

The Arlington Forester



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February 2016

Libby Garvey to Address AFCA Meeting

Arlington County Board Chair Libby Garvey is our guest speaker at the February 17 AFCA meeting at 7 pm in Barrett School library. Ms. Garvey will discuss current issues facing Arlington and then answer questions. This is your chance to hear from, and provide input to, the County Board Chair on issues such as economic development, school capacity, green space, traffic safety, affordable housing, taxes, and rebuilding the Lubber Run Community Center

Libby Garvey was elected to the Arlington County Board in March 2012 after serving on the Arlington County School Board for 15 years, including five times as chair. She was selected in January by her colleagues to serve as County Board Chair for 2016. An Arlington resident since 1977, Ms. Garvey's two daughters are graduates of Arlington County

Public Schools.

Finally, three of 250 copies remain of the Arlington Forest History Book published last summer to mark our neighborhood's 75th anniversary. To purchase a copy, send a check for \$15 (for hand delivery in Arlington Forest) or \$20 (for mail delivery anywhere in the U.S.) made out to "AFCA" to John Naland, 100 N. Granada St., Arlington 22203.

A PDF version of the book is on the AFCA website (www.arlingtonforestva.org) under the Neighborhood tab. Two printed copies are in the Arlington Public Library's Center for Local History. If a tech-savvy resident would like to volunteer to create an eBook version, contact John Naland at newsletter@arlingtonforestva.org.

Bats, Mosquitos, and Zika Virus

By John Naland

Interesting messages were exchanged on the Arlington Forest Families listerv in early February. They began with a question about how to build a bat house to attract bats to eat mosquitos that might be carrying the Zika virus. One posting forwarded comments by Arlington County's Natural Resource Manager Alonso Abugattas who made three points:

Bat Houses: In our region, only about two percent of manufactured bat boxes manage to attract bats. The reasons for their failure include their poor design and the exacting placement requirements needed for bats to successfully occupy them - for example, high off the ground, exposed year round to direct morning sun, and inaccessible by predators. The bottom line is that installing bat boxes in our area is a waste of effort. Anyway, bats prefer to eat meaty moths and beetles instead of scrawny mosquitos.

Zika Virus: The odds of Zika virus becoming an issue here

due to transmission by mosquitos appears to be small. The Zika-carrying species of mosquito, *Aedes aegypti*, is not normally found in our area. Some have historically found their way here, but those are rare summer time occurrences are

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AFCA Meeting 7 p.m. February 17 at Barrett School Library

THE ARLINGTON FORESTER

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Editor's Note

The *Arlington Forester* welcomes articles, news notes, letters, and photos focusing on non-commercial events or issues specific to our neighborhood. We publish eight times per year (Sept to Nov and Jan to May). Deadline for submissions is the first of the month. E-mail submissions of up to 400 words to newsletter@arlingtonforestva.org. Space often fills up before the deadline.



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Supersizing Arlington?

By John Naland

The January AFCA meeting featured an interesting presentation by Victor Hoskins, Director of Economic Development for Arlington County. That office promotes business, real estate development, tourism, and arts (including programming at the Lubber Run Amphitheater) in Arlington. The focus of his talk was efforts by his office to attract new companies to fill the over 20 percent of commercial office space that is currently vacant in Arlington. That, in turn, would increase commercial tax revenue to fund public services.

Judging by the questions and comments after his presentation, most of the Arlington Foresters attending the session were impressed by the strategies being used by Mr. Hoskins and his staff to attract new companies to Arlington. At the same time, several attendees expressed concern that filling vacant office space would only encourage more construction which would increase population, school over-crowding, traffic, and over-utilization of green space. Mr. Hoskins appropriately noted that his office is doing the job as assigned to it and that the County Board sets macro-level issues such as the future of "smart growth."

The most recent example of population growth promotion took place on January 28 when the County Board voted 5-0 to approve construction of a six-story condo building in Rosslyn with 63 units to replace an old four-story, 33-unit apartment complex. The larger size was made possible by the County Board giving the developer a "density bonus" in exchange for the developer including four affordable-housing units, adding public art, and building to LEED Silver standards.

