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Trends in Economic Development

The guest speaker at the January 20 AFCA meeting at 7 pm in Barrett School library is Victor Hoskins, Director of Economic Development for Arlington County. That office works to promote business, real estate development, tourism, and arts. Mr. Hoskins will discuss trends in Arlington's economic development and then answer questions. He assumed his current position in January 2015 after more than 25 years of experience in economic development and executive leadership elsewhere in the Metro DC area.

As we start a new year, AFCA expresses gratitude for the dedicated efforts of Timothy O'Leary who recently stepped down after an unprecedented 15 years as Arlington Forest's representative on Arlington County's Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC). During his tenure, he

secured funding for the removal of invasive plants from Lubber Run Park (2006-10) and expansion of the playground near the foot of S. Park (2013-14). Taking his place is Karen Burst as primary representative and Liz Kauffman as alternate. One will attend monthly NCAC meetings over the next few years while our next project -- renovating the N. Edison playground -- climbs the queue of projects from across the County awaiting funding.

AFCA's annual dues drive ended last month. Some 295 of the 851 households in Arlington Forest paid their \$10 dues to support AFCA's efforts to enhance the quality of life in our neighborhood. Participation rates were: Southside 41%, Greenbrier Section 35%, and Northside 30%. Participation fell by 56 households from the previous year.

Update on the Lubber Run Community Center

by Michael Thomas

The next decision on the LRCC will be made by the School Board which must decide whether to accept the County's offer to place four APS pre-Kindergarten classrooms in the new community center. Building pre-K classrooms is supposed to help relieve crowding in north Arlington elementary schools. However, APS's enrollment projections show that crowding will not be a problem at Barrett Elementary for the next 10 years. This is partly because the 12-room addition that was built at Barrett in 2001 (consuming 1/3 acre of playground) and the two trailers that sit on the baseball field are considered as part of Barrett's permanent capacity.

The School Board will likely make the decision at its January 21 meeting when it adopts the framework for its next Capital Improvement Program. The Department of Parks and Recreation has said that, if there are APS classrooms at LRCC, the County will end the much-loved and oversubscribed co-op

play-school program that has been used by generations of children and parents from the surrounding communities.

The County Board faces three major decisions about the new LRCC: whether to include APS pre-K classrooms (if APS

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AFCA Meeting 7 p.m. January 20 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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AFCA Holiday Party

More than 100 Arlington Forest kids of all ages turned out on December 4 to welcome Santa to the annual AFCA Holiday Party at the Lubber Run Community Center (see photos). Santa arrived riding 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. Kids and grownups 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 for the 12th year in a row by Foresters Chris Bosch (bass) and Ken Schellenberg (keyboard). Barrett Elementary School Daisy, Brownie and Girl Scout members led singing of seasonal songs and helped Santa with the kids. As he has for more than two decades, Chris Scheer organized the party.

Special thanks go to LRCC director Marco Dillon and his staff who decorated the hall and assisted throughout the evening. Thanks go to Captain Randy Higgins at Fire Station 2 (at Wilson and George Mason) who arranged for Santa to be delivered to the party in a dramatic way. Thanks also go to all those who brought treats to share and who worked behind the holiday goodies tables. Fun was had by all. We hope to see you there next holiday season!

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LRCC Update

...continued from page 1

wants them); whether to include underground parking; and what general concept to study for the CIP.

For the last point, County staff offer a choice between a greatly expanded building and parking lot with a gym or a greatly expanded building and parking lot without a gym. Both concepts result in the loss of nearly an acre of green space. Both concepts include 19,000 square foot of administrative office space, consuming about 40 percent of the building's floor space. Without the increased office space, LRCC could be rebuilt without greatly expanding the building's footprint and without adding 60 spaces in the parking lot.

The new County Board will likely make its formal decision on what concept to pursue during its January 23 or January 26 meeting.

AFCA President Allison Kennett wrote to the County Board in December to remind them of the desires expressed by Arlington Foresters who, by an overwhelming majority, endorsed a vision statement calling for a "right-sized" community center designed to maintain existing green and "unmanufactured" outdoor recreational spaces, to preserve mature trees and wildlife habitat, and to serve as a gateway to Lubber Run Park.

Real Estate Market Update

Arlington County experienced a 2.1% year-over-year growth on average sale prices last year for all types of housing. Arlington Forest experienced another year of solid sales activity last year, with 30 properties closed in 2015 (per MRIS database). The average list price was \$702,815, average sold price was \$703,225. In 2014 the average sold price was \$672,206. Last year, the highest sale price in the neighborhood was \$865,000 and the lowest was \$490,000. The average DOM (days on market) was 21.

