

The Arlington Forester



Volume 53, Number 4

Arlington, VA

January 2012

A New Year in Our Neighborhood

by John Naland

The Arlington Forest Citizens Association enters 2012 ready to continue its mission of advancing the interests of our neighborhood. Issues which AFCA will address in the coming months include: traffic and pedestrian safety issues along our streets, planning for the second-annual neighborhood-wide cleanup to be held in April on Earth Day weekend, and plans for summer 2012 performances at the newly-renovated Lubber Run Amphitheater.

The coming months will also feature the AFCA-sponsored annual community yard sale and AFCA's annual picnic and election. As new issues arise, AFCA will address them as well to give voice to our community in discussions with local officials.

The first AFCA meeting of the year is Jan 18 at 7 PM in the

Barrett School library. The agenda includes a review of ongoing issues as well as planning for upcoming AFCA activities. If you have an issue to raise or if you just want to see your association in action, please attend. Meetings rarely exceed one hour.

Finally, if you have not yet sent in your \$10 AFCA dues for the September 2011 to August 2012 fiscal year, please do so today and send it to your association's Vice President using the form on page 9. Your dues support AFCA's activities which enhance the quality of life in our neighborhood. As of press time, 282 of the 853 households have paid. Participation rates by section are Greenbrier Section-34%, Southside-33% and Northside-31%.

Improvements at Route 50 and Park Drive

Arlington County is planning to make safety and access improvements to the intersection at Arlington Boulevard and Park Drive. The project will reduce speeding and the incidence of collisions and will create better access and crossings for pedestrians, transit users, cyclists and those travelling on the shared-use paths parallel to Arlington Boulevard. The proposed design for the intersection features new sidewalks and crosswalks, curb and gutter, upgraded signals and pedestrian call buttons, accessible ramps and new trees.

Currently, the project is in the design stage at 50% complete and was presented at the Nov 2011 AFCA meeting. County staff will meet again with residents at AFCA's Feb 15 meeting when the design will be 75% complete. Once the community has reviewed the project, the engineer will develop construction documents. The project is expected to begin construction in summer 2012.

You can see further details and the concept plan on the County website (search for "Park Drive") or directly at www.arlingtonva.us/departments/EnvironmentalServices/dot/page84310.aspx. For more information, please contact Christine Simpson at csimpson@arlingtonva.us or 703-228-3339.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Smoke-Free Parks.....2	Around the Forest.....9
Trailhead Project.....3	Exchange / Calendar.....10
Cub Scout Pack.....4	Nature News.....11
Neighborhood Notes.....5	Barcroft News.....12
Holiday Party.....6	Barrett News.....13
Pauline Cohen.....7	Kids for Hire.....14

AFCA Meeting 7 p.m. Jan 18 at Barrett School Library

THE ARLINGTON FORESTER

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Editor's Note

The *Arlington Forester* welcomes articles, news notes and letters focusing on events or issues specific to our neighborhood. We also welcome photos accompanied by an explanatory caption. The next deadline is Feb 3 for the issue to be distributed the weekend of Feb 12. E-mail submissions of 400 words or less to John Naland at newsletter@arlingtonforestva.org. Space fills up early, so check with the editor in advance if you plan to submit a long article. Submissions are subject to editing.

Smoke-Free Parks

by Lora Strine

R-E-S-P-E-C-T: There's a new level of respect in our neighborhood parks. And it has a sign. Arlington County has posted signs in our parks and recreation areas asking us to respect our community values related to a healthy and safe environment by reducing second-hand smoke exposure in parks. Smoke-Free Parks makes sense:

-- According to the U.S. Surgeon General, there is no safe threshold of exposure to second-hand smoke. It has over 4,000 chemicals in it, and most of these chemicals are toxic and cause cancer.

-- Parks are healthy places for youth, families and community. The more tobacco-free places we have the fewer opportunities youth have to start using.