A few days later, Arlington Public Schools held a "community stakeholder meeting" to develop strategies

respond to the 25 percent enrollment growth that is projected over the next ten years. APS officials noted that the funds and bonding capacity currently allotted to APS are insufficient to build all of the needed new seats for students. Numerous participants expressed concern that APS can never keep up with enrolment growth as long as County Board policies promote population growth. Several citizens noted that the County Board never gets developers to contribute funds to build new schools. APS officials responded that they have no say over those issues.

Finally, in recent days, several Greenbrier Section residents contacted County traffic officials to report that increasingly-frequent long traffic backups at Carlin Springs Rd. and Arlington Blvd. are causing convoys of cars to divert onto the neighborhood streets of N. Granada St. and N. Edison St. in order to reach Route 50 more quickly. This, too, appears to be a result of increasing population in Arlington.

[Do you have a view on this topic? If so, submit it for printing in a future issue. Please see page 2 of this newsletter for guidelines.]



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Zika Virus

...continued from page 1

not believed to be a long term problem. Our own mosquito species, even the introduced Asian Tiger Mosquito, are not believed to be able to transmit Zika. Of course, insects and viruses can mutate, but that appears unlikely.

Mosquitos: Of course, our area's mosquitos are a real concern for various reasons - especially the Asian Tiger Mosquito due to its ability to breed in manmade dwellings. Thus, we should combat their breeding locations in small trapped water containers. We should clear clogged gutters (a place where lots of breeding takes place), empty pot stands, regularly change bird baths/other water sources, and clean the area of tires, cans, bottles, and such that can hold the stagnant water that mosquitos need to survive.

In a separate message, Arlington Forest resident Paul Kovenock added that mosquitoes also hide under English ivy. They shelter there because ivy provides good cover, dark and moist, and is free from predators. They breed in the moisture which persists under English ivy because sunlight and air does not penetrate the matted ivy. Removing invasive English ivy from your yard is one way to reduce mosquitoes. (See page 6 of this newsletter for more information about removing English ivy.)



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Real Estate Market Update

Arlington's February real estate market is starting off strong. Foot traffic (the number of people physically looking at home) is active for single family and townhomes. We had over 40 people through our open house at 26 S. Park on 1/31. It is currently under contract. The overall inventory in Arlington remains low, especially in the mid to lower price range.

In many areas, there are not enough homes for sale to satisfy the number of buyers in that market. This is good news for home prices. It is projected that additional inventory will hit the market in the next few months.

As of this writing there are only 27 homes for sale in Arlington County under \$700,000, and 9 of them have been listed within the last 7 days.

30 year fixed rates continued to drop this week to an average of 3.72%.

For home buyers, lower interest rates are always good news. Add to that a

new Zillow report saying that now is a good time for renters to become home buyers. The national average time it takes to break even on rent v. buy is only 2 years. So if you know that you'll be staying put and renting for more than 2 years, you'd be better off buying.

There Will Never Be a Better Time to Move-Up! If you are moving up to a larger, more expensive home, consider doing it now. Prices are projected to appreciate by 5.4% over the next 12 months according to *CoreLogic*. Rates are projected to rise by .75% by the end of 2016. Whether you sell your existing home first, or buy your move up home first, we can help with guidance on the best approach with your situation.

Stop on by our open house on 2/14 at 118 N. Abingdon Street in the Forest. Listed for \$709,900, this turn-key home has an expanded main level floor plan and a 2 car garage!



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Nature News

by Bobbi Farley
Park Naturalist,
Long Branch
Nature Center

Nature: Face your Fears:

"Bees, poison ivy, snakes, getting lost, strangers..." the list goes on for why people fear and avoid nature or any green space and park. It's

safer to either stay at home or turn to manufactured outlets for recreation. But at what cost?

Each generation of children and adults are further removed from and more fearful of nature than the last. For many people, going outside and playing in true nature -- not the sidewalks or even back yards -- is either completely removed from their childhood or has been reduced to a novelty, like going to an amusement park. Trekking through the woods, catching insects, playing in mud, building forts, coming home scraped, dirty and happy has become an anachronism, an artifact of the past.

Abundant research has demonstrated the benefits of nature exposure for both children and adults: reduced stress and anxiety, greater cognitive and learning skills, increased physical and mental health. Yet, many people justify excising this source of spiritual nutrition over "safety" concerns. That's like refusing to eat fruits or vegetables for the risk of cracking a tooth on a seed. Yet, we know how to avoid the risk as to get the benefits in regards to our veggies, why should nature immersion be any different?

