NEW YEAR - NEW CHALLENGES

by Scott Sklar, President, Ashton Heights Civic Association

I hope you all had a great Holiday and Happy New Year!

Great news - we have had no droughts, forest fires, floods and storm surges, earthquakes, or hurricanes -- as experienced across the country. Sure makes me appreciate living here in the Washington Metropolitan area.

But that doesn't mean that there are no challenges. The National Weather Service (NWS) announced that Reagan Airport’s total observed rainfall for the year had reached 61.34 inches at exactly 6:26 a.m. on December 15th, shattering D.C. areas old record of 61.33 inches set in 1889, making this past year as the wettest calendar year on record. Dealing with basement flooding is common in this area - cleaning downspouts, keeping water away from foundations, and landscaping to slow water movement are local requirements.

If I were to categorize the top three challenges living in Arlington, I would have to say:

1. Building density as empty lots become filled, existing housing on lots expand to the property boundary, and buildings grow higher and higher -- all impinging on our community's open space, tree canopy, and quietness that drew many of us originally to Ashton Heights.

2. Traffic congestion has been growing every year, and even with the Metro, greater orientation towards "walkable communities", bike lanes with bike share and now scooters -- we still are becoming more grid locked.

3. Crowded schools came upon us as demographics have changed. The student population has grown, and the County and School Board have driven building and upgrading new public schools on existing sites as well as new sites. And keeping schools walkable from our communities is becoming more difficult.

President’s Message continues on Page 3
Civic Association Mission

AHCA’s mission is to promote the welfare and interaction of Ashton Heights and Arlington. Meetings, usually held the third Wednesday from September to May, are open to all residents, although only paid members can vote. Active participation is welcome. AHCA keeps you informed through meetings, this newsletter, and the website: www.ashtonheights.org. You can volunteer by contacting the Executive Committee.

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Handy Numbers

ABANDONED VEHICLES AND BICYCLES
Vehicle on a county street: 703-228-4144
Bicycle: 703-228-4057
(Give exact location, description, and how long it’s been there)

ANIMAL REMOVAL
For dead animals reporting and to request removal, call the Animal Welfare League of Arlington at 703-931-9241.

For live animals

ARLINGTON APP and EMERGENCIES
Use the Arlington Virginia app on your mobile device for many services: search apps for “ArlingtonVA”

Sign up for Arlington Alert – A great way to stay informed and receive timely information during emergencies. Get more info at www.arlingtonalert.com.

CRIME
Suspicious activity & non-emergency: 703-558-2222
Online reporting:
http://police.arlingtonva.us/online-police-reporting-system

Crime prevention services (security assessments/ literature): 703-228-4057 or hhurlock@arlingtonva.us

Online crime mapping tool:
www.raidsonline.com/?address=Arlington,VA

STREET LIGHT OUTAGE & POTHOLES
Street light outage: 703-228-6570
Give exact location and pole number)
For filling street pot holes, call 703-228-6570) or file on web site https://topics.arlingtonva.us/reportproblem

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2018/19 Ad Rates:

- Business Card: $60
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- 1/2 Page: $145
- Full Back Page: $295
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Counter to this, crime has not increased, and tree canopy, while less, is being actively replenished.

We are in the process of updating our AHCA Guidelines for all our Committees.

- In 2018 we adopted Schools Principles
- In January we will vote on our updated Development Principles
- In February we will vote on Development Operational Guidelines and our AHCA Transportation Principles
- We have Draft Tree Canopy and Native Plants Principles which will also be finalized

The goal of these activities is to build consensus, priorities, and involvement so the Ashton Heights Civic Association (AHCA) can be proactive in the County processes and decision making and maximize our impact on outcomes.

We have intervened in pushing a more formal process to accelerate street light repairs so that calls are not shuttled between Arlington County and Dominion Power. We have met with Dominion Power on better control, public notice and interaction with Ashton Heights residents on tree cutting near power lines. We negotiated this year with the beer garden developer at Wilson Blvd and 10th St North to put up barriers, have lighting downward towards the ground, limit parking and they complied with our requests. AHCA supported the neighborhood in blocking a hotel on the Staples lot because it did not comply with approved plans, and we have a functioning stop sign on Pershing Drive that makes entry from North Irving Street possible during the rush hours.

Our AHCA Committee Chairs have been dutifully following and influencing roadway redevelopment, Ballston and other developments, tree canopy and open spaces, neighborhood planning and sidewalk projects, and new schools projects, among many other activities.

As always, we are always looking for ideas, concerns, and your input. Our emails are on page two of this newsletter, and of course, there is the AHCA listserve. Thank you all for your efforts for our community, to make Ashton Heights even a better place to live.

And again, Happy New Year.