-- The Smoke-Free Parks Initiative promotes positive role modeling. Adults are role models and the more youth see tobacco use, the more it becomes an accepted norm and the more likely they are to use tobacco products.

-- The Smoke-Free Parks Initiative reduces litter. In smoke-free parks you won't see discarded cigarettes that pollute land and water. Further, discarded cigarettes are often ingested by toddlers and pets and they diminish aesthetics of parks and nature and cost the County in additional maintenance expenses.

For more information on the program, search "smoke free park initiative" on the County website. Need help to quit smoking? Call the Virginia Quit Now Hotline at 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669).



Trailhead Project Moves Forward

by John Naland

Arlington County's Park and Recreation Commission last month approved a \$15,000 Park Enhancement Grant to beautify the trailhead located at the foot of N. Greenbrier (pictured at right). The project was proposed by an ad-hoc group of neighbors from the 100 block of N. Granada to better and more safely connect our community to Four Mile Run and the WO&D bike/hike/jog trail network. The County Board is expected to give final approval at its January 21 meeting.

The project is the outgrowth of efforts by neighbors who, since April 2008, have conducted semi-annual clean-ups of the trailhead and the banks of Four Mile Run below it. The neighbors will be out again this coming Saturday, April 21 (Earth Day weekend). Anyone who uses that trail is welcome to join in the clean-up effort.

Four years of 30-person volunteer cleanups have removed tons of trash and invasive plants. However, the neighbors decided to apply for the grant after concluding that outside assistance was needed to reduce the invasive plant threat to a point where it can be kept in check and that the addition of a few pieces of park equipment would improve the community's connection to the parkland.

The project will fund a contractor to remove invasive plants from two acres on either side of the trail leading down into the Four Mile Run watershed. The contractor will make a first sweep in the coming months and will return in a year to remove surviving invasives that sprout again. This will remove the thicket of invasive plants that now chokes the area during the growing season and will thereby improve trail visibility to walkers and cyclists going up and down the winding path.

Other project elements focus on the trailhead itself. Two non-native evergreen trees at the trail entrance will be relocated (they were apparently planted years ago by a former resident without County approval) thereby revealing the native forest beyond. In their place, several new features will convert the site to an attractive focal point overlooking the parkland. A large flat boulder that is suitable for seating will be installed to provide a spot for trail users to pause to rest. An information kiosk will be installed to provide info on community events and the natural environment.

A new, specially-commissioned map of Arlington Forest will be created for display in the info kiosk that will depict details of nearby walking trails. That map will be reprinted in this newsletter so all residents can have a copy.

The County will likely also consolidate the plethora of signage near the trailhead and relocate the trash can from around the corner to the trailhead area. All the project elements should be accomplished by this summer.

Due to limited funding, money was not approved to

paint the rusty street barricade located at that spot. However, the Department of Environmental Services is currently studying whether or not to simply remove the old, unsightly barricade.

This is apparently the first project in Arlington Forest that has won funding under the annual Park Enhancement Grant program. The process was competitive, with over a dozen neighborhoods around the County applying for the program's limited funding.



Crime Watch

For the second year in a row, a rash of holiday season car break-ins hit Arlington Forest. This time, GPS devices and other valuables were stolen from a dozen unlocked cars in Northside (100 block of N. Columbus) and nearby Bluemont the night of Dec 19. That same night, a Honda Odyssey loaded with gifts was stolen from Bluemont (it was recovered a week later after it crashed in the District with four youths seen fleeing the scene).

The robberies confirmed the advice that Corporal Beth Lennon of the Arlington County Police Department gave at the AFCA meeting on Nov 16: do not leave valuables visible inside cars. Corporal Lennon reported that serious incidents such as house burglaries are rare in our neighborhood, but that car break-ins and other petty thefts (such as of unsecured bikes) are more common.

She urged residents to report all incidents to the police, even if the losses were minor and the criminals long gone. Reporting incidents allows the police to look for trends that might prompt them to increase police cruiser patrols in the neighborhood. Also, the police often fingerprint cars that have suffered break-ins and such evidence could help to identify and convict crooks responsible for dozens of crimes.