While there are inherent dangers anywhere in our world, we know to avoid and be preemptive toward risks. As for kids playing in the forest, let them, just do so with the proper precautions for both parents and children. Go with the kids to the natural spaces to see for yourself how clean and safe leaves, sticks, rocks, and soil are compared to plastic tunnels and ball pits. Define a large perimeter to be their play area so they don't wander too far. Learn about the most common hazards like poison ivy by looking them up online or in guidebooks.

Children can and do absorb this information. Indeed, they have a much greater learning capacity than many adults realize. I have seen small children proficiently use an iPhone or

name over 700 toy monsters, so they can learn poison ivy is three leaves, to avoid wasp nests and that most snakes in our area are harmless.

The inhibition some people feel comes from fear of the unknown, but if people make the effort to become better acquainted with the natural world, the benefits and enjoyment will far outweigh the few small dangers. With dozens of parks and nature centers in our area there are many resources available such as loaner guidebooks, marked trails and signage, and guided programs led by experienced naturalists.

The Arlington Department of Parks and Recreation has scores of nature programs for children, families and adults, some with free admission. To check them out, please visit: <http://arlingtonparks.us/snag/>.



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Around The Forest

Farmers Market: At the October 2015 AFCA meeting, Robert Swennes from Field to Table, the organization behind several local farmers markets, spoke about the possibility of opening a farmers market at Barrett Elementary. The crowd expressed considerable support at the meeting and it's now time to move to the next steps. Robert is working to drum up interest and support from surrounding civic associations and plans to further engage the community at a meeting on April 6th at 7PM at the Barrett Elementary School library. The target date for the opening of the new farmers market is spring of 2017. Key to its success is a solid group of volunteers serving in a number of roles. If you are interested in volunteering or are just interested in hearing about the farmers market, please attend the April 6th meeting.

Oh Poop: Unsightly deposits left on white snow prompted several neighbors to ask this newsletter to -- once again -- remind residents to obey the County ordinance requiring picking up after their dog. Take extra bags and, if after dark, a flashlight to facilitate cleanup. Remind anyone else who walks your dog -- children, nannies, dog-sitters -- to obey the law.

Community Calendar

Next AFCA Meeting: Wednesday, February 17, 7 pm at Barrett Elementary.

Presidential Primary Voting: Tuesday, March 1. Polls open 6 am to 7 pm

Neighborhood Spring Cleanup: Saturday, April 16. Help beautify our neighborhood parks and other public areas.

E-CARE: Mid-April. Semi-annual recycling event at Thomas Jefferson Middle School.

Taste of Arlington: Mid-May. Local food showcase in front of Ballston Mall.

Annual Yard Sale: Saturday May 21. Turn unwanted stuff into cash.

Lubber Run Amphitheater: Live entertainment under the stars resumes in June.

Arlington County Fair: August 17-21. Rides, food, displays, and racing pigs.

Future AFCA Meetings:

March 16: School Capacity & Master Gardener

April 20: Traffic Issues & Ballston Mall Update

May 18: Picnic & Membership Meeting



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Barcroft School News

Winter greetings from Barcroft Elementary! Students returned from Winter Break on January 5 and began Third Quarter learning. Events in January included a clothing donation drive sponsored by the Barcroft PTA. Many thanks to our neighbors who helped raise over \$300 for our school! The PTA held its monthly meeting on January 12, and discussed the proposed Modified School Year calendar for 2016-2017 as well as school participation in several Arlington Public School (APS) parent committees. On January 13, students enjoyed an afternoon Humanities assembly, an Acapella Group presentation.

On January 19-20, third grade students spent their mornings at the Wakefield pool attending swimming lessons. Second quarter report cards were sent home on January 20. On January 21, the PTA hosted a successful Barcroft Night at Panera Bread. Thank you to the neighbors who joined us!

The Blizzard of 2016 arrived and closed school until February 1. Field trips to the National Gallery of Art, swim lessons, and public education programs such as Too Smart to Start were postponed. While Barcroft and other APS students missed a total of seven days in January, 10 snow days have been built into the APS calendar.

On February 2, the PTA held its monthly meeting and

heard from our Gifted Resource Teacher. On February 3, Grade 4 and 5 students participated in the National Geography Bee. Parent-Teacher conferences were held on February 4-5. Conferences started at 2 p.m. on Thursday and continued through Friday. The PTA provided dinner to teachers and staff. On February 18, Barcroft will host the first of three School Information Sessions and Tours for interested families. The additional dates are March 15 and April 14.

