



Over the Fence

News for Neighbors from the Arlington Heights Civic Association Fall 2008 Edition

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fall is here, and we are enjoying a lovely season so far. I want to take this moment to thank our many volunteers. We continue to enjoy civic association sponsored events, like our upcoming Halloween Parade & Party on October 26, 4-6 p.m., and make small, but meaningful, improvements at TJ Park thanks to a committed group of volunteers. Please do not hesitate to volunteer, neighbors -- we can accomplish a lot through persistence!

Major capital projects in the neighborhood, aside from those funded by the county's Neighborhood Conservation Program (see "Neighborhood Improvements" section), seem to be off the table for the time being. Due to lack of funding, there is no plan for major capital projects at the **Career Center** or **Thomas Jefferson Middle School**. The civic association continues to seek community friendly planning for both sites. The School Board has allocated limited funds to address pressing maintenance needs at both locations. The evening **High School Continuation Program** has been relocated from Arlington Mill to the Career Center. The Day Program, however, was relocated to a NOVA-owned building on N. Glebe Rd., a relief to many who are concerned about lack of parking. In the meantime, the School Board continues to pursue plans to rebuild **Wakefield High School**.

Two specific issues require focused attention now. The **TJ playground** is no longer just old, but some equipment is now failing. Separately, on September 16, 2008, the County Board formally commenced the Columbia Pike Land Use & **Housing Initiative**, a planning piece of the 2005 Columbia Pike Revitalization Plan. A County Board resolution authorizes the County Manager to establish a Plenary Group of representatives from neighborhoods, advisory commissions, CPRO, major property owners and developers, and housing and tenant advocacy groups. The Plenary Group would assist county staff to identify issues and make recommendations. The process of establishing a housing plan for the Pike is likely to be long and elaborate, but like all major planning initiatives on the Pike, it should be closely watched.

Please save the date for the **Halloween Parade & Party, Sunday, October 26, from 4-6 p.m.**, 400 block S. Garfield St. (cul de sac) (rain date: Nov. 1, 4-6). In addition to the parade and membership drive raffle, we plan to have a "Spooky Tent." We encourage *all* neighbors, adults, children, and friendly pets to get festive and come dressed for the Parade. **Volunteers are needed** to help plan and lead activities, and to bring baked goods. If you are interested in volunteering for this event, please contact RJ Thacher directly at rj.thacher@verizon.net.

Lastly, come to our **Fall AHCA meeting on Tuesday, October 21, at 7 p.m.** at Patrick Henry Elementary School Library. EXPECTED AGENDA ITEMS: Columbia Pike Housing Study; Possible 4-Way Stop at S. Irving and 2nd St. South; Establish Association Dues; Vote Priority for NC projects. As part of our **Meet the Neighbors** series, we will welcome Deborah Greenbush of the **Easter Seals Walter Reed Adult Day Services**, who will describe and answer questions about the adult care program at the Walter Reed Community Center.

See you around the neighborhood,

Juliet Hiznay

Neighborhood Improvement Projects

Neighborhood Conservation

The neighborhood is on the cusp of seeing its first major street improvement in several years. The 100% design meeting for S. Garfield St. (Arlington Blvd. to 2nd St. S.) will be held this fall, with construction expected in Spring 2009. The S. Fenwick St. project (Arlington Blvd. to 2nd St. South) has been successfully re-petitioned, with 21 out of 27 homes responding, and 19 voting yes. Fenwick St. is likely to be funded at the Fall Funding Round (December) meeting of the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee.

TJ Park

Thomas Jefferson Middle School students can now be seen playing on the upper grass field, which got new sod and a new irrigation system this year. The running trail paving was completed, solving many drainage problems, and access issues. I have seen so many more of our residents enjoying the trail, especially children on bicycles. The basketball and tennis courts have also been resurfaced. Work continues to improve the park area along S. Irving St. Park personnel have adding organic matter to establish more topsoil before planting additional understory shrubs and trees. Our volunteers continue to plant, weed, and water the flowerbeds – thank you!

Jackson St. Pedestrian Bridge

The pedestrian bridge project is now well under way, with many visible improvements. The existing structure has been sandblasted and painted. Still to come is roofing and lighting. Additional lane closures should be expected. The contractor for this project encountered some difficulties over the summer. This was due to a subcontractor that did not carry out expected work. Finding a new subcontractor for the work delayed the project. However, the project is moving forward on a revised schedule, with completion slated for October 2008. Updates are available at <http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/EnvironmentalServices/cpe/page63231.aspx>.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

AHCA Fall Meeting, Tuesday, October 21, 7 p.m., Patrick Henry Elementary School Library

Patrick Henry PTA Yard Sale, Saturday, October 25, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Halloween Parade & Party, Sunday, October 26, 4-6 p.m., 400 block S. Garfield (*cul de sac*)

*RAIN DATE is November 1, 4-6 p.m.

