



Ashton Heights News

The Newsletter of the Ashton Heights Civic Association

www.AshtonHeights.org

Back on Track - Still

Scott Sklar, President, AHCA

I wanted to send my warmest regards to everyone within Ashton Heights and our surrounding community, and hope you had a good summer and are safe and secure during this pandemic.

The Ashton Heights Civic Association (AHCA) has still been very active addressing a wide range of issues. I am happy to say that we will continue to email our AHCA Newsletter but we will also return to delivering it after we polling our coordinators Bea Camp and Julie Mangis as well as the volunteers that deliver the newsletters.

As you can see on the cover page, we will hold our first new AHCA Monthly Meeting (the third Wednesday of every month) using ZOOM coordinated by Emmilu Olson and Chris Armstrong. I hope you will participate and hear the short reports by our Chairs & Co Chairs of our eight AHCA Committees & Subcommittees and our two speakers.

AHCA is in the process of sending another letter to the County Board on "safety" approaches on North Kenmore Street since a child was hit a few months after a bicyclist was hit – emphasizing the need to speed up differentiate between 'traffic calming' and move to "pedestrian & property" safety. We plan to keep up the pressure.

AHCA has been active on a range of COVID-19 issues, starting with the family help service established by AHCA Safety and Security Committee chair Christina Schultz, and interfacing with the County on crowding at the Beer Lot and other issues.

Development issues are always before us, as are tree canopy, affordable housing, schools, transportation & traffic, and open spaces/playgrounds. And I expect the challenges of COVID, smaller Arlington County budget resources -- are all going to make our efforts harder. That said, why we have a civic association is to pool our human resources to track these issues, build community consensus, and interact effectively with the County, businesses, and community organizations.

Continued on page 2...

ZOOM MEETING INSTRUCTIONS

The following information will also be sent in an email prior to the first September Zoom meeting.

- If you don't have the free Zoom app you can download it in your app store or create an account at <https://www.zoom.us/>.
- If you haven't used Zoom, you might try it out with a neighbor, so you are familiar prior to the meeting.
- If you need help please feel free to email Emmi at briggsphotography@gmail.com or Chris at carmstrong07@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Emmi and Chris (Your AHCA Zoom Team)

September Zoom Meeting Details

Topic: AHCA Monthly Member Meeting (online)

Time: Sep 16, 2020 07:30 PM Eastern Time

Ashton Heights is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting. Join the meeting by link or dial-in.

Join the Zoom Meeting (Click the link below)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83384603982?pwd=bDgvRUgwdEZ4cTltVINnblhRTHBMUT09>

Or call: +1 301 715 8592 US (MD)

Meeting ID: 833 8460 3982 | Passcode: 705777

AHCA Monthly Meeting

NOW ON ZOOM

Wednesday, September 16, 2020, 7 – 9 PM

7:00 Committee Reports & Community Updates

7:45 Speakers:

- **Voting Safely in 2020** - Joan Porte, President; Lisa Koteen Gerchick, Election Integrity Chair and Donald Gurney, Voter Services Chair; Arlington League of Women Voters
- **Plans for the GMU Institute for Digital Innovations & Replacement for the Kann's Department Store Building** - Lisa Wilson Durant

9:00 Adjournment

Ashton Heights Civic Association Volunteers

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.

Executive Committee

President: Scott Sklar solarsklar@aol.com 703-522-3049	VP Programs: Jim Richardson jabrighardson@verizon.net	VP Membership: Jim O'Brien jimob1@verizon.net 703-528-0376	Treasurer: Doug Williams treasurer@ashtonheights.org	Secretary: Jodie Flakowicz jodie.flakowicz@gmail.com
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Members-at-Large

Cole Deines coledines@gmail.com	Jim Feaster jimfeaster1@gmail.com	Patrick Lueb jiffy64@me.com	Ken Matzkin kenmatz1@gmail.com
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Committees

Safety & Security	Christina Schultz cmschultz@yahoo.com	Transportation	Patrick Lueb jiffy64@me.com
Development/Zoning	David Phillips davidphillips1@msn.com	Playgrounds & Parks Subcommittee	Brent Burris brburris@gmail.com
Housing	Matthew Hall mhall@goldsteinhall.com	Tree Canopy and Native Plants Subcommittee	Brooke Alexander brooke.alexander52@gmail.com
Schools	Gregory Morse gregm748@gmail.com		
Neighborhood Conservation Rep	Brent Burris brburris@gmail.com		

Newsletter

Editor/Layout	Amy Miller amylmiller4@gmail.com	Advertising	Carmen Kosik newsletterads@ashtonheights.org
Distribution	Bea Camp summercamp81@yahoo.com	Listserv Moderator	Betsey Lyon etlyon410@gmail.com

Two issues we are preparing for, is how we interface and react to the Arlington County Water & Wastewater Utility Rate Study. We want to make sure rates are fair and that service and billing are also fair and responsive. The County has two proactive activities maximizing: 1) mail-in voting, and 2) insuring maximum participation in Census 2020. Right now we are just forwarding information, but we are very interested in ideas and approaches from anyone within the Ashton Heights community.