Non-urgent incidents should be reported to the police by phoning 703-558-222 or via an online form on the County website.

Cub Scout Pack 548 in Action

by Cubmaster Carey Johnston

It's been a busy couple of months with Cub Scout Pack 548. Your local Arlington Forest Cub Scout Pack participated in the Scouting for Food Drive last November. This entire food drive across Arlington collected 75,777 pounds of food for the Arlington Food Assistance Center. Thanks to all Arlington Foresters that participated in this charitable event.

In December the boys learned about the importance of fire safety from Smokey Bear. Members of the U.S. Forest Service came with Smokey Bear to talk about the history of Smokey Bear and his rules to prevent wildfires. The boys learned that a 5 lb. black bear cub was found in the aftermath of a forest fire in the Capitan Mountains near Capitan, New Mexico in 1950. The cub was sent to the National Zoo in Washington, D.C. to become the "living symbol" for fire prevention. The boys learned to not play with matches and to always put out campfires cold to the touch.

.....
PACK PICTURE: Cub Scout Pack 548 with Smokey Bear pictured at right.



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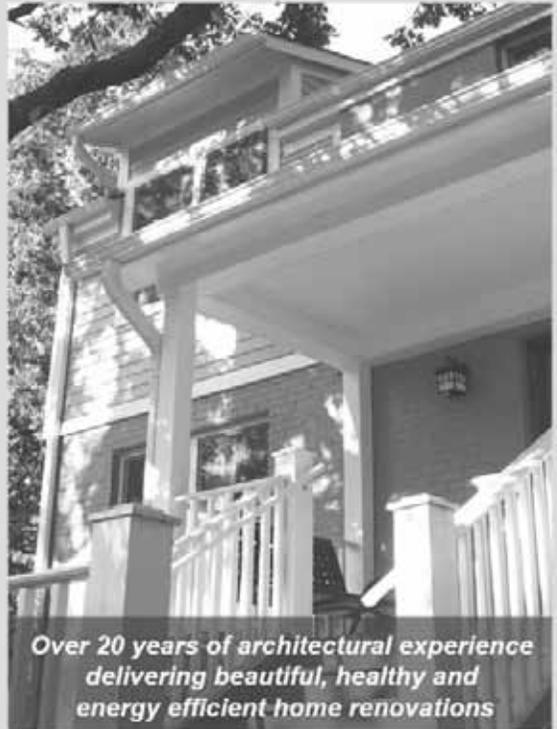


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Neighborhood Notes

by John Naland

Our family moved to Arlington Forest in 1999. Since then, we have noticed slow but steady changes in our neighborhood. For example, at first our two preschool daughters were almost the only kids on the block. I am not sure if a Barrett School bus even stopped near us back then. Over the last decade, more and more young families have moved in. Today, kids swarm the corner school bus stop.

Just as kids have grown, so too have many of our neighborhood's trees. For example, the evergreen tree in our front yard is noticeably taller than when we moved in. Conversely, two enormous Dutch elm trees in our back yard succumbed to disease and had to be removed.

Of course, there also have been architectural changes throughout Arlington Forest. Several years ago when we decided that our original front door was too cracked and weathered to last much longer, I used daily walks with my dog as a cover for checking out replacement doors throughout the neighborhood. Studying those houses highlighted to me just how individualized many have become over the decades.

Constructed primarily between 1939 and 1948 from ten base designs (varying by front entrance location, roof

design, construction materials and other factors) and initially sold for a grand total of \$5,990, most Arlington Forest houses have been modified over the years by the addition of side or rear expansions, a front porch or other renovations. But almost all retain the iconic Colonial Revival Style which helped to qualify Arlington Forest for being added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2005.

Neighbors with whom I have spoken agree that it would be a shame if we ever started seeing teardowns that replaced our neighborhood's charming Colonials with generic McMansions. The most likely perpetrator would be a developer buying an original house that had few or no modifications. But any competent builder would hopefully note the solid construction of our houses and thus undertake renovation instead of replacement.

