



Virtual AFCA Meeting—Native Trees and Gardens

AFCA invites you to join our monthly Zoom meeting on Wednesday, March 19, at 7 p.m. With spring planting season coming up, master gardeners will discuss how you can enhance the beauty of your yard while supporting habitats for native wildlife by choosing native trees and other plants.

To join the meeting, you can participate through Zoom by entering the following URL into your browser between 6:50 and 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March

19: <https://tinyurl.com/4k6ycvjm>. (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 816 5354 1733 and passcode 469609. 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 February 2025 Meeting

On February 19, AFCA President Sal D'Itri kicked off the AFCA meeting on Zoom with about 16 households in attendance. A representative from the Arlington County Police Department reported on crime trends in the area of Arlington Forest. Overall crime numbers were up from last year, but crime in 2024 was way down from the previous year, so crime in our area and all across Arlington has been relatively low overall. You can find out more online at Crime Data Hub Arlington VA.

The police department representative stressed that you should call the nonemergency police department number whenever you see something questionable. The only way for the police to know about crime-related issues in a particular area is if people report them. The nonemergency number is 703-558-2222.

A neighbor suggested that the Barrett PTA should reach out to the whole neighborhood (not just to Barrett parents) to report things like school auctions and school events. The Barcroft PTA and Kenmore PTSA already do so through this newsletter (see page 7); the Barrett PTA

did so in the past but largely stopped a few years ago. Another way of connecting to the community would be through listserv.

Rick Epstein and Eric Lotke reported on the most recent meeting of the Arlington County Civic Federation (CivFed). CivFed, founded in 1916, has more than 90 member organizations (including neighborhood groups like AFCA) dedicated to advocacy and community involvement. In effect, CivFed plays an important advisory role for the five-member Arlington County Board, Arlington's governing body.

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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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Four Universal Landscape Goals

By Doug Bellamy

The article is adapted from Homegrown National Park.

Every landscape must perform four ecological functions if we are to achieve a sustainable relationship with the natural world that supports us. (Continuing to insist on landscapes that do not sustain Mother Nature is not and has never been a realistic option.) It's really very simple: our landscapes must do the things that enable ecosystems to produce the life support we and every other species require, including (1) supporting a diverse community of pollinators throughout the growing season, (2) providing energy for the local food web, (3) managing the watershed in which they lie, and (4) removing carbon from the atmosphere, where it is wreaking havoc on Earth's climate. How well a landscape accomplishes these four goals depends on how well we, as landscape managers, choose and deploy the plants on our landscapes.

Native Plant Gardening Clinic

Naturalists and gardeners will be ready to guide your native plant gardening at the Long Branch Nature Center in Glencarlyn Park on March 23, 10-noon. You can also get help ordering for the nature center's Spring Native Plant Sale. This is a pop-in event and no appointment is needed.



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Meet Forester Tom Shannon: New Executive Director of Phoenix Bikes

By Emily O'Keefe

Tom Shannon, a longtime Arlington Forest resident, has recently stepped into an exciting role as the Executive Director of Phoenix Bikes, a local nonprofit that's doing incredible work to empower youth through bicycles. Tom's new position at Phoenix Bikes brings together his love for bikes, his leadership experience, and his commitment to helping young people develop skills that will last a lifetime.

Tom's connection to bikes began when he worked at Spokes, Etc., a bike shop in Arlington. After earning his business degree from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and serving as a logistics officer in the Army, Tom went on to lead global initiatives at Chevron and to work for Mobike, an advocate for sustainable bike-sharing. He later led disaster logistics at the American Red Cross and, in his free time, taught local kids to ride bikes through his own enterprise, Little Wheelies. He now focuses all of his time on his true passion: supporting local youth through cycling.

At Phoenix Bikes, Tom's role is to help expand the organization's programs, including the beloved Earn-A-Bike program, which gives local teens the chance to learn bike repair skills and earn their own bike. This program lets young people gain hands-on experience, build confidence, and connect with their community. But Phoenix Bikes is more than just a place to fix bikes—it's a community hub for learning, growth, and empowerment. Whether you're interested in donating a bike, volunteering your time, or supporting its mission through a financial contribution, Phoenix Bikes relies on the generosity of the community to keep its programs running. If you have a bike collecting dust in your garage, consider donating it to Phoenix Bikes to help local teens earn their first ride! Your donation not only supports the Earn-A-Bike program but also helps create opportunities for young people in our community to thrive.