So welcome to Fall. Join us this month as we start-up our monthly meetings via ZOOM. And all, be safe!

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Sign up for the Ashton Heights Listserv

Stay in the loop and sign up for the Ashton Heights listserv. We know, email can be inundating these days, but thankfully the new listserv platform has many ways to personalize the emails that come to you.

Join the discussion list! Send a message to main+subscribe@ashtonheights.groups.io with your full name and street address in Ashton Heights or Lyon Park.

Worried about too many emails? You can adjust your account delivery option to receive a message digest rather than each individual email.

Explore and use other links at the bottom of group messages you receive. They provide you flexibility to mute a topic that involves more discussion than interests you. Groups.io is more fully featured than our old listserv program, Yahoo Groups, which we no longer use.

Questions? Email List Moderator [Betsey Lyon](mailto:etlyon410@gmail.com) directly.

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<https://www.nature-by-design.com/>

300 Calvert Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22301 - conveniently located just off Rte. 1 south of Potomac Yard, right on Calvert to the end of the street. "Finding us for the first time is half the fun!"

Fall is a ***GREAT TIME*** to plant natives!

FREE Tree Whips from Arlington County

Brooke Alexander, Ashton Heights Tree Canopy and Native Plant Coordinator

Arlington County is providing 400 young native trees to Arlington residents at no cost this fall.

These small trees, termed 'whips', are in two-gallon containers and range from 2-4 feet tall.

Registration opens September 8 online at <https://environment.arlingtonva.us/register-for-your-free-tree/>



I expect these trees to go quickly. So, sign up ASAP. With these trees, you pick up and you plant. Pick up location choices are October 24 at Barcroft, and October 27 at Bon Air Rose Garden Parking Lot. As of newsletter deadline time, the particular tree species list was not finalized.

Can We Improve Our Form of Government?

By Dave Schutz

AHCA is starting a committee on Arlington's Form of Government, our attention having been focused by the opportunity Patrick Hope has created with the passage of ranked choice voting legislation last year.

It would be remarkable if the form of government established at the beginning of the 1930's, during the era of the Byrd Machine and when the County had 25,000 residents (and some of the motivation for which is wholly unacceptable in the current time), was optimal today, and we think it's time for a careful look at how we are doing and how peer jurisdictions meet good government goals. I'm part of this effort, and am having an extremely interesting time interviewing a number of people who have been or are now active in Arlington civic life, on their views about how we elect our government and its form.

Areas which have been identified so far as worth thinking about include whether Board members should be elected simultaneously or to staggered terms as they are currently, whether and how to use party primaries, ranked choice voting, length of term for Board members, rethinking the current transparent fig leaf of 'nonpartisan' School Board elections, compensation level for the elected, number of members on the Boards, district vs. at large election of Board members, and term limits. Also, even in advance of its report, the ad hoc group will probably go to the Board in the fall with a set of proposals we would like to have it incorporate into its legislative request list, to establish flexibility for Arlington if it decides it wants to make changes.

We are eager to hear from citizens! Since there's no coffee and cookies table at the AHCA meeting this fall, I hope to get emails! And we don't think any of this is going to happen if Arlington's Board and Democratic party don't want it (or at least aren't opposed). Email Dave Schutz at porgschu@verizon.net to get involved.

Advertise with us!

The Ashton Heights newsletter is distributed to 1,200 households September - May. Our readers enjoy supporting local businesses.

Do you know of a local business that would benefit from advertising in the AH newsletter?

Email: newsletterads@ashtonheights.org

2019/2020 Ad Rates:

Business Card	\$60	Full Page	\$245
1/4 Page	\$85	Full Back Page	\$295
1/2 Page	\$145	One Page Insert	\$325

Newsletter Distributors: THANK YOU!

By Julie Mangis and Bea Camp

When the pandemic closed almost everything last spring and association meetings were canceled, the AHCA Newsletter went electronic for Apr and May with no door-to-door newsletter distribution. We discussed doing away with hand delivery of newsletters, relying on the internet instead.

While many residents subscribe to the [Ashton Heights listserv](#) and some visit our [website](#), by far our most successful outreach to all AH residents is the printed version of the newsletter. 56 newsletter distributors deliver to 1,167 households 9 months each year!

One problem with going all digital is that we do not have email addresses or phone numbers for the majority of AH residents; only 609 individuals are on our listserv. Some of our residents do not have internet access. In addition, keeping up with new and departing neighbors is a record-keeping challenge. Also, advertisers support the cost of printing the newsletter and we make a promise to them about our circulation, its size and frequency.