For more information on the unique architectural aspects of our neighborhood (including a house-by-house inventory detailing features and year of construction), check out the 200-page National Park Service report that certified our neighborhood's entry in National Register of Historic Places. To see it, search "Arlington Forest Historic District" on the County website.



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Jim

Holiday Party - Dec 2, 2011



Several hundred Arlington Forest kids of all ages turned out on Dec 2 to welcome Santa to the annual AFCA Holiday Party at the Lubber Run Recreation Center (see accompanying photos). Santa rode past the lighted Christmas tree on a strobe-flashing, siren-screaming Arlington County fire truck. He then entered the rec hall where he was greeted by excited kids, camera-toting parents and other residents gathered for this neighborhood party which has taken place annually since 1946.



Santa sat on his throne hearing each child's holiday gift wishes while his helpers handed out gift bags to the children. Kids and grown-ups alike swarmed over the community goodie tables laden with holiday treats.

Forester David Mog made sure that Santa showed up on schedule. Festive holiday music was provided by Foresters Ken Schellenberg (piano) and Chris Bosch (bass). As he has for 21 of the past 25 years, Chris Scheer organized the party assisted by his wife Karen.

Special thanks go to the Lubber Run Recreation Center staff which helped to decorate the room and assisted throughout the evening. Thanks go to all those who brought treats to share and to the residents who worked behind the holiday goodies tables. Thanks also go to Captain Higgins and his crew at Fire Station 2 at Wilson and George Mason who provided the fire truck.

Fun was had by all. We hope to see you there next holiday season!

Passing of Pauline Cohen

by John Naland

Pioneer Arlington Forest merchant and resident Pauline Cohen died Nov 4 at age 95 in Culpeper. She and husband Isadore "Jack" Cohen (who died in 1998) were the first Arlington Forest Shopping Center merchants. They opened a grocery store in 1940 and converted it to Arlington Forest Delicatessen and Carry Out Shop in 1942 after the A&P Supermarket opened nearby (the location of their shop can be seen in the center of this newsletter's page 1 masthead which was drawn in 1948). Two generations of Foresters were satisfied customers for the next 42 years.

Initially prohibited from living in Arlington Forest due to the neighborhood's then-restrictive covenant prohibiting non-Christians, the Cohens eventually bought a house near the shopping center in which they lived until they closed the delicatessen and retired in 1984 after new shopping center owners tripled rents for all merchants.

Original Arlington Forest resident Ellie Eshelman (who lived here from 1941 to 1958 and now resides in Virginia Beach) recently provided this remembrance:

"I was almost four years old when my sister and I went to Jack's Deli for the first time. Mom gave each of us a penny. When I returned home and showed mom my little package of candy corn, she opened my other hand and saw that I still had the penny. (It never crossed my mind to give Jack the penny.) She told me the penny was for Jack, and sent us back to the deli. I handed Jack the penny and he received it with an easy smile. Jack's was a good place for me to return my soda bottles for a few pennies, and he never seemed to mind if I took a free look at the comic books because I usually bought a package of cupcakes before I left."

"Jack was a tall, nicely built man. He had a receding hairline and dark, wavy hair. Jack usually sat on a stool behind the register between the giant dill pickle jar and the meat case. He wore a white bib apron and always had a pencil tucked behind his ear. Sometimes his wife Pauline was there and sat on a stool beside him. Pauline was petite. She wore her long, dark hair in a hairnet and sometimes put a flower in it. She had beautiful hands and I noticed her nails were always polished."

"All sorts of exciting things were going on at the shopping center. Kids on bikes. A bus driver going for coffee at Mrs. Beasley's counter. The park workers going for lunch. Jack's screen door at the Deli opening and closing with kids buying candy and putting their roller skates back on. Jack and Pauline were always there; the shopping center's mainstay. They were an extremely kind and gentle couple."