Mortgage Update

Last December, the Federal Open Market Committee raised its benchmark Federal Funds Rate. *What does this mean for consumers?* The Fed Funds Rate increase is not directly tied to long-term rates on consumer products, like purchase or refinances home loans. So, consumers should not expect home loan rates to rise as a direct result of the Fed's decision. Improving economic factors may influence home loan rates as The Fed's rate increase was based on signs of a strengthening economy. If the economy continues to

improve, home loan rates could move higher. Why? Because home loan rates are based on Mortgage Backed Securities, which are a type of Bond. Weak economic news normally causes money to flow out of higher risk investments like Stocks and into less risky investments like Bonds, causing Bond prices and home loan rates to improve. Strong economic news normally has the opposite result. As of this writing, stock prices have dropped and mortgage bond prices finished the week higher which helped rates improve. Current fixed rates are at 3.875% to 4%.

Great news for buyers low on cash!

Fannie Mae recently revised their 95% loan program for a primary residence from \$417,000 to \$625,500. Borrowers can now use gift money for all required down payment and closing costs (similar to FHA loans). Contact me for great reliable local lenders who offer competitive financing. My team and I can help you with all of your buying and selling needs. From first time buyers, move up buyers and sellers, to homeowners downsizing, our expertise can get you the results you are looking for!



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Nature News

by Bobbi Farley

Park Naturalist,
Long Branch
Nature Center

eyes, elusive nature, and haunting calls in the night, owls have quietly secured their place in the ecosystem and our thoughts. Yet, how the owl survives using its specialized adaptations alone would be a source of admiration.

The most obvious feature of owl survival is its ability to hunt at night while resting during the day perched high up in the trees and out of sight with feathers that mimic the texture of tree bark to the point of invisibility. During the night, owls patrol the skies using their sharp eyes to find prey such as rabbits, small mammals, frogs, fish, other birds and insects.

Hunting nocturnal prey, which have heightened senses of hearing and smell to compensate for reduced visibility, presents a challenge for predators. Owls, however, are a step ahead with their own adaptations for hunting in the night. In order to hunt ever-wary prey such as rabbits and mice, owls have soft feathers to enable silent flight for ambushing prey. They also have a specialized sense of hearing to better pinpoint the location of prey in the dark. The ears of an owl are offset; the right ear is higher to focus on sounds coming from above while the left is lower for sounds from below.

The foremost sense people associate with owls is their incredible sight. An owl's eyes are able to see far better in darkness than humans due to their reflective retina, the sheet of tissue inside the back of the eyes which collects and bounces light within the eyeball. Additionally, they have enlarged eyes to permit more light to enter. Bigger eyes, however, come at the expense of eye muscles, leaving them unable to move their eyes in their sockets. As compensation for restricted eye movement, owls have fourteen neck bones which makes it appear as though they can turn their heads completely around. In truth,

Silent Wings in the Night:

Owls have long been an animal of renown in folklore and popular culture, often representing wisdom and insight. With their piercing

they can turn their heads 270 degrees, compared to 70-80 degrees the seven neck bones provide humans.

As elusive as these birds are, they can be seen during the early evening or very early morning hours, and can also be heard hooting in the distance.

Or, to see various local owl species up close, the Long Branch Nature Center is hosting the Raptor Conservancy for their Owls of Virginia program which is a free family event being held on Sunday, January 24 from 3 to 4 pm.

Best of Arlington: For the second year in a row, readers of Arlington Magazine rated the Mathnasium in the Arlington Forest Shopping Center as offering one of the best tutoring services in the County.



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Nature News

Snow Watch: Arlington County announced in December that they plan to increase enforcement of the five year old ordinance that requires residents to clear snow and ice from sidewalks 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. Moreover, freshly fallen snow is much easier to remove than snow that has been compacted into ice by foot traffic. Residents unable to shovel due to ill-health, travel, or other reasons should coordinate for someone else to do the work. A low-cost option is to utilize "Kids for Hire" on page 10 of this newsletter for a list of energetic youths who stand ready to assist.