Most importantly, the hand-delivered newsletter brings AH residents to the listserv and the website. Without the newsletter, awareness of the association, neighborhood issues, and dues income would likely diminish over time. In preparation for this month's newsletter, we asked our newsletter distribution team if they would be comfortable making their normal contact-free deliveries, and were gratified that the overwhelming response was "Yes!" We are ever grateful to them for their many years of dedication and service. Thank you!



Dancing Days are Here Again...

By Susan Miller

Without a warning, Adagio Ballet announced the shuttering of their doors as of May 31st, 2020. For the past decade, 3 of our 4 children danced at Adagio, starting with Mommy & Me classes. This spring, we had 15 lessons/week, with an intensive dancer, a youth dancer, an early years dancer, and my mom classes. We were shocked by the closure.

So began the quest to find a new studio. We've now conducted extensive due diligence on nine area dance programs and Covid-19 protocols. Our criteria included: Covid-19 Risk Mitigation, Quality Programming with all Dance Styles, Location, and Professional Faculty. Ultimately, our best fit is the [Dance Academy of Virginia](#) (DAV).

Covid-19 Risk Mitigation

I'm in midst of breast cancer reconstruction, so this was an even more pressing concern. Katherine Horrigan, former Director of Adagio (but not owner) and newly the founder of the DAV, shared her perspectives, "Health and Safety are our first priorities, and then of course, excellence in dance training. With our mixed model of studio, virtual, and in-person private or small group lessons, we're accommodating family needs and enabling our students to return to dance in the safest way possible." She incorporated parent feedback on protocols during summer classes, from masks worn by teachers and students, social distancing as outlined via tape on dance floors and ballet barres, small class sizes, temperature checks, hand sanitization, drop off/pick up areas, access to outside air circulation, cleaning, virtual and in person options, etc. Horrigan highlights that key components to the program are motivating kids to be active and building healthy habits to keep spirits high in a challenging time, whether in or out of the studio.

Continued on page 5...



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Mix of Dance Styles: Balance of Ballet, Contemporary & Tap

DAV training will shape students to be versatile in ballet, contemporary, and tap techniques. My 5th grader, 3rd grader, and Kindergarten have each found a fitting dance track. My oldest was placed in the Academy Program Ballet/Contemporary Division and Tap Division, a pre-professional curriculum with ten plus hours of dance a week, performance rehearsals, and competition coaching. My younger two daughters will participate in their Youth and Little Dancer programs, with instruction from skilled professionals in each dance style, from ballet to jazz, lyrical, modern, hip hop, and tap. As a former dancer, it was important to me to find a quality program teaching proper technique and to balance ballet with contemporary dance training to best care for growing bodies.



In the next newsletter, I'll share more details on my research. In the mean time, classes are filling up, so [register](#) soon, and if your dancer is already in an intensive program, you may contact the studio for [Academy](#) auditions.

"My Vote Won't Count"

By Liza Gookin Hodskins

Fueled by false and alarming claims, many people worry that their mail-in or drop-off vote will not be delivered and/or counted for the presidential election this November 3rd. FEAR NOT. Unless you decide to request or mail in your ballot last-minute, you have lots of time to make sure your ballot counts. [Arlington's Office of Voter Registration](#) has been working hard to make sure this will be an easy process.

First: Relax! The ballots aren't even ready yet. The deadline to run for the highest office just ended in late August, and in Arlington, ballots aren't ready till 45 days before the election. That means the ballots won't be available until September 18. You can get a ballot either by requesting one in advance, or by going in-person to a few locations for early (a.k.a 'absentee') voting..

To request a mail-in ballot (assuming you are registered to vote in Arlington*), you can:

- submit the request [online](#) if you have a VA license (easy, fast, and most efficient)
- print the request
- pick up a request from any Arlington library
- pick one up from the wall envelope outside 2100 Clarendon
- call to request one (may be slowest & least cost-efficient).

Mail or take your ballot request to:

- Absentee Voting, 2100 Clarendon Blvd, Ste. 320, Arlington, VA,
- Absentee@arlingtonva.us
- the drop box outside the entrance to 2100 Clarendon on the wall near the library drop.

Ballots themselves will start to be mailed out Sept. 18 to those who requested them, and then on a rolling basis. When you get yours, make sure you follow the instructions in the packet and return it quickly.

The most efficient way to GET a ballot is to fill out a request [online](#). You save Elections spending money to mail you a hardcopy of the request, you save a stamp and don't have to look for an envelope, and what you type in goes into the database as written (with minor interim processing). Read and follow the instructions on the ballot when you get the package. Mail it. If you are still concerned about the mail, or if you are late, find the list of drop boxes on the [website](#).