*Next AFCA Meeting:
Jan 18th, 7 p.m. at Barrett School*



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Around the Forest

Columbus St. Safety Project: The County has started on the Columbus Street/Arlington Blvd. traffic safety project. They laid down the new median and will soon add additional signage among other safety-related upgrades.

Carlin Springs Bridge Project: The County has selected the configuration to be used in reconstructing the Carlin Springs Bridge over N. George Mason. Rejecting an option that would have removed one vehicle lane, the new design will keep the four current vehicle lanes while adding bike lanes and widening the sidewalks. To fit all that in, the bridge will be widened by four feet, the vehicle lanes will be narrowed, and the central median will be removed. The project will also add upgraded safety features including pedestrian safety lighting under and above the bridge, new approach guardrails, and improved signage. Structural upgrades will include concrete support structures repair and replacement, high-performance concrete bridge decking and new bridge railings. Work will likely begin late this year or in early 2013.

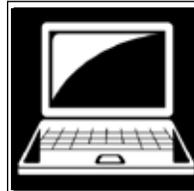
Arlington Forest Shopping Center: The Davita Medical dialysis center opened last September on a 20-year lease in the large space formerly occupied by Country Curtains (and before that by A&P Supermarket, 7-11, and then Duron Paints). Next door, Little Quiapo Restaurant closed late last year (opened 1986). It remains for lease, as does the space vacated in 2007 by Mrs. McGregor's Garden Shop (opened 1985).

Snow Watch: We have gotten off easy so far this winter, but if more than a dusting of snow eventually falls, please keep in mind the County ordinance requiring residents, businesses and churches to remove snow and ice within 24 hours after snowfall ceases (within 36 hours if snowfall exceeds 36 inches). Despite the 24-hour rule, the County urges shoveling "as soon as possible" since snow and ice left for any length of time could cause a pedestrian to fall and be injured. If you see a hazardous sidewalk that has not been cleared, you can report it via an online form so the County can investigate. You can also report streets that have not been plowed in a timely manner. Search "snow" on the County website for details. If you need help shoveling, check out Kids for Hire on page 14 for a list of energetic neighborhood students who are ready to assist.

Amphitheater: Both the County's quarterly newsletter and the end-of-year Arlington Sun Gazette listed the renovation and reopening of the Lubber Run Amphitheater as one of the top events of 2012 in Arlington County. The save the amphitheater effort was spearheaded by Arlington Forest residents and strongly supported by AFCA.

Tree Steward Program: TreeStewards of Arlington and Alexandria are volunteers dedicated to improving the health of our urban trees through educational programs, tree planting and care, demonstrations and tree maintenance throughout the community. New volunteer training will be held on Wednesday evenings, starting Feb. 8 through April 2012, with some Saturday mornings. Fun and interactive training is provided by recognized experts in tree care and citizen advocates. Learn how to care for trees on the streets, in parks, at schools, churches, temples, and your neighborhood. For more information and to complete an application, visit the TreeSteward website at www.TreeStewards.org or call 703-527-2349.

Please Drive Nice: With pedestrians, kids, pets, cyclists, and forest animals crossing our neighborhood streets, it is vital for drivers to adhere to traffic regulations by signaling turns, coming to a halt at stop signs and not speeding. Especially on hilly or curvy streets which offer a limited sight distance, keeping the speed down can mean the difference between stopping or not stopping in time when something unexpected happens.



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Southside: Douglas Sims, 119 S. Columbus St. 22204

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HOME PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

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Forest Exchange

Wanted-Pool Membership: Friends of the Gibson-Mutty family are seeking an Arlington Forest Club membership since they are moving to Bluemont this spring. If anyone is interested in selling a membership, please contact Bill Boswinkle at 571-224-2238.

Wanted-AFCA Dues: Send in your membership registration coupon along with \$10 in annual household dues today to your AFCA section VP. The dues form can be found on page 9. Thanks!

Put Your Notice Here: Send your notice by Feb 3 to newsletter@arlingtonforestva.org.