January’s AHCA Meeting will Include these Great Topics:

- **Green Streets Project on Oakland Street** featuring Anne Guillette, Watershed Projects Manager, Arlington County

- **Arlington County Animal Control** with Jennifer Toussaint, Chief of Animal Control, Animal Welfare League of Arlington - will be available to discuss animal control, as well as any questions the audience may have (including feral cats)

If you have an idea for a topic you would like to hear about at an upcoming meeting, simply email Julia Tanner at jktanner1@gmail.com and pass along your suggestion.
You may have noticed over the past year that weekend nights in Clarendon are a bit less rowdy and problematic than they used to be. This progress is due to the Arlington Restaurant Initiative (ARI), started by the Arlington County Police Department (ACPD) and several other county offices, in February 2018. ARI, based on a successful model in the United Kingdom, aims to improve safety for patrons and restaurant staff while increasing nightlife business. Rather than concentrate on patrons, this program focuses on the restaurants. ACPD offers a training program for restaurant owners and staff that includes responsible alcohol service, fake identification detection, recognizing and responding to sexual harassment, and de-escalation techniques, among other sessions. The George Mason University Center for Evidence-Based Policy and the Social and Decision Analytics Lab Biocomplexity Institute of Virginia Tech have partnered with ARI to, respectively, assess challenges faced by businesses that serve alcohol and to conduct an economic and social impact study.

Sixteen restaurants in Clarendon that serve alcohol are participating in this voluntary accreditation program and have lauded its results for their business and customers, as well as the community at large. Prior to this initiative, an average weekend in Clarendon involved about three arrests for drunken and disorderly conduct. Thanks to ARI, there were three arrests in Clarendon over the entire summer in 2018. The program is expected to be rolled out in other nighttime hotspots in Arlington this year.

For more information, check out the ACPD webpage – https://police.arlingtonva.us/ari

"The Arlington Restaurant Initiative . . . works collaboratively with County agencies and businesses to improve the standards of establishments that serve alcohol through education, partnerships and open lines of communication."

- M. Jay Farr, Chief of Police, ACPD
**Kids, Inc. Entrepreneurs**

**Key to Services Offered**

- A - Leaf raking, shoveling
- B - Babysitting
- C - Pet/plant sitting
- D - Odd jobs/errands
- E - Lawn mowing
- F - House sitting
- G - Mother’s helper
- I - Technology

**Send updates to**

Ann Felker gr8est9@gmail.com

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KIDS INC offers a robust roster of willing and able local youth to help out when the household hands are not enough. They are enthusiastically awaiting your calls. Birth years allow you to match the size of the job with the age of the person. We manage the directory; you define the work and determine the pay scale. Let it be known that entrepreneurship is alive and well in Ashton Heights.
Brooke Alexander
Tree Canopy Fund coordinator for Ashton Heights
ARMN (Arlington Regional Master Naturalist)
Brooke.alexander52@gmail.com

A pair of Carolina chickadees requires 6000 to 9000 caterpillars to successfully raise one brood of young. Like 96% of all songbirds, chickadee babies require insects as food; chickadees favor caterpillars. (Adult chickadees eat seeds and berries, in addition to insects.)

Carolina chickadee parents feed their nestlings for 12-16 days, until they fledge; and then they feed them for another 3-4 weeks until the young disperse, and go off to fend for themselves. So, that’s 6000-9000 caterpillars over a 5-8 week period of time in the spring, for one brood of chickadees. That’s a lot of caterpillars!

So, where do the chickadee parents find these caterpillars? On our native trees!

All plant leaves have poisonous substances protecting them from predators. However, certain caterpillars have evolved alongside particular plants, and can safely eat the leaves. Thus, our NATIVE caterpillars are the caterpillars which will sustain our NATIVE songbirds. Our historical forest here in Ashton Heights is an Oak-Hickory forest. Oaks support 534 different species of caterpillars; hickories support 200. Plant an oak or hickory! (Crepe myrtle, burning bush, and callery pear have been documented to support one species of caterpillar.)

By the way, it’s worth pointing out that our native caterpillars also mature to become our native butterflies and moths. Thus, in addition to feeding our native baby songbirds, our native trees also feed our young native butterflies and moths.

As it turns out, chickadees are cavity nesters. They’ll nest in nest boxes, but more likely our local chickadees are nesting in cavities they have excavated in dead tree snags, or rotten branches. So, for the chickadees, leave a rotten branch or stub (at least 6 inches wide, and 4 -20 feet off the ground), or a rotten tree trunk in your yard for an extra year. Chickadees generally don’t nest in the same site twice.
Happy New Year

AHCA MEMBERSHIP SIGN-UP AND DUES PAYMENT FORM

Ashton Heights Civic Association annual dues are $15 per household or $10 per individual member or $25 per household for two years. Anyone residing or owning property in Ashton Heights who is at least 18 may join and then vote at AHCA meetings.

Send this form and a check payable to AHCA to Jim O’Brien, 643 N. Kenmore St. 22201, or bring it to this month’s meeting.

Name(s): __________________________________________

Children (and ages) (optional):__________________________

Street address: ______________________________________

Phone: _______________________ Resident since: ________

E-mail: ____________________________________________

Neighborhood interests: ______________________________

PAY DUES ONLINE at www.ashtonheights.org/join-ahca

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SPRING INTO THE MARKET

In real estate, Spring is the most advantageous time to market and sell your home. If you are planning on selling, after the first of the year is a great time to prepare your home.

To Begin:
• Interview John and Trevor
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SPRING IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER

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