AHCA Annual Meeting, Tuesday, January 27, 2009, 7 p.m. -- Patrick Henry Elementary School Library

Community Night at the Drafthouse (tentative), Wednesday, March 25, 5 p.m. – Cinema-N-Drafthouse

SUPPORT YOUR CIVIC ASSOCIATION – JOIN AHCA

Please fill out this form and send it to AHCA, c/o Jason Torchinsky, Treasurer
3109 S 7th St., Arlington VA 22204

First & Last Names: _____

Children's Names: _____
(or Business Name)

Home Address _____ Arlington, VA 22204

Home Phone _____ E-mail address _____

Attached is a check for \$20.00 for a 2008 family membership
 Attached is a check for \$25.00 a 2008 business membership
 Attached is an additional donation of [\$ _____]
(donations are not tax-deductible)

I would like to be involved by:

Becoming an officer or serving on a committee
 Distributing the newsletter or other announcements
 Contributing articles for the newsletter
 Volunteering for Events

County Approved Zoning Changes

On July 19, 2008, the County Board amended the Zoning Ordinance to approve **Accessory Dwelling** units for single-family detached homes *only*, and under limited circumstances. For example, the homeowner must live in the main dwelling, the accessory dwelling must be within the main house and is limited to two persons. Further details are available at <http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/CPHD/housing/pdf/page65473.pdf>.

Volunteer Opportunities

History Buff?

Did you know that Arlington Heights is one of the few neighborhoods in Arlington County that has not done a neighborhood history project with the Arlington Historical Society? If you are interested in organizing such a project, it could become one of the civic association goals for 2009. Contact Juliet Hiznay at 703-685-2596 or strangefruitblues@yahoo.com.

Newsletter

This newsletter is an important part of how we get news out to the neighborhood. If you are a **high school student** interested in pursuing writing or journalism, we could use your help with the newsletter. Tasks include updating sections of the newsletter, collecting information for community news, and drafting news items to be included in the newsletter. Your parent or guardian must provide consent for this volunteer position. Please contact Juliet Hiznay at 703-685-2596 or strangefruitblues@yahoo.com.

Gardening

We can always use more volunteers for gardening projects. Are you interested in helping by donating plants, planting, weeding or watering? Contact Juliet Hiznay at 703-685-2596 or strangefruitblues@yahoo.com.



FREE Special Reports From Realtors Mike and Claudia Webb:

Mike & Claudia are now offering their special reports that are a vital reading for anyone selling or buying a home now or in the near future.

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- 1. 29 Essential Tips That Get Homes Sold Fast (And For Top Dollar).**
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Mike and Claudia Webb
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Arlington Heights Civic Association – 2008 Officers

President: Juliet Hiznay, 703-685-2596, strangefruitblues@yahoo.com
First Vice-President: Martin Chadzynski, 703-979-2768, mchadzynski@yahoo.com
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Yahoo Group Moderator: Jay Jacob Wind, (703) 920-5193, jay.wind@att.net
Advertising Manager (Newsletter & Web): Jay Jacob Wind, (703) 920-5193, jay.wind@att.net

Recent Legislation offers a tax credit for First Time Buyers

If you are a first time home buyer (classified as individuals who haven't owned a home in the last three years), and it is your primary residence, you are eligible for a federal tax credit of \$7,500 or 10 percent of the purchase price, whichever is smaller. With a tax credit, you subtract the credit amount from the total you would otherwise pay to the Internal Revenue Service. If you owe \$1,500 and you qualify for the credit, you would get a \$6,000 refund. There are two big catches, though. If you earn a modified adjusted gross income of more than \$75,000, or \$150,000 if you are married and filing your tax return jointly, the credit starts to phase out. For single people, it phases out completely at \$95,000 of annual income, while for married people filing jointly, it phases out at \$170,000. But you have to **pay back** the credit over the next 15 years, in equal amounts each year when you pay your federal taxes. That makes this more like an interest-free loan than a true credit.

Redefinition of Jumbo Loans

Under the new housing bill, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have permanent authority to buy bigger loans in areas with high housing costs. (Temporary measures allow them to buy bigger loans, but those expire on 12/31/08). They can buy loans up to 115 percent of the local median home price, though they cannot buy any loans larger than **\$625,500**. Any larger loan will generally be a Jumbo loan, which will have a higher interest rate. Loans up to **\$729,750** are available until 12/31/08.

Great news for veterans!

VA loans in the Metro DC area are available for 100% financing on homes selling for \$729,750 or less. For prices above \$729,750, a VA buyer would need to pay 25% of the amount which exceeds \$729,750. Veterans can essentially make a \$42,600 down payment on a \$900,000 home. The 100% loan amount will decrease to \$625,000 in 2009.

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