AFCA Website: AFCA's website moved last fall to www.arlingtonforestva.org. New content is being added over time, including recent back issues of this newsletter.

AFCA Listserv: Keep informed of late-breaking major neighborhood news by joining the AFCA listserv by e-mailing ArlingtonLife@gmail.com.

Kids for Hire: Need help with babysitting, snow shoveling, pet sitting, or other tasks? Check out Kids for Hire on page 14 for a list of neighborhood youths who are available to help. If you have a tween or teenager who has a service to offer, encourage them to sign up.

Community Calendar

Happy New Year!



Next AFCA Meeting: Wednesday, Jan 18, 7 PM, at Barrett School library. See page 1 for details.

Future AFCA Meetings: Feb 15 (at Culpepper Garden Senior Center), Mar 21, Apr 18, and May 16 (annual picnic).

2012 Election Dates: March 6 Republican Presidential Primary (no Democratic primary), March 27 County Special Election, June 12 State Primary, and November 6 General Election.

Neighborhood Spring Cleanup: Saturday, April 21. Join us Earth Day weekend for our second annual volunteer clean-up of public spaces around Arlington Forest.

Annual Community Yard Sale: Date in May 2012 to be determined. Turn unwanted stuff into cash.

Taste of Arlington: May 20 in front of Ballston Mall.

Lubber Run Amphitheater: Performances resume in June for a full summer of live entertainment under the stars.

Arlington County Fair: August 8-12.

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Time to Build and Play

by Rachael Tolman

Long Branch Nature Center



In recent years the term “nature-deficit disorder” (coined by Richard Louv in his book *Last Child in the Woods*) has become common in today’s youth. A recent study by the Kaiser

Family Foundation found that kids over 8 spend over 7 hours a day in front of a screen (computer, TV, smart-phone, etc)! To counter this, movements like No Child Left Inside and Children and Nature Networks have been started.

Here at the nature centers we have always loved being outside and taking you with us; fishing, birding, hiking, camping, and more. We now are taking steps to offer you more chances to be outside. Recently Long Branch Nature Center and Friends of Arlington Parks have received a Park Enhancement Grant from Arlington County for a total of \$11,539 to put in a Nature Discovery Area!

Right now there are no natural play-discovery areas in Arlington County Parks, so this will be the first. Our area will have no “play equipment” - the only furnishings will be

natural materials, rocks, wood, water, and a child's imagination. The space is there for kids to explore, create, climb, and play in natural setting without worry about harmful plants or animals or getting lost.

We are very excited about this project and look forward to your support and the projects' inception. The site is located below the nature center, steps from the stream crossing, with access from the paved trail and hiking trails. Some work has already begun in space, with old trees being cut and cleared from the site, making way for further clean-up and new features being added.

We still need some helping hands to make this a successful project. We'll need volunteers to remove unwanted plants, put play features in place, come up with a great name, spread the word, maybe start a blog, and maintain the Nature Discovery Area once completed. As you can see, there is much yet to be done. If you'd like to help in any way or be updated on our progress, please let us know. We'd love for you to be a part in creating Arlington's first natural play area!

To find out more about this project and about our ongoing programs for children and families, search “Long Branch Nature Center” on the County website.

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Barcroft School News

Happy New Year from Barcroft Elementary! Winter Break ended on January 3, and the 5th graders returned to a happy prospect. As winners of the November 2011 **Caps@School** contest, 5th grade students received **100 complimentary tickets to the January 3 hockey game** versus the Calgary Flames. Go Caps! All students will receive their **2nd Quarter Reports Cards** on **January 12**.

Other upcoming school events include **Family Academic Night** on **January 17** to focus on Reading. Please join us for the following events in January as well. Visit **Sauca Restaurant** on Columbia Pike all day and evening on **January 24** for the third month of the **"4 Days, 4 PTAs, Eat the World" fundraiser**. This event is a partnership among the PTAs of Barcroft, Clarendon, Campbell, and Randolph Elementary. When you eat-in or take-out that day, the 4 PTAs will share 15% of the receipts. The **final Sauca Eat the World fundraiser** will be on **February 21**.