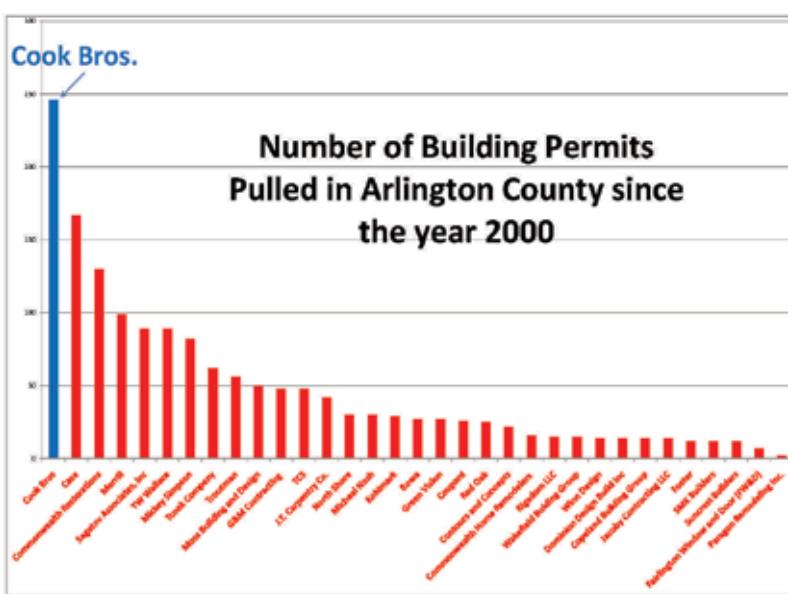
Ice Melt: Speaking of clearing sidewalks for the safety of your neighbors: a recent issue of Consumer Reports notes that traditional rock salt (sodium chloride) can harm pets, plants, and concrete. Slightly more expensive options do not; including ice melt made of calcium chloride or calcium magnesium acetate (CMA). Please consider the environment and pets the next time you purchase ice melt.

Oh Deer: A handsome male deer was struck by a vehicle near N. Granada and Arlington Blvd before dawn on Christmas Eve. He made it down the trailhead at the foot of N. Greenbrier before dying. Animal Control came and removed his body. For your own safety and for the safety of our forest friends, please drive extra cautiously near parkland during hours of darkness.

TreeStewards Training: Do you want to protect and promote our urban tree canopy? Then become a volunteer TreeSteward. The next TreeStewards of Arlington and Alexandria volunteer training will start on February 2 at the Fairlington Community Center. Apply now at [www.treestewards.org](http://treestewards.org). Class is limited to 25 participants, and preference will be given to those who have a desire to serve the community with a commitment to volunteer service. The TreeStewards make a difference in the health of our urban tree canopy. Through classroom training and hands-on practice, TreeStewards learn the basics of tree biology and physiology, tree identification, planting and maintenance techniques, construction impacts on trees, pruning and selecting the right tree for the right spot.

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Forest Exchange

Forester Eric Lotke at the Library: Author Eric Lotke will present his novel, Making Manna, at Arlington's Central Library on Thursday, January 28 at 7 pm. Making Manna is a classic American tale, uplifting and enjoyable (with a social commentary between the lines). Critics have called Making Manna "A beautiful book" and "More than a good story." Eric and his family have lived in Arlington Forest for 19 years - and he will happily attend your book group. More is at www.making-manna.com.

Family Activities at St. John's Church: Family Game Night, Saturday, January 23, 7-9 pm - Free. Bring a board, strategy or kid's game that you would like to play with friends and neighbors. Hot chocolate and popcorn served. You can bring a non-perishable food item to donate to the Arlington Food Assistance Center. Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, Tuesday, February 9, 6-7:30 pm. The dinner, on the day before Lent starts, features the traditional pancakes, ham, and applesauce. Prices are: \$5 for adults and \$3 for children aged 6-12. St John's Episcopal Church is located at 415 S. Lexington, 1 block east of Carlin Springs Road. For more information, check the website www.stjohnsarlingtonva.org.



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Community Calendar

Next AFCA Meeting: Wednesday, January 20, 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:

February 17: County Board Member
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. Congratulations to Barcroft Elementary and its teachers and students for the recent #14 ranking by Niche.com in 2016's Best Public Elementary Schools in Virginia. Barcroft Elementary is in excellent company as 19 of the 20 most highly-ranked schools in the state are from the APS district. Congratulations to our teachers as well for a #11 ranking in the 2016 Elementary Schools with the Best Teachers in Virginia designation. For more information, go to <https://k12.niche.com/rankings/public-elementary-schools/best-overall/s/virginia/>.

December was exciting for the Barcroft community. The Winter Concert was held on December 8 with musical performances by the 4th/5th Grade Chorus. On December 12, over 200 runners joined together with the community on a sultry Saturday morning to run the first ever 5K Snowball Stride. Runners started from Barcroft Elementary and completed the certified 5K race on the W&OD Trail. Elves, Santas, Reindeer, and Pajama-clad runners finished the course with cheers from the crowd. The PTA raised over \$2500 for students!