Tips:

- No excuse needed to vote early, as you have in the past.
- Write clearly! Make sure you have filled out every required field and signed and dated it when necessary.
- *If you have voted in Arlington before, and have not canceled your registration, you are still registered. If you are really worried, you

can check on your registration and your ballot request and processing [online](#). The state website uses its "Check Your Registration" for several other purposes you may be looking for, such as Update your Address, Apply to Vote Absentee by Mail, Find your Polling Place, and Check your Voting History (includes tracking ballot requests). If you can't find yourself the first time, try again in another day or two.

- Please note that unlike other states, absentee ballots are counted basically as soon as they come in, but the numbers aren't released by the machines until polls close at 7pm. They are neither all counted that one night, nor afterwards, so they would be included in Election Night announcements.
- Although the very last time to get completed ballots in is noon on Friday, November 6 (if postmarked no later than Election Day), the sooner you get them in the better.
 - You cannot bring anyone else's ballots in—but you CAN bring in their ballot requests. We provide training if you want to help residents fill out their ballot requests.
 - Take a few moments to check out the county's elections [website](#). You can find much more information, like disability services, what's on the ballot, military and overseas services, and información en Espanol and other languages.
 - Arlingtonians are good citizens. There are no expected staff shortfalls at the polls despite fears of COVID. If you want to help, you can see if other VA jurisdictions could use any.
- Please remember that mail-in ballots are meant to be alternatives to in-person voting. Please try not to request one if you think you will come in person—that causes more work both sending it and processing it and thus costs elections more in time and money processing both. However, if you must vote in person after requesting a ballot be sent you, bring your entire ballot package with you to the polls—there the poll workers will take you aside to handle that separately.
- See the [online](#) list of acceptable IDs.
- All your regular (Election Day) polls are expected to be open in Arlington on November 3.
- Arlington elections continue to be run safely and securely. We want all legitimate ballots to count, and all CDC COVID guidelines to be followed. Wear your mask (paper ones will be available if you forget.) Social distancing will be supported and expected.
- Remember, elections workers are people, too, and most are essential workers working in person to help the elections run smoothly. **Be kind. Together we are strong.**



Liza Gookin Hodskins formerly was Aide to County Board Members Jay Fisette and Erik Gutshall, and is now Senior Elections Registrar. Any errors are probably mine. (Please note that this article is by no means all-inclusive, nor approved by the General Registrar, but contains basic info you can search for on the official Voting and Elections [website](#).

The Spring Market has arrived!

Momentum from the 2019 real estate market has continued into the new year. We are in the 8th year of a real estate bull market, and the conditions have been much more favorable to the seller. There has been a shortage of housing inventory nationally and locally. In 2019, the supply of property in Arlington & Alexandria was down 50% compared to a historic 5-year average. Single family homes in Alexandria & Fairfax appreciated 9.6% & 10.5% over a 5-year period while Arlington homeowners realized a 22% growth rate. Another factor in the current and recent market was the announcement in 11/18 of Amazon's HQ2 move to Crystal City. In an already hot market, Arlington became a focal point for speculators, home buyers and investors. The hype is more psychological than actual. Amazon hired 400 workers last year and is scheduled to bring on 600 to 800 employees in 2020.

Here is an example of what is happening in the current real estate market. After a 2-week coming soon marketing period starting in mid-January, we activated an Arlington property on 2/12. After one week of aggressive marketing we received 12 offers on the day of our contract deadline, resulting in an astounding \$70K above the asking price.

With current mortgage rates at 3.5%, homebuyers are coming out in droves, seeking homes to buy to take advantage of existing conditions with very few properties to choose from.

Have you had thoughts of selling? The next few months will present a huge opportunity with the current environment and trends. Contact me for a confidential discussion about your situation and we can customize a plan for you. *Who you hire matters - put my 35 years of local market expertise to work for you!*



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Fall Native Plant Sales

Brooke Alexander, Ashton Heights Tree Canopy and Native Plant Coordinator, Arlington Regional Master Naturalist (ARMN)

In these corona times, many of the traditional fall native plant sales have been canceled. However, there are two sales that have been scheduled where care has been taken to minimize exposure! And I have included several nurseries with year-round availability that have modified shopping for options.

Long Branch Nature Center (Oct. 3; 1 to 4pm)

- <https://parks.arlingtonva.us/native-plant-sale/>
- Order by 5pm Sept 24.

Glencarlyn Library Garden (Sept. 13; 1 to 3pm)

- <https://mgmv.org/2020/08/12/autumnfest-at-glencarlyn-library-garden/>
 - Master Gardener demonstration garden.
 - See vendor's list at www.hillhousenativeplants.com.*
- Order by Sept 9 (email hillhousenativeplants@gmail.com).

Earth Sangha*

- non-profit that propagates wild plants for ecological restoration (<http://www.earthsangha.org>)

- Self-service Saturdays, or 1-on-1 appointments, or curbside pick up.
- Order at www.earthsangha.org/wpnlst

Nature by Design*

- Local native plant nursery in Alexandria. <http://www.nature-by-design.com/>
- Browsing appointment, or curbside pick up

Virginia Native Plant Society*

- Wednesdays, 10-1, April thru October. Native plants sold in the Green Spring Gardens Park, behind the horticulture center. No web site.