On **January 27**, the school will host the first annual **European Heritage Night Celebration**. Join us that evening, and expect delicious food and exciting entertainment! On **January 30**, the **PTA's Winter After-School Enrichment Classes** will begin. The PTA has partnered with the company **Enrichment Matters**, and students will be able to take fascinating after-school classes including computer design,

art, cooking, golf, martial arts, basketball, and science.

February at Barcroft promises to be exciting as well. Many teachers have planned special activities to celebrate the **100th Day of School**. During this month, the PTA will host a **Ethiopia Reads Service Project**. The **February 7 PTA meeting** will feature a presentation from our Special Education PTA representative, and a presentation about Spring Intersession by Intersession Coordinator, Katie Madigan.

The PTA will host a **Family Fitness Skating Night** at the T.J. Community Center on **Saturday February 11**, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. February **Parent Teacher Conferences** will be held on **February 15-17**, so students will have a 5-day long weekend to celebrate Presidents' Day. To culminate its celebration of **African American History Month**, the school will once again host its famous **African American Heritage Night Celebration** on the evening of **February 24**. Please join us for these and other exciting events. To learn more about What's Happening at Barcroft, go to <http://www.apsva.us/site/default.aspx?domainid=388>.

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Barrett School News

The Barrett PTA would like to thank the Arlington Forrest Citizens Association for its generous contribution. The AFCA donation helps ensure that the PTA will continue to support wonderful programs at Barrett.

Exciting news: Barrett will receive a \$1,000 grant to help promote family engagement and student achievement through the National PTA Take Your Family to School Week (Feb 12-18). Stay tuned for more on Barrett Family Book Clubs! In addition, The Arlington Forrest Foundation awarded a \$2,320 grant to support Project Interaction's Family Involvement program to help build strong home-school partnerships. For more on Project Interaction, check out the wonderful Parent Narratives from the Cultural Heritage Festival at www.youtube.com/user/barrettpi (scroll down to Cultural Heritage Assembly Parent Narratives).

Whooping Cranes, Polar Bears and Build-A-Birds, oh-my! Please visit our website at www.apsva.us/barrett/ (click on Project Discovery) to view the blog posts from all grades to see what is happening with Project Discovery. Be sure to read the Science Blog on Barrett's webpage (www.apsva.us/Page/16040) which has recent information on science fair project ideas. Get started now! **Science Discovery Night** is just around the corner on **Feb 23**.

Family Gym Night is at **7 p.m., Friday, Jan 20**. Kids and their parents can participate in the following: Zumba by X Factor, activity stations run by Play by Play, yoga, and free play in the gym.

The staff and PTA at KW Barrett Elementary School are hosting a series of *information sessions* for the parents of **prospective kindergarten students for the 2012 school year**. Each session will include school tours, exhibits of students' work, and information on Barrett's focus in math, science, and the arts. The *information sessions* are scheduled for the following dates: Tuesday, Feb 7, 9:15 to 10:45 a.m.; Tuesday, March 6, 9:15 to 10:45 a.m.; and Thursday, April 12, 12:45 to 2:15 p.m. Parents of prospective kindergartners are also invited to attend our annual *NASA Science Discovery Night* on **Thursday, Feb 23, 6 to 8 p.m.**

UPCOMING EVENTS:

No School-Martin Luther King Day, Monday, Jan 16
Family Library Night, 7:00-8:00 p.m., Tuesday, Jan 17
Family Gym Night, 7:00-8:30 p.m., Friday, Jan 20
No School-Teacher Prep Day, Monday, Jan 23
Winter Concert, 1:45 p.m. and 7 p.m., Thursday, Jan 26
Pre-K Days, 8:20-9:30 a.m., Tuesday, Jan 31
Science Discovery Night, 6 to 8 p.m., Thursday, Feb 23

Market Update

Happy New Year! 2011 was another good year for real estate in the Metro DC area and Arlington was one of the better markets. In Arlington Forest there were 22 homes that sold and settled (per MRIS) with an average list price of \$594,520 and an average sold price of \$585,136 averaging 50 days on the market. Seller subsidies averaged \$4,750, with a high of \$15,000.