The next several months should be busy. On March 2, the school will distribute free books to students as part of the Reading is Fundamental program and celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday, a long-time Barcroft Elementary tradition. On March 14, to mark the end of the Third Quarter, Barcroft will host a Leonardo Learning and Math (Celebration of Pi) event. Spring Intersession classes will be held from March 28-April 8. During Intersession, students may take time off from school or enroll in interesting Intersession classes. Barcroft's International Night celebration will be held on April 28. We hope that you can join us for these events!

To learn more, contact our PTA President Tara McCabe at tcs04@gmail.com.



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Jim

Barrett School News

The families, students, and faculty of KW Barrett Elementary have finally dug out of all the snow and come back to class roaring and ready to learn! Lots of events had to be rescheduled, including the much-anticipated Winter Concert. (Rumor has it the playlist will include Jingle Bells and other nods to snowy weather.) The show, which will feature the band, orchestra and chorus, has been set for February 17 at 7:00 pm.

The family Valentine's Party and Dance will now be February 19. Brick's Pizza Night is February 24 and the big Barrett fundraising auction will be April 29 from 7:00 pm to 10:00. Details on all of these events can be found on the Barrett PTA website: <http://barrett.my-pta.org/>

Reading at home is the first step in education and this month, Barrett launched a Twitter campaign asking students and families to show their love of books. Families

can send in a picture of their students reading the book that "warms my heart," using the hashtag #KWBPrize for a chance to win a gift card for ... more books!

A Book that Warms My Heart ❤️
#KWBPrize Twitter Challenge!

Tweet a photo of you and your child reading together with the hashtag #KWBPrize and mention @BarrettFamilies during the month of February and be entered for a chance to win a Barnes and Noble gift card!

📷 + #KWBPrize + @BarrettFamilies

Upcoming Events:

- No School**, February 15th
- Winter Concert**, February 17th
- Family Dance**, February 19th



KW Barrett Elementary Principal Dan Redding greets students as they climb onto the bus. (Photo credit: Renee Shaw)



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- Caroline Rogers: babysitting, pet sitting, dog walking, carolinearogers@verizon.net, 703-892-0226
- Julia Rogers: babysitting (RC certified), yard work, juliaerogers23@gmail.com, 703-892-0226
- Jon Tiernan: babysitting (RC certified, references), pet sitting, jontiernan16@gmail.com
- Liz Tiernan: babysitting (RC certified, references), pet sitting, lizzytiernan@gmail.com

Greenbrier Section:

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- Allison Ferrell: babysitting (RC certified), pet sitting, Allisonrocket@aol.com, 703-276-2840
- Ethan Hall: babysitting (RC certified), snow shoveling, leaf raking, pet sitting, dog walking, k.hall.b@verizon.net, 302-650-4428
- Bridget Holt: babysitting (RC certified), dog walking, pet sitting 703-465-0580
- Jack Holt: babysitting (RC certified), yard work, snow shoveling, leaf raking, watering plants, tutoring, jackloginname@gmail.com, 703-465-0580

- Anthony Lawson: pet sitting, dog walking, 703-933-8880
- Charlotte Lawson: leaf raking, pet sitting, dog walking, 703-933-8880

Northside:

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- Laura Brancati: babysitting (RC certified), dog walking, pet sitting, laura@barms.org, 703-243-1916
- Alex Brown: yard work, leaf raking, snow shoveling, alexhutchinsb@gmail.com, 703-314-8840
- Riittisha Choudhary: tutoring, babysitting age 4-12, yard work, riittishachoudhary@gmail.com
- Ely Constantine: pet sitting, leaf raking, snow shoveling, cpconstantine@comcast.net, 703-841-9229
- Sophia Constantine: pet sitting, dog walking, srconstantine@comcast.net, 703-841-9229
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- Tenley Kennett: plant watering, dog walking (25 lbs. max), 571-277-4441
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- Marika Mortimer-Lotke: babysitting (RC certified), house sitting/chores, 703-276-9046
- Allison Vernon: babysitting (references), pet sitting, catharinevernon@aol.com, 703-522-9147
- Gabby Young: babysitting, mother's helper, pet sitting, dog walking, merrywesing@yahoo.com, 703-622-4229



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