Watermark Woods*

- Native plant nursery in Hamilton, VA. Curbside pick up available. www.watermarkwoods.com

*neonicotinoid-free, per vendor



Community Crime and Safety Corner

Reporting Crime during COVID-19

By Christina Schultz



Police departments across the country have been forced to make significant changes to how they operate as the coronavirus spreads. Arlington is no exception. The Arlington County Police Department (ACPD) is exercising caution to mitigate the risk of unnecessary exposure and spread of COVID-19. Among other measures, they now encourage people to report non-emergency and non-violent incidents through an [online reporting system](#) on the County website. Common incidents that should be reported online include theft from cars (a neighborhood favorite!), vehicular bump and run or other vehicle crashes with no injury and less than \$1500 in damage, as well as credit card fraud, identity theft, vandalism, harassing phone calls or email, and suspicious circumstances.

You must be at least 18 years old and are required to have internet access and an email address to use this portal. Incidents reported online are reviewed for approval, which

may take up to five business days. While some offenses might seem minor, like the change stolen from our unlocked cars, the ACPD encourages all neighbors to report incidents so they can gather data and detect trends of crimes occurring in the area. Officers continue to respond in person to crimes in-progress and emergency calls when there is an immediate threat to a person or property.

Stay tuned for the October newsletter to hear directly from the Arlington County Police Department on the challenges they face during the pandemic and trends in crime statistics.



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Rebecca Reynolds MSN/L.Ac.
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The Ashton Heights Yard Sale is Back!

Please consider participating. Anyone who is interested in assisting with outreach and marketing, or has other suggestions, please contact us: Chris Armstrong, carmstrong07@gmail.com | Ann Felker, gr8est9@gmail.com | Jay Fisette, jay@fisette.org

HOW IT WILL WORK

- **WHY:** We have all been cleaning out our closets, attics and drawers for 6 months of pandemic lock-down and social distancing. The bounty is palpable! The idea is to provide an option for those people who want to participate. Serious safety protocols will be included in all materials and descriptions of the Yard Sale. This is a 100% outdoor event, spread across 6 hours.
- **SAFETY:** All participating families must set up their sale in an effort to separate spaces and encourage social distancing. Hand sanitizer must be available and visible at each site. We encourage families to post signage that promotes social distancing and use of hand sanitizer. Masks will be required of all participants – hosts and buyers.
- **WHEN:** Saturday, October 17 from 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. Rain Date is Sunday, October 18.
- **WHERE:** Outdoors, at your own home.
- **WHO:** Ashton Heights residents. The Lyon Park Yard Sale will not be held this year, so residents of Lyon Park are invited to participate.
- **HOW:** Please register at <https://forms.gle/wL717WnS8n1GjHLR6> by 6 p.m., October 14. There is no cost. All homes will be compiled into a Master List to include the address (with a hotlink to map it) and a short characterization of the key items available. This list will be easily available to anyone through the link, which will go live on October 15. A packet with Final Instructions and copies of a map/legend of participating homes will be dropped off at each participating home on October 16.
- **MARKETING:** The Planning Committee will promote the Yard Sale extensively through social media and local news media. We will also place signs around the neighborhood the day before. Participants are encouraged to make signs and post them on nearby arterial roads the night before. All signs should include the website link.



Kids, Inc. Entrepreneurs

By Ann Felker

Based on recent requests, it might be time to change our service categories to align with the real world help that neighbors have asked for.

“What category includes weeding? How can I find a dog walker? Lawn mowers and leaf rakers are not necessarily gardeners. Plant sitting is not anything like pet sitting. Date night babysitting is different from playing with children in the backyard while parents work inside.”

I will communicate with our young entrepreneurs and start our new system next month. Speaking of flourishing kids, here are a few clues about how to work with our Employables.

This list (see right) provides a great way for our young people to discover the joys of independence on a controlled scale, to practice their manners with adults, to learn about the dignity of fulfilling expectations. You will become their first manager. Be tender.

- Write out your expectations and include your name and address on the note. (Sometimes, kids have two jobs at once)
- Arrange a pay scale that satisfies everyone, first.
- Never give out a bare key. Attach it to a shiny object so it does not get lost.
- Do not put your address directly on the key.

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
- H - Technology

KIDS INC offers a robust roster of willing, able local youth to help when the household hands are not enough. They enthusiastically await your calls.

Send updates to: Ann Felker - gr8est9@gmail.com

For privacy reasons, Kids Inc. Is not being posted on the Ashton Heights website.

Please find the full listings in your paper copy or the copy emailed to the Ashton Heights listserv.

