

The Arlington Forester

Vol. 67, Number 5

Arlington, Virginia

February 2026

Virtual AFCA Meeting—Lubber Run Park Issues

AFCA invites you to join our monthly Zoom meeting on Wednesday, February 4, at 7 p.m. A local gardening expert will give us tips on where to obtain plants that are native to our area and how to plant them.

To join the meeting through Zoom, enter the following URL into your browser between 6:45 and 7 p.m. on Wednesday, January 21: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86776565835>.

Alternatively, you can dial in to the meeting at 301-715-8592, where you will be prompted to enter meeting number 867 7656 5835 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 6:45 p.m.

AFCA January 2026 Meeting By Char Mahoney, AFCA Corresponding Secretary

AFCA President Sal D'Itri kicked off the February neighborhood meeting on Zoom by announcing that Arlington Forest won first place in the Arlington County GetGreen competition. Sal will coordinate with the county to receive a neighborhood award in about 2 weeks. The GetGreen award and related photos will be passed to AFCA Historian Todd Burns for recordkeeping.

Sal reminded folks about the Arlington Forest Cake and Coffee Social scheduled for Saturday, 2-4 p.m., at the Lubber Run Community Center. About 40 neighbors are signed up to attend. The county plans to keep the facility open for this event unless forced to close it due to snow/icy weather. Sal noted that Arlington County's Deer Management Program has a sharpshooting component that will commence in early February for 2 days from 4 to 10 p.m. Affected areas will be in Glencarlyn, Bon Air, and Barcroft Parks. Police will cordon off the areas before sharpshooting occurs. Sal also noted that a committee is organizing the traditional Arlington Forest Home and Garden Tour scheduled for May 9. Sal added that the next AFCA meeting will focus on spring gardening and native plants, potentially featuring a speaker from Nature by Design. He is also working with Phoenix Bikes owner and Arlington Forest resident Tom Shannon to organize a neighborhood bicycle ride this spring.

Eric Lotke, one of Arlington Forest's representatives to the Arlington County Civic Federation

(CivFed), summarized a recent CivFed meeting. In the meeting, Jacqueline Snelling discussed the county's Comprehensive Plan, noting that the county is in the drafting-and-sharing phase of its 5-year plan update. Eric reported on the county's progress in studying potential changes to the structure of the county government, such as expanding the number of board members, changing the length of service for the county board chair, and moving from at-large voting for board members to voting by district. Fact-finding started in 2025, and no proposals have yet been made. Other topics discussed at the CivFed meeting include the county budget, which faces significant revenue shortfalls and increased expenses. The county is seeking public feedback by January 30 on how to balance its budget for fiscal year 2027, which starts on July 1. During the meeting, the Arlington County police and sheriff reaffirmed that they do not participate in federal immigration (ICE) enforcement.

...continued on page 2

Contents

Jan. AFCA meeting	2	Community mini-grants	6
Valentine's Day	3	Barrett news	7
Garden Design	4	Newsbits	8
Lubber Run after 1700	5	Kids for hire	10

AFCA Virtual Meeting 7 p.m. **February 4** Through Zoom

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The Arlington Forester is the official publication of the Arlington Forest Citizens Association, Arlington, VA. A nonpartisan, nonsectarian publication serving the residents of Arlington Forest, the *Forester* welcomes articles and photos focusing on issues specific to our neighborhood. We publish monthly from September to November and January to May. The deadline for submissions is the first of the month. Email your submission of up to 400 words—preferably with a photo—to newsletter@arlingtonforestva.org. Articles on controversial issues are welcome but do not necessarily reflect the views of AFCA and will be marked as opinion.

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AFCA January Meeting

...continued from page 1

Forester Bev Johnston provided an update on the county's traffic and pedestrian safety improvements on N. Carlin Springs Rd. Recent improvements include adding dedicated lanes and a bike lane area from N. Abingdon St. to N. Edison St. Under the county's Vision Zero initiative, a pilot program focused on speed management will start after street painting in March/April. The county will install rumble strips and speed markers between Rt. 50 and Ballston. Bev noted that a transportation study for the Carlin Springs corridor, needed to secure bond funding for major changes, has been delayed until a new countywide transportation plan is completed.