When he's not leading Phoenix Bikes, Tom enjoys spending time with his wife, Emily, and their two boys, Teddy and Charlie. He's also a craft coffee enthusiast, an avid cyclist, and a data science student at Georgia Tech. Tom is thrilled to be part of an organization that brings so much positive energy to Arlington, and he's excited to continue helping Phoenix Bikes to grow and expand its impact.

Interested in getting involved? Visit Phoenix Bikes to learn more about its programs, donate a bike, or see how you can help make a difference in the lives of local youth!



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Harbinger of Spring in Lubber Run Park

The article is based on a February 2023 blog on the Arlington Regional Master Naturalists website by Forester Colleen O'Hara.

In our local parks, early bloomers called spring ephemerals (“ephemeral” means passing) wait all year to pop up for only a few weeks when the weather starts to warm. In Lubber Run Park, blooms like bloodroot brighten brown winter landscapes and play an important ecological role by providing food to the season’s early pollinators. Spring ephemerals take advantage of sunlight unblocked by overhead foliage to grow vigorously in spring, then die back as the trees leaf out.

Bloodroot emerges in March, with white petals surrounded by a cluster of yellow stamens. The plant gets its name from the red color of its sap, which can irritate the skin. Bloodroot has only recently reappeared in Lubber Run Park; for decades, invasive ground covers like English ivy and lesser celandine suppressed the



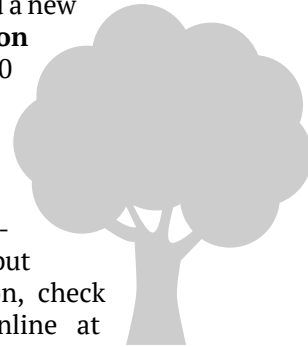
growth of native plants, but their seeds remained in the soil, ready to reemerge if the invasives were ever removed. In the 2000s, neighborhood volunteers pitched in to help remove English ivy and other invasives from Lubber Run Park. Within a few years, bloodroot was coming back.

In March, you can find lovely patches of bloodroot on the west slope of Lubber Run Park below Greenbrier. Other spring ephemerals, though not much seen (yet) in Lubber Run Park, include spring beauty, trout lily, Virginia bluebell, and Dutchman’s breeches. Reliable viewing spots for spring ephemerals include Riverbend Park and Scott’s Run Nature Preserve, both on the Potomac River, and the Bull Run Occoquan Trail in Fairfax County. You can see eastern skunk cabbage, another spring ephemeral, in the magnolia bog on the northeastern side of Barcroft Park beyond Four Mile Run.

Plant a Tree in Your Yard

Help keep the “forest” in Arlington Forest! Spring or fall is the perfect time to plant. If you have lost a tree or want to add a new one, you might be able to get one through the **Arlington Tree Distribution Program**, which is giving away 500 young native trees this fall. The trees, 2-6 ft tall, come in 2-gal containers. You can register for a free tree beginning on September 2 at <https://tinyurl.com/3z6jzhhr>.

Alternatively, through the **Tree Planting Program** administered by EcoAction Arlington, you can get a native tree planted on your property at no cost to you, but the number of trees is limited. For more information, check out EcoAction Arlington Tree Planting Program online at <https://tinyurl.com/4xfxehbz>.



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Coyotes Are Here to Stay

The article is based on a report by ArlNow on February 10.

Multiple sightings on February 4 in the Yorktown neighborhood and on January 24 in Lubber Run Park generated a rash of coyote reports to Arlington County. According to Alonso Abugattas, Natural Resources Manager for the county, the eastern coyote has been around for years and is already well-established in our area. Coyotes, he notes, "can be a threat to outdoor pets such as feral cats or loose dogs but [are] otherwise harmless and shy."

The eastern coyote evolved from western coyotes moving eastward and interbreeding with wolves in the Upper Midwest and with dogs along the way. They are therefore slightly bigger than their western cousins and can come in more colors,

including black. People might have seen more coyotes lately because it was their breeding season and they were out looking for mates and denning sites. According to Abugattas, coyotes keep an eye on people who get close to their dens, but it would be extremely rare "for them to do anything more than watch."