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Volunteer to Serve Ashton Heights in Times of Disaster

By Chasta Piatakovas, Community Outreach Coordinator
& Engagement Liaison, Arlington CERT

When disaster strikes, people want to help as evidenced by the courageous efforts of bystanders who helped those affected by the massive flooding in Arlington on July 8, 2019 and the current COVID-19 response with volunteers

like Ashton Heights resident Deborah Hartman sewing masks as part of the Million Mask Challenge to donate to medical professionals and vulnerable communities.



Founded in response to 9/11,
Arlington Community Emergency

Response Team (ArlCERT) comprises community members trained to help people prepare for, respond to, and recover from a major disaster in Arlington including flood response and recovery. Since September 2002, ArlCERT has trained over 900 volunteers from youth to seniors in CERT disaster response, fire suppression, basic first aid, light search and rescue, and terrorism awareness.

In addition to the 2019 flood response mobilization, Arlington County Emergency Management (ACEM) activated ArlCERT volunteers to (i) conduct damage assessments after Hurricane Isabel and the 2012 derecho; (ii) clear fire hydrants of snow and shrubs to speedup emergency fire response; (iii) act as survivor role-players for first responder training events; and (iv) distribute over 5,000 meals and counting to those in the quarantine hotel.

Ashton Heights resident Dave Harrop decided to take the free training after learning about the CERT program from a former colleague and hearing that a retired Army doctor maintained his skills in emergency medicine as a volunteer. "Those kinds of contribution sounded like a good thing to do, so as I have begun to approach retirement, I determined to do likewise. This will give me opportunities to pitch in and stay active and engaged, especially once I do retire."

After graduating from CERT training—held twice a year in the spring and fall for six weeks—volunteers join a neighborhood CERT (Ashton Heights residents join the Ballston Neighborhood CERT with residents from Buckingham, Ballston-Virginia Square, and Lyon Park) to collectively help their community prepare for and recover from disaster situations. "Arlington CERT reminds me that we can do really great things with some simple organization and training, making a big difference when the time comes, as well as helping when things are quiet," said Harrop.

If you are interested in joining ArlCERT, please visit <https://emergency.arlingtonva.us/get-involved/cert/> and click on the CERT Info Request button. ArlCERT will conduct the fall CERT basic training virtually starting September 9 (a class in Spanish is slated for November).



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.

Name(s): _____

Children (and ages) (optional): _____

Street address: _____

Phone: _____ Resident since: _____

E-mail: _____

Neighborhood interests: _____

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

Ashton Heights 100 Year Anniversary in 2021

Our wonderful neighborhood turns 100 next year and it's time to start planning ways to celebrate and memorialize this beautiful place. We are looking for people who are interested in sharing their memories, getting involved in related activities, and know how to convert old paper materials into modern formats (Ex: Facebook, etc.). If you haven't done so, be sure to look at the historical materials on our website: <https://ashtonheights.org/about-ashton-heights/>.

We are thinking about creating a 100 year timeline that will allow us to identify when different types of houses were built, when people came and went, and many of the other ongoing changes to this dynamic area. If you're interested in helping, contact AHCA's Historian Jim Terpstra at 703-903-9231, terpstrajames2@gmail.com or come by 522 N. Ivy St.

Restaurant Review - Medium Rare

3601 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22201

By Vinh & Susan Nguyen

(703) 243-2020

mediumrarerestaurant.com

Note: Medium Rare currently operates as both a delivery/takeout and dine-in business. If you choose the takeout option, you will choose a pickup time while having access to the full menu; prices are slightly higher than dine-in. Delivery through third parties will show a more limited menu and still higher prices [info as of August 2020]

So where does one go for a good steak in Arlington nowadays? And we're not talking tired chains (that's you, Outback) or fancy expense account places (no thanks, Ruth's Chris Steak House). For 17 years, we Arlingtonians used to be able to dig into a juicy steak at Ray's the Steaks. Sadly, the flagship (and last) restaurant closed in June 2019. This closure was no sadder than the demise of the previous Arlington steakhouse icon, Tom Sarris Orleans House.

This Rosslyn institution started in 1964 and lasted until 2007 when cranes came to demolish the unmistakable white 2-story building with the iron railing. So what now?

Thankfully, Medium Rare decided to locate its second bistro-style restaurant in Arlington, just across from the Virginia Square Metro station. Owners Tom Gregg and Mark Bucher brought back from France their love of unadorned steak frites and replicated this in their three local restaurants.



Things are kept simple. There is only one cut of meat, "culotte", a lean and flavorful piece cut from the cap of the top sirloin; it's considered subprimal in butcher speak, hence affordable. In fact, there's really only one fixed-price menu with the following items for the unbelievable dine-in price of \$24: Artisan Rustic Bread - Mixed Green Salad - Culotte Steak- Hand-cut fries - Secret Sauce. Your only choice is how you want the steak done (cuts are thin so medium rare is closer to medium). Additionally, for the table you can choose a wine from a list of 5 reds and 3 whites (one each from the major varietals), pick among 4 beers, and elect one of 5 desserts (we are partial to the key lime pie).