Art Schwartz now represents Arlington Forest on the county's Arlington Neighborhoods Advisory Committee (ARNAC), and he attended its meeting on January 15 at the Lubber Run Community Center. ARNAC's main purpose is to identify and propose neighborhood improvement projects, such as renovation of Edison Park playground a few years ago. The next project review period is in May, and neighborhoods are encouraged to submit two proposals for consideration, with costs ranging from \$100,000 to \$1.2 million. On January 29, Art will attend an orientation meeting and will share what he learns about project proposals submitted by other neighborhoods. Liz Grossman, AFCA vice president for Northside, offered to share a list of projects previously approved by the county to help spark ideas.

Art Schwartz and Marsha Lederman proposed that AFCA consider funding a Stumbling Stone—a permanent bronze sidewalk marker memorializing enslaved persons who lived, worked, and died in Arlington Forest. Historical maps indicate that at least three farms with documented enslaved persons overlapped with our neighborhood's boundaries.

To increase attendance, members suggested that AFCA post meeting reminders to the "Arlington Forest Families" listserv a week before, a day before, and the morning of each meeting.

Repair

Posts



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Valentine's Day in Arlington Forest: A Tradition of Connection

By Todd Burns, AFCA Historian

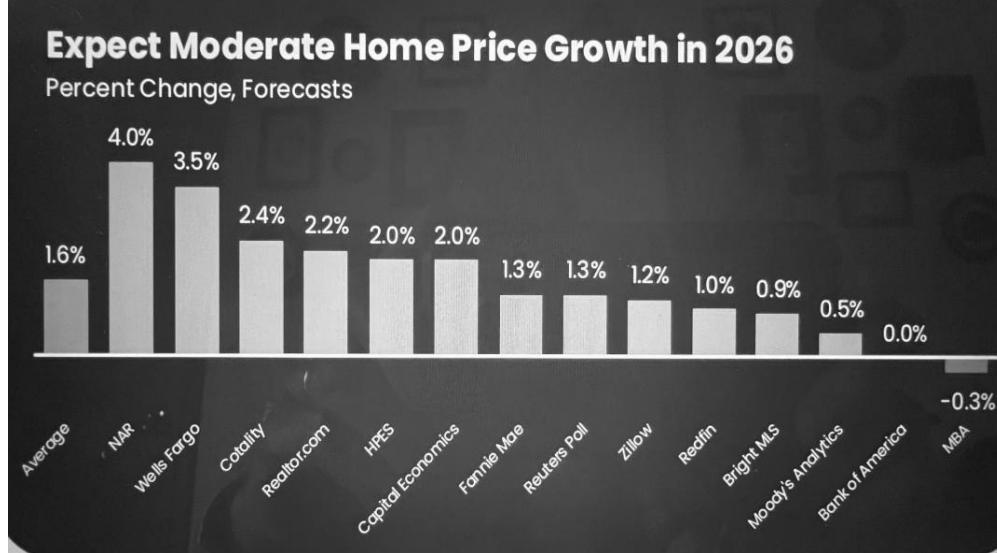
Valentine's Day traces its origins to ancient Rome, where mid-February was marked by festivals celebrating fertility, renewal, and the coming of spring. One such festival, Lupercalia, was observed with rituals meant to bring good fortune and strengthen social bonds. As Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire, these pagan traditions gradually gave way to new observances. By the late 3rd century, the story of St. Valentine emerged—likely drawing from more than one historical figure—who was said to have performed acts of compassion and, according to legend, secretly married couples in defiance of imperial orders. By the Middle Ages, Valentine's Day had become associated with romantic affection, especially in England and France, where it was believed that birds began pairing in mid-February. The exchange of handwritten love notes followed, and by the 18th and 19th centuries, printed Valentine cards made the holiday a widely shared tradition centered on expressing care, appreciation, and connection.

That spirit of connection feels especially fitting in Arlington Forest. Built in the early 1940s, our

neighborhood was designed to foster community, with sidewalks, porches, wide roads, and shared green spaces that invite neighbors to know one another. Just as Valentine's Day reminds us to pause and express appreciation, Arlington Forest has long thrived on small, everyday gestures—waving during an evening walk, sharing learned experiences and free items on our neighborhood list-serve, and picking up left-behind trash.

As February brings a bit more daylight and hints of spring, Valentine's Day offers a timely reminder of what makes Arlington Forest special: the relationships that turn a collection of houses into a true neighborhood. Whether it's a kind note to a neighbor, a shared cup of coffee, or simply a smile on a winter walk, these simple acts of goodwill carry forward both a centuries-old tradition and the enduring character of our community. Take a moment to reflect on what makes our Arlington Forest so special, and consider doing something small to add to our neighborhood.