If you encounter a coyote who doesn't run away, Abugattas recommends yelling or throwing "something that rattles or makes noise near them to scare them off." Feeding coyotes, he warns, is "a terrible idea as they will associate people with handouts and lose their fear." But there's no need to report a coyote to Animal Control unless you think it is sick. As Abugattas puts it, coyotes have moved into our area to stay "and we need to learn to live with them."



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Opinion: Bamboo Invasions

By Hutch Brown

Asian bamboos can be attractive, but their aggressive spread can affect the neighbors, including wildlife in our local parks. Bamboo rhizomes (pronounced RYE-zohms) are stems from the plant's roots that grow laterally underground to form new roots and shoots, a seedless method of propagation. In some bamboos, rhizomes can grow up to 5 ft/yr underground, taking the plant under fences across property lines and onto public parkland. You can see bamboo doing just that on slopes along the W&OD Trail in Glencarlyn Park below Southside. Another example is the wooded Northside buffer strip near Arlington Forest Park. The bamboo there is relatively short (up to 5 ft tall) and the area of spread is still small (perhaps 20 ft²). But the bamboo is clearly displacing native plants, and the potential for further spread is worrisome.



Even more worrisome is the bamboo wall that has appeared in Lubber Run Park. Bamboo more than 15 ft tall seems to have crossed under a backyard fence into a gulley between culdesacs in Greenbrier. The bamboo forms a dense monoculture where little else grows, and it is spreading downhill toward Lubber Run, displacing native plants and destroying habitats. Invasive species such as English ivy and wineberry are relatively easy to control in the park using gloves, clippers, and spades; not so bamboo, where chemical controls might be needed. The chemical approach is to cut shoots to the ground and repeatedly spray with herbicide. The manual alternative, in addition to cutting shoots, is to dig a 2-ft-deep trench around the entire patch, cut off the rhizomes, emplace a plastic barrier, fill in the trench, and repeat up to twice a year. It's best to avoid such trouble by choosing ornamental plants other than bamboo (preferably natives).



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Kenmore School News

By Samantha Bell

The Parent/Teacher/Student Association (PTSA) hosted two after-school dances for the 6th and 7th grade classes in March to raise money for the 8th-grade evening dance planned for April 4. The annual Kenmore Middle School 5k race, open to the public, will be held on Saturday, May 10, starting at 9 a.m. The race is a USATF-certified 5k course in Bluemont Park that starts and finishes near Kenmore. The link to the race registration is <https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/Arlington/KenmorePTSA5k>. We are looking for event sponsors to support this race, with sponsorship levels starting at \$500. If you are interested in sponsorship or have any questions, please contact kenmoreptapresident@gmail.com. Other upcoming events include Spring Break on April 14-18 and Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week on May 5-9.

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 PTSA or have any questions. Volunteers are always needed. Donations to the PTSA are always appreciated at <https://kenmorepta.memberhub.com/store>.



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Foresters Perform Sondheim, Simon & Garfunkel

Singing actresses Judy Lewis and Jane Petrofsky performed an hour of songs by Stephen Sondheim in a local winter concert, accompanied by pianist Ken Schellenberg and cellist Deborah Larson. Judy and Ken are some of our neighbors in Arlington Forest. You can hear them performing another hour of Sondheim songs on May 19, 2-3 p.m. (county signup activity #913301-04); May 21, 1-2 p.m. (#913301-05); and May 27, 11:30-12/30 p.m. (#913301-06). You can also enjoy a walk through the best songs from one of the 1960s' greatest folk-rock groups, Simon & Garfunkel. Sherry Hickey and Judy McVerry will sing and Ken Schellenberg will accompany them on piano on April 17, 1-2 p.m. (#913304-26); April 22, 11-noon (#913304-27); and April 24, 11:30-12:30 p.m. (#913304-28). Registration is required through the Arlington 55+ website; some performances are at the Lubber Run Community Center.