The sourdough *Rustique* bread comes warm to the table, crunchy on the outside and light and airy on the inside. The salad features bibb and red leaf lettuces and cherry tomatoes and arrives with a classic Dijon vinaigrette. The steak comes pre-sliced, is accompanied by a generous portion of fries, and is doused with the famous "secret sauce." Fries are hand cut from Yukon Gold potatoes and twice-fried so they arrive hot and crispy at the table. The light brown sauce, key to the meal, is cream-based and shows hints of mustard, peppercorns, and shallots and is great with both the steak and the fries.

As you finish off your first steak, a server comes around to offer a second round, dispensing more slices from a hot skillet. Of course, you get a generous second helping of fries and sauce too. Don't feel shy about asking for a full portion for your second helping, even if you won't finish it then and there. Home takeaway is fully expected. What a deal! [Note: if you order takeout now, you will get a serving that approximates both initial and refill steak/fries portions.]

Medium Rare stands at the intersection of a steakhouse and a French bistro, boiled down to the simplest essence. If not for the bustling Fairfax Street traffic outside, one could imagine this neighborhood restaurant in one of Paris' arrondissements. We are truly lucky to be able to claim this restaurant as one of our own. Let's hope it lasts at least as long as Ray's.

VDOT Survey Results

By Joan Fitzgerald



VDOT did a survey of options to “improve safety” on Arlington Blvd between Glebe Road and Fillmore Street. I put “improve safety” in quotations because there are many ways to improve safety, and unfortunately, the most-voted-for scenario will **reduce** safety in the Ashton Heights and Lyon Park neighborhood.

The scenario with the highest support: a dedicated left turn lane on eastbound Rt 50 onto N. Irving St., with a dedicated left turn light, and a new median to prohibit left turn lanes onto any street except N Irving and N Fillmore. This is not good news for those of us who have long advocated for traffic mitigation and traffic reduction strategies, to improve safety in our neighborhood, reduce speeding and to maintain our quality of life.

Frankly, the survey results were not a surprise:

- The survey was open to everyone, everywhere, not just those affected by the changes and not those of us who live in Ashton Heights or Lyon Park.
- Almost all of the options in the survey involved directing traffic down N. Irving. One option that was originally recommended by VDOT (prohibiting left turn lanes at N Irving and other interchanges) was included in the survey but not the most voted-for option.
- The survey itself was a problem and did not follow basic best practices: the options were not randomized, which means they were always presented in one order. Any market research practitioner will tell you that this creates extraordinary bias towards the responses listed first.

There are many ways to improve safety along the Glebe Road/Fillmore Street corridor without purposefully directing traffic into the neighborhood! Several of us are organizing to oppose any change that would direct traffic from Rt 50 onto N. Irving Street, or any other neighborhood street in Ashton Heights or Lyon Park. Here are some of our reasons:

- First, the left turn lane proposal is contrary to important principles in our Ashton Heights Neighborhood Conservation Plan, which dictates no changes to one neighborhood street that would adversely affect another neighborhood street. Clearly, blocking turns onto Jackson and enabling turns onto Irving has that adverse effect.
- It's not appropriate to make it easier for Fairfax County commuter traffic to cut-through our neighborhood, which is a direct impact of the dedicated left turn lane and light. Commuter traffic should be using major arterials, like Glebe Road and Washington Blvd, not neighborhood minor streets.
- VDOT anticipates significant traffic increases as a result of the change. The study results are here: <https://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/ro ute50arlingtonstudy.asp>

Thank you for considering this important issue!

Updates from the Development Committee

By David Phillips and Jack Spilsbury

The development committee has been enjoying its in-pod summer break, only addressing relatively urgent issues that arose. All raised by Scott, these included:

1. The anomaly that chicken rearing is not allowed on AH residential lots but there is no prohibition on bears.
2. The possibility that bourbon, or even stronger stuff, could be used in eradicating the coronavirus.
3. Whether the Beer Lot has been socially distancing and if not why not. (Could it be caused by the presence of the young and restless White House staff who frequent it).