National projections show home prices rising about 1.6% this year, with some communities experiencing even stronger appreciation. In Arlington County, single-family homes are expected to see a 3.8% increase from 2025 to 2026. Northern Virginia continues to show notable resilience, driven by steady demand for homeownership—an investment that remains strong over the long term. If the next chapter is on your mind, just reach out whenever you want to chat.



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Restoring Nature: Step 1—Design a Layered Landscape

The article is slightly edited from a piece by Joan McIntyre, Elaine Mills, and Leslie Cameron, Extension Master Gardeners, Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia (MGNV).

Having a vision is an important step for transforming your yard into a natural and productive landscape. The first action item in MGNV's Restoring Nature series focuses on designing a layered landscape filled with native plants. Layers of trees, shrubs, perennial plants, grasses, sedges, and ground cover plants create abundant habitat, which supports pollinators and other wildlife with shelter, nesting sites, and food. Layered landscapes also conserve water resources, manage stormwater, restore soil health, store more atmospheric carbon, and reduce maintenance over time. To get started:

1. Create a sketch of the existing landscape (or use the property plat) to map existing plantings and identify gaps where woody trees and shrubs and perennial plant and ground cover plants can be added to create more layers.
2. Set a few tasks at a time to keep efforts more manageable and within budget.
3. Start with a limited number of plant species and plant densely.
4. As part of early planning, check with Arlington County and Alexandria City, which offer funding or stormwater utility fee credits to property owners for native plant landscaping that better manages stormwater.



5. For those with small yards or living in apartments, add those layers that fit your space: a few small shrubs, a pollinator garden, or even a few containers with native plants for deck, patio, or balcony.

For more tips and resources on how to add layers to your landscape, including for those with modest garden space such as decks, patios, balconies, visit Restoring Nature Action 1: Design a Layered Landscape.

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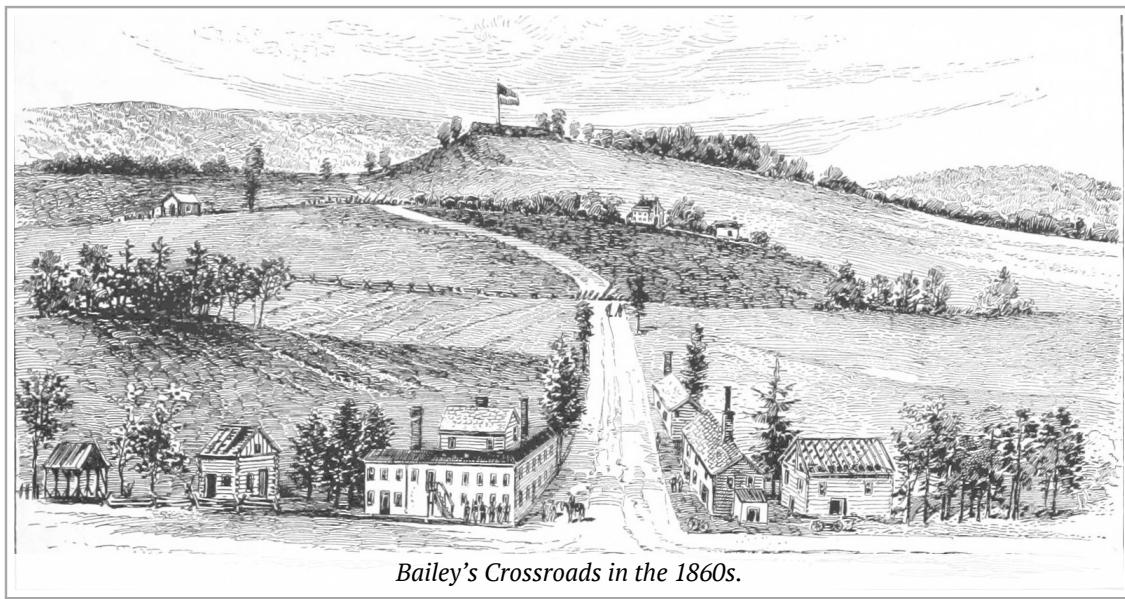


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Erosion Chronicles: Lubber Run After 1700

By Hutch Brown



Bailey's Crossroads in the 1860s.