Ballston Macy's Redevelopment

Preparations to demolish the shuttered Ballston Macy's have begun, with demolition to be completed by August, followed by about 5 months of excavation. Plans are to replace Macy's in about 3 years with 553 apartments, a 38,400-ft² ground-level "organic grocery store," and 2,000 ft² of other stores. During construction, a pedestrian travel path with overhead protection will line Wilson Blvd.; the sidewalk along N. Glebe Rd. will remain closed, but pedestrians will still be able to use the alley between Macy's and Chipotle. Macy's closed last spring after 71 years in Ballston. The store originally opened as Hecht's in 1951 as part of the Parkington Shopping Center, at the time the largest suburban shopping center on the East Coast.

County Staff Preparing for Federal Cuts

Arlington County is preparing for the potential impacts of ongoing federal cuts and instability under the new administration. The county's proposed budget for fiscal year 2026 increases the county's stabilization reserve from \$21.5 million to \$33 million to act as a buffer if Arlington Public Schools loses federal funding or if federal job losses bring down commercial tax revenue. The county is considering a possible real estate tax increase and a higher meals tax, in addition to possibly eliminating 44 positions and increasing fees for some services.

Community Calendar

Next AFCA meeting: Wednesday, March 19, 7 p.m.

Neighborhood Spring Cleanup: A Saturday in April 2025

Annual AFCA Picnic: Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Annual Yard Sale: A Saturday in May 2025

Turnaround Day: A Saturday in July (tentative)

AFCA Meetings

Topics are tentative.

March 19, 2025: Native trees and gardens

April 16, 2025: Pedestrian/traffic safety

May 21, 2025: Neighborhood picnic

55+ Nature Walk in Lubber Run Park

Arlington Regional Master Naturalists Stephanie Martin and Caroline Haynes will lead a "Signs of Spring" walk in Lubber Run Park at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, April 2, for the Arlington 55+ program. You can learn how to capture your observations on the iNaturalist app. It's a great opportunity to practice for the City Nature Challenge 2025 on April 25-28, when cities around the world will collaborate and share their observations of nature. You can sign up online on the Arlington 55+ website (activity #913106).

Early Spring Wildflower Walk

Naturalists will lead a walk from the Long Branch Nature Center in Glencarlyn Park on March 30, 11-noon, to look for early wildflowers like spring beauty, bloodroot, and trout lily. The leaders will discuss the fascinating ecology of these early-spring plants. Teens aged 12 and up are welcome to attend with a registered adult. You can register online at Early Spring Wildflower Walk.

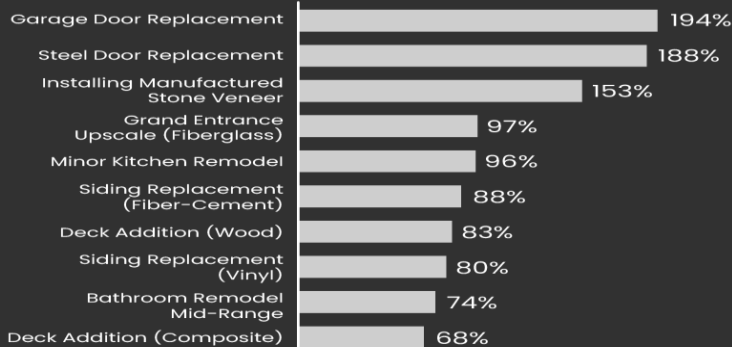
Ravens Nesting Again

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.

It's smart to make strategic updates. But how do you decide what's worth doing and where to spend your time, money, and effort? Lean on a local agent who knows what buyers are looking for, what quick wins you can make, and which projects have the best ROI.

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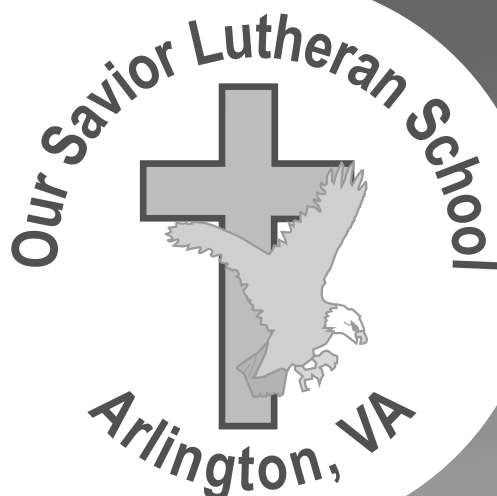
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