On a much less urgent note:


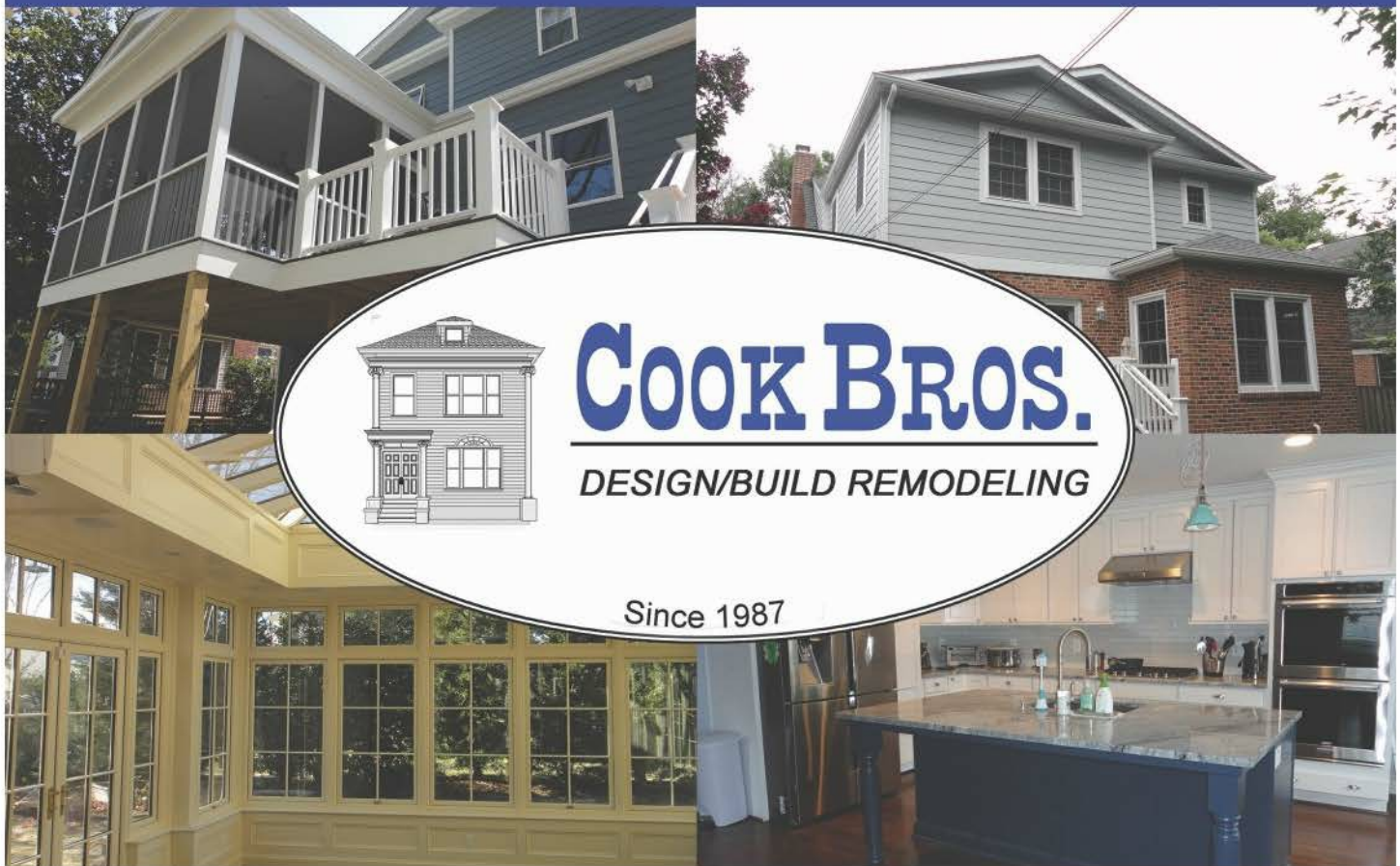
4. The preliminary site plan for redevelopment of the Joyce Motors Site in Clarendon is with the County. We had a zoom with TCS, developers of the Wilson/Silver Diner site on the updated concept - mainly hotel, apartments, retail/entertainment space, a new road (10th road N). A meeting for the full AHCA is arranged for November 18. No further news on the Wells Fargo and other sites, to be followed up.
5. The County Admin held a special meeting for nearby residents on the CVS project on North Kenmore and were very helpful (even providing the plans). We then met the developers on ways to shield the adjacent dwellings through landscaping, fencing and traffic control. Seems to be on track for new year start. Will check further.
6. A very diverse range of views was expressed following the County proposal to announce a zoning amendment dialogue about additions on non-conforming (small) lots. For all who did not read it, here is an extract of our conclusion:

“...the concerns that this measure would set a precedent allowing harmful erosion of existing zoning regulations are overblown. Rather, this measure would follow on previous ones to create more parity between different zoning areas. Consequently, we feel that the sense that this is an opportunistic proposal that weakens or undermines sector plan guidelines (which of course might be a relevant concern in other situations), is also overstated because the change applies narrowly and aims to regularize treatment of non-conforming lots across the range of residential zoning categories..... Based on the above points we would support a proposal not to challenge this amendment beyond reiterating the need for transparent communication at all times with the community. Instead, while continuing to monitor specific projects, we should use the good relations we have built up with the County Administration to challenge significant exceptions or changes to zoning code, for instance those that might arise from the redevelopment of Clarendon and other similar large projects.”

We hope that everyone has had a safe and good summer.

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