By the 1700s, beavers and American Indians were largely gone, and our area was being cleared for upland farming by European immigrants and enslaved Africans. A 1760 map shows Arlington divided among large landowners like John Colville, who owned much of the Lubber Run watershed. Farmhouses remaining in Arlington Forest today include the Mary Carlin House (built in about 1800); the Charles Mix House (dating to the 1820s-40s); and the Ann Carlin Cottage (erected in about 1850). In the upper Lubber Run watershed, the Halls Hill plantation, run by enslaved labor, was established in 1850 on 327 acres; enslaved labor was also used on a 592-acre property around Arlington's Glebe House. Large plantations applied intensive farming methods that eroded and gullied the soils, and tobacco—the main cash crop—soon exhausted Piedmont soils. Farmers ditched, moved, and straightened streams, and so much cattle grazed near Lubber Run that it was dubbed Cow Run on an 1865 map. Civil War forts and camps cut nearby trees for firewood and fields of fire. All this contributed to deforestation, soil erosion, streambed siltation, and degraded habitats for fish and wildlife.

Steep slopes in our area were largely left alone. Much of Glencarlyn Park has never been logged, and Lubber Run Park has trees more than a century old. But people dammed streams to mill the grains that farmers grew, building millponds along Four Mile Run and its tributaries. Farmers needed roads to carry their crops to market, and an 1861 map shows Balls Crossroads (now Ballston) with intersecting farm roads. The map also shows the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad (now the W&OD Trail) along Four Mile Run; a landowner used the railroad to open a resort in 1872 near the Carlin Springs, still flowing at the time. For the next 20 years, visitors came by train from Alexandria and Washington, DC,

partly to wander up Lubber Run and enjoy the scenery. In about 1925, a part-owner of the Henderson property (which later became Arlington Forest) dammed Lubber Run to pool water for horticulture.

In the agricultural landscapes after 1700, the Lubber Run stream system was still largely intact but had artificial dams, streambed engineering, streambanks trampled by livestock, and cropland erosion and downstream siltation from stormwater runoff. Soils that washed from deforested uplands, known as legacy soils, buried floodplains across our area and collected at the bottom of millponds. Where Lubber Run emerges from underground in Woodlawn Park, you can still see legacy soils several feet deep over a dark wetland soil exposed in the eroded streambank. By 1900, native trout were gone and water tables were falling due to widespread deforestation and rising levels of stormwater runoff. In what is now Lubber Run Park, forest disturbance was minimal, and the park probably looked much like it did before European settlement, but with growing signs of erosion and soil deposition.

Piano Tuning

Steve Offutt

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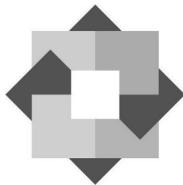
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PTA Update— Barrett Middle School

Save the Date! Upcoming Family Events at Barrett:

Family Dance
Friday, February 20
6:30-8:15 p.m.



Family Science Night
Thursday, March 5
5:30-7:30 p.m.

Bingo Night
Friday, April 10
6:30-8:15 p.m.

Watch for details on each event as the date gets closer. We look forward to celebrating learning, community, and fun with our Barrett families!

2026 Arlington Forest Home and Garden Tour



On Saturday, May 9, Arlington Forest will celebrate the return of a beloved spring tradition, the Home and Garden Tour. The tour will showcase examples of our neighbors' creativity and imagination in customizing Arlington Forest's brick homes to their own needs

and in creating colorful gardens. If you have completed a recent renovation, done some creative interior decorating/organizing in an original house, or just want to show off your garden, please contact Katherine Roberts, Arlington Forest Home and Garden Tour Chair, at kentkatroberts@verizon.net.



Paul Cachion, MBA

571-216-6802

CachionHomes@gmail.com

Looking to Downsize?

I often have clients asking me to sell their single-family homes, so they can downsize, take care of less, and still be nearby.

In that vein, we have a spectacular condo coming on the market in one of Arlington's premier buildings, Key & Nash, in Rosslyn. A spacious 2BR, 2 bath, with an office, the building has a beautiful rooftop lounge area, and a tranquil courtyard for parties. A walker's paradise, the home is less than 200 yards from Metro, and close to restaurants and nightlife.



If you have any interest in a home for your next stage of life, please feel free to get in touch.