The Second Quarter Leonardo Learning Night Celebration was held on December 16. Students demonstrated 2Q learning to family members. Also featured was a musical

celebration by 5th Grade singers in the Lobby, a "Dancing with the Stars" dance demo in the gym, and crab soccer. Students and faculty came together again during the monthly School Wide Morning meeting on December 17. Congratulations to Ms. Kristin Shymoniak and Mr. Cesar Celis, who were voted as Barcroft Elementary's nominees for the APS Teacher and Support Employee of the Year awards. Winter Break began on December 21, and the first day of school in 2016 was January 5.

Events in January include a clothing collection drive through Tuesday, January 19. The PTA earns money when you donate your gently-used family clothing. The PTA held its monthly meeting on January 12. On January 13 the school enjoyed an afternoon Humanities assembly, an Acapella Group presentation. Beginning January 19, third grade students will spend their mornings at the Wakefield pool for a week attending swimming lessons. Second quarter report cards will be sent home on January 20. On Thursday, January 21 will be Barcroft Night at Panera Bread (Bailey's Crossroads) from 4 - 8 p.m. We hope that you can join us!

To learn more about What's Happening at Barcroft Elementary, contact our PTA President Tara McCabe at tcsm04@gmail.com.



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you would like to meet with me to see your home and give you some ideas on how to prepare it, please call me for a free, no obligation consultation . With the inventory low, it is an ideal time to sell your home. I look forward to meeting with you.

Jim

Barrett School News

The Barrett Elementary family came back ready to take on 2016 with a full plate of learning and fun. The coming weeks will bring the Winter Concert for the chorus, band and orchestra with two performances on January 21. There is a matinee at 1:30 pm and an evening performance starting at 7:00 pm for the night owls out there.

February will start with a day off for students since the 1st is a Teacher Work Day. But after the long weekend students will begin marking African-American History month with visits from Roving Readers as well as projects integrating African-American accomplishments, contributions and struggles into their classwork.

February also brings class pictures on the 8th and our Family Dance Party on the 19th. Remember, there is also no school on Monday, February 15 as we celebrate Presidents' Day.

You can follow some of the exciting learning happening at Barrett by following #kwbpride on Twitter!

Upcoming Events:

- **Winter Concert**, January 21
- **Class Pictures**, February 8th
- **No School**, February 15th
- **Family Dance Party**, February 19th

Kenmore Play: The Kenmore Middle School Act II Theater program is proud to present "The Lion King, Jr," featuring many of your Arlington Forest friends and neighbors. The performances are Thursday and Friday, January 21 and 22 at 7 pm at Kenmore. No tickets are required, but donations are encouraged and accepted, with the proceeds benefiting the Theater Department to help defray the cost of this and future productions. Your whole family will enjoy this wonderful Kenmore production. Come see "The Lion King"!



"Whale shark!" Students use new google cardboard viewers to try virtual reality in the library at KW Barrett Elementary. (Photo credit: Margaret Frick)



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- Julia Rogers: babysitting (RC certified), yard work, juliaerogers23@gmail.com, 703-892-0226
- Jon Tiernan: babysitting (RC certified, references), pet sitting, jontiernan16@gmail.com
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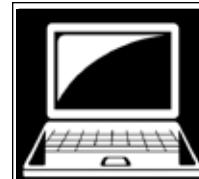
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- Mary Corina: babysitting (RC certified), dog walking, pet sitting, leaf raking, snow shoveling, tutoring, 703-248-8885
- Allison Ferrell: babysitting (RC certified), pet sitting, Allisonrocket@aol.com, 703-276-2840
- Ethan Hall: babysitting (RC certified), snow shoveling, leaf raking, pet sitting, dog walking, k.hall.b@verizon.net, 302-650-4428
- Jack Holt: babysitting (RC certified), yard work, snow shoveling, leaf raking, watering plants, tutoring, jackloginname@gmail.com, 703-465-0580

- Bridget Holt: babysitting (RC certified), dog walking, pet sitting, 703-465-0580
- Anthony Lawson: pet sitting, dog walking, 703-933-8880

Northside:

- Laura Brancati: babysitting (RC certified), dog walking, pet sitting, laura@barms.org, 703-243-1916.
- Daniel Brancati: yard work, leaf raking, snow shoveling, car washing (in your driveway), daniel@barms.org, 703-243-1916
- 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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- 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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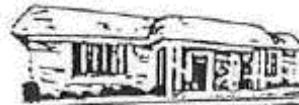
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