Mortgage interest rates have remained low. As of 1/6/12 the fixed rate for conventional loans is at 3.875% for Conforming loans up to \$417,000, 4% for Conforming Plus loans up to \$625,500 and 4.75% for Jumbo loans. FHA fixed rate loans are at 3.75%, loan limit of \$729,750. VA loans with 100% financing up to \$625,500 are at 3.875%.

As part of the temporary resolution over the Tax Cut Extension congress decided that mortgage borrowers should

foot part of the bill, and increased the "Guaranty Fees" that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac charge to lenders that securitize Mortgage Backed Securities with the Agencies. On 1/4/12 BB&T announced a change before their competitors do the same, and estimated the increase to roughly 0.125% in the rate. The real kicker on this is that the payroll tax extension only for 2 months and the G Fee increase is for 10 years.

A new sales contract for the Metro DC area is in effect as of 1/1/12. The new contract eliminates boilerplate mandates for property condition and walk through items. In practice this means that the seller has no obligation to repair mechanical, electrical, plumbing and appliance defects. The purchaser must request every item that is required to be repaired.

Looking for expert advice on buying, selling, refinancing or remodeling? Contact me to discuss your situation!



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Kids for Hire

These Arlington Forest youths are available for babysitting, pet sitting, snow shoveling and other services. They are listed by neighborhood, but some may prefer to work within a few blocks of home. Contact them to discuss availability and fees. Students who wish to be on this list should send their name, services and contact info to newsletter@arlingtonforestva.org.

Northside:

- Sophia Constantine, pet sitting, dog walking, cpconstantine@comcast.net, 703-841-9229
- Sophie Frank, babysitting (Red Cross certified), soccer training, tutoring, sophie.e.frank@gmail.com, 703-859-0722
- Fiona Hickey, babysitting (Red Cross certified), 703-351-7013
- Sophie Hickey, babysitting, 703-351-7013
- Isaac Mortimer-Lotke, babysitting (Red Cross certified), 703-276-9046
- Marika Mortimer-Lotke, babysitting (Red Cross certified), 703-276-9046
- Gabby Young, babysitting, mother's helper, pet sitting, dog walking, merrywesing@yahoo.com, 703-622-4229
- Chris Werbos, snow shoveling, dog walking, pet sitting, yard work (can work with power tools), chris.werbos@gmail.com

Southside:

- Caroline Rogers, pet sitting, dog walking, carolinearogers@verizon.net, 703-892-0226
- Julia Rogers, babysitting (Red Cross certified), juliaerogers23@gmail.com, 703-892-0226
- Jon Tiernan, mother's helper (Red Cross certified), dog walking, pet sitting, snow shoveling, jonny.boy4@hotmail.com, 703-979-5046
- Liz Tiernan, mother's helper (Red Cross certified), dog walking, pet sitting, lizzytiernan@hotmail.com, 703-979-5046

Greenbrier Section:

- Zephren Collinson, babysitting (references), pet sitting, dog walking, snow shoveling, tutoring, 703-528-3595
- Kate Felsenheld, pet sitting, dog walking, k.cliffhero@gmail.com, 703-276-9874
- Alex Hendel, babysitting (Red Cross certified), dog walking, tutoring, alexhendel@gmail.com, 703-763-0070
- Alice Naland, babysitting (Red Cross certified), pet sitting, dog walking, snow shoveling, nalandfamily@yahoo.com, 703-888-0125
- Lucy Naland, babysitting (Red Cross certified), pet sitting, dog walking, snow shoveling, LucyMnaland@gmail.com, 703-888-0125



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