Forester Competes in World Ultramarathon Challenge



Michael Wardian, a 51-year-old Arlington Forest resident who ran across the entire country from coast to coast in 2022, has already competed in the World Marathon Challenge twice before, running a full marathon every single day in a different part of the world. Beginning on January 31, he was back in action with an even loftier goal—seeking to beat the world record for the even longer 50K option. Seven days of ultramarathons, one on each continent and each a bit over 31 miles long, began for Mike at the Ultima Base in Antarctica.

Being Winter Salt Smart

Shovel snow before it turns to ice and consider using sand instead of salt, which washes into streams, harming aquatic plants and animals. Consider using deicers containing calcium magnesium acetate instead of sodium chloride, and spread it lightly and evenly. A 12-ounce coffee mug is usually enough for a 20-foot driveway or 10 sidewalk squares. After ice melts, sweep up the deicer for reuse.



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Animal Control Captures Rabid Raccoon

In late December, an Arlington Forest neighbor circulated a photo of a sign posted by Arlington County Animal Control in Lubber Park about a “clinically rabid” raccoon caught in the area. The incident was not reported in the news, but Animal Control confirmed by email that the sign was theirs, saying that a “single animal was removed on December 18th” but that “we have had no further concerns or issues since.”

Arlington Forest Wins First Place

Arlington Forest won first place in Arlington's GetGreen Greenest Neighborhood Contest for 2025. The GetGreen program works through an app tailored to help neighborhoods reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build ecologically sustainable communities. Using the GetGreen app, neighbors made improvements around their homes and properties. According to Arlington's Climate Policy Office, “We were truly impressed by Arlington Forest's commitment to sustainability and the thoughtful efforts your neighborhood has made to advance environmental stewardship.” You can get the GetGreen app online through the County Climate Policy Office.

Arlington Considers New Limits on Impervious Surfaces

Arlington County has launched a Low Residential Development Study of potential new limits on porches, patios, and other impervious surfaces on residential lots. Single-family homes cover 70% of Arlington's private land, and zoning restrictions have not kept suburban lots from expanding the area of impervious surfaces, which already cover more than 40% of Arlington. To help meet county goals for tree cover and stormwater management, the study will explore the feasibility of new restrictions on impervious surfaces. Find out more at Arlington Low Residential Development Study.

Faces of the Forest: Tell Us About Someone You Know!

Faces of the Forest offers a glimpse into the lives of your neighbors—people you may pass by on the street, see at the bus stop, or quickly greet as you go about your busy day but never have had the opportunity to get to know on a deeper level. There is so much magic happening in the Forest, and this occasional article highlights the fascinating individuals who comprise the lovely community we are fortunate to call home. Send your write-up of about 400-600 words with a photo (if possible) to newsletter@arlingtonforestva.org. Questions? Send an email or call editor Hutch Brown at 703-855-1732.

Community Calendar

Next AFCA meeting: Wednesday, February 4, 7 p.m.

Annual AFCA Picnic: Wednesday, May 6

Arlington Forest Home and Garden Tour: Saturday, May 9

Annual Yard Sale: A Saturday in May

Summer Turnaround Day: July 11

Fall Turnaround Day: November 7

AFCA Meetings

February 4, 2026: Spring gardening with native plants

March 4, 2026: Pest control issues (rats, wasps, mosquitoes, etc.)

April 1, 2026: *To be determined*

May 6, 2026: Neighborhood picnic

Deer Sharpshooting to Begin in Local Parks



An overabundant deer population is threatening the health of Arlington's forests by stripping away young plants. In response, Arlington County will begin managing its deer population in February 2026 through professional sharpshooting in select natural parks, including Barcroft and Glencarlyn (but not Lubber Run) Parks. Sharpshooting will be from tree stands at night with sound suppressors using lead-free ammunition. Affected areas will be sealed off by police, and the harvested venison will go to food banks. Professional sharpshooting has long been successful in neighboring jurisdictions, with no reported injuries.

Being Flood Aware—

Turn Around, Don't Drown!

Winter and spring rains are likely to bring occasional flooding to low spots on roads. Six inches of water will reach the bottom of most cars, causing loss of control and possible stalling. A foot of water will float many vehicles. Two feet of rushing water can carry away most vehicles, including SUVs and pickups.



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arlingtonforestva.org](mailto:newsletter@arlingtonforestva.org)

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