Red Lines in the Sand
By Scott Sklar, President, AHCA

The Ashton Heights Civic Association (AHCA) has been one of the leaders in looking towards the future. Our association leaders in the 1960’s and 1970’s fought to ensure tapered zoning from the metro stations to the residential neighborhoods, tree canopy expansion, and open spaces as Arlington became an inner suburb.

It was wise then, and it is wiser now.

Joining four other civic associations, we have drawn a line in the sand on the block where the fire station sits, to have it a mixed-use park, including the roof of the new firehouse other than development. We have rejected that the spot of land where a tiny used car lot and some Arlington-owned houses and an area of no-parking area between the Northside Social coffee shop and the church suffices for mixed use in the future. There is a difference between some open space, and some community picnic, playground, and other activities in a large space in what will be a high-concentration urbanized setting in the near future.

We have also rejected the idea that this site become another giant building of which some will be dedicated to Affordable Housing. To be clear, AHCA supports affordable housing – and we are strongly prodding the Arlington Board to include it in the other five giant buildings being reviewed now to be built in the Clarendon area within the next two years. But the park on the 10th Street North site is as important to those in affordable housing as it is to our five neighborhoods represented by the five civic Associations. AHCA is standing our ground.

AHCA has also been working with those in our community affected by roof-top noise from various bars and restaurants in Clarendon and along Wilson Blvd. The Arlington County Police have worked with us pro-actively on Don Titos and other restaurants. But institutionally, the Arlington code enforcement staff are the ones that need to be given extra hours with pay, rather than police, to visit these sites at night when the complaints are filed. These issues are not really police matters, but code enforcement matters – and again AHCA is making clear that as we urbanize even more, these issues will get worse, not better. So we need an expansion of enforcement with pay, for those who can ensure commercial behavior fits the guidelines and those within our community can sleep at night. Another line in the sand.

On a personal note, many of you may know I sit on Arlington County’s C2E2 Commission’s Energy Committee, and many of us are pushing for an Arlington County Climate Coordinator to be appointed to ensure that the myriad of Arlington agencies and programs row in the same direction of the unanimously approved (twice) Arlington County Community Energy Plan (CEP). Again, drawing a line in the sand for our Arlington’s resilient future.

There has been some pushback on all the above by Arlington’s various commissions and committees. I have gotten many calls. But these issues are too important to “just go along for the ride”. It affects our quality of life, and frankly, some personal control of our local environs. So,

Presidents Column continued on page 2...
**President’s Column, continued from page 1**

we’re hanging tough. But not just to be tough, to be vigilant – it’s our community, and if we don’t fight for it – Clarendon can transform into the cement, shaded, lack-of green of Ballston (just walk along North 9th Street in the cement wind tunnel to experience the effect).

I want to thank AHCA’a Development Committee and the AHCA Committee Chairs and CoChairs of our other Committees who have all been important leaders in directing and protecting our community’s future. And I look forward to hearing your ideas, and having you work within our AHCA Committees as your time allows.

Happy Spring!

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**Ashton Heights Pet(s) of the Month**

By Bianca Sanchez

Daisy and Poncho, 6 and 7 years old, moved from condo central in Ballston to N. Oakland St. in the fall of 2020. Now closer to the ground, these quirky pups enjoy their janitorial duties in the kitchen while their humans cook, inspecting filled grocery bags and new mail packages, protecting their home from mail carriers, other dogs, and squirrels in the backyard. Most importantly they enjoy just spending time with their humans on walks, road trips, or on the couch.
Update from the Arlington Arts Center
By Catherine Anchin

Happy spring Ashton Heights! The Arlington Arts Center is looking forward to seeing you as we open our spring exhibitions and classes this month.

On April 9, AAC will reopen with three new exhibitions including the annual SOLOS exhibition, which features six of the most promising artists from the mid-Atlantic region. With SOLOS, we flip the script and invite the artists to curate their own show within a single gallery. The work on view, and the way you experience it, is entirely the artist’s perspective.

The artists participating in SOLOS were selected by an independent jury of contemporary art professionals. This year’s jury included Myrtis Bedolla, Owner and Founding Director of Galerie Myrtis; Amber Esseiva, Associate Curator at the ICA at VCU in Richmond; and Al Miner, Director and Chief Curator of the galleries at Georgetown University.

In our Jenkins Community Gallery, we will feature selections from the senior AP Art classes from four Arlington high schools, including Washington-Liberty, Yorktown, Wakefield, and HB Woodlawn. Each school will have a few weeks to showcase their student work. Washington-Liberty will be on view first beginning April 9, so be sure to visit us through June 18 to get a glimpse of what Arlington high school seniors are creating.

AAC is also pleased to present Transference, a solo exhibition of abstract mixed media works on panel and paper by artist-in-residence Stephanie Lane. Lane’s gestural abstract compositions feature line drawings combined with tangled masses of expressive brushwork. In addition to working as a fine art photographer Lane is currently an instructor at AAC where she has taught adult classes in Figure Drawing and Painting and the Creative Process since 2011.

Classes begin the week of April 19 for kids and adults. Adult classes this season include Figure Drawing with Sarah Balough, 2D & 3D Portraiture with Silvia Salgado, Experimental Painting with Stephanie Lane, and Art & Wellness with Bethany Masimula.

And for those looking for spring break camp and summer camp options, space is still available. Camps are offered from April 11 through April 15 and June 27 through August 26, for ages 5-7, 8-11, 12-14, and 14-18.

Visit our website to register for classes and save the date for Saturday, April 23 when we host our first public opening reception to celebrate these exhibitions! Many thanks for all your support of the Arlington Arts Center.
Volunteers Wanted!

Get involved with the Ashton Heights Civic Association (AHCA) and volunteer for one of these open positions:

- **Vice President, Programs** – responsible for scheduling two speakers for each of the 8 monthly meetings per year. In addition, this volunteer will communicate with the Clarendon United Methodist Church to reserve our monthly space. This is an Executive Committee (ExCom) position – elections for the ExCom will be held soon. Questions about this position? Email Jim Feaster at jimfeaster1@gmail.com

- **AHCA representative on the Neighborhood Conservation Program** – this program disburses county funds for curb and sidewalk improvements. Questions about this position? Email Brent Burris at brburris@gmail.com

If you are interested in either position, please email Scott Sklar, President of the AHCA at solarsklar@aol.com.

Here’s a critical tip when buying a home in today’s competitive real estate market. **Submit your mortgage pre-approval from a reputable, local lender.** Your mortgage loan officer is a key player on your real estate acquisition team. A pre-approval from an out-of-town or big box lender, credit union or online mortgage company can create doubt in the mind of a seller and listing agent.

For example, we've seen sellers disregard offers from buyers who are pre-approved by an internet lender and some credit unions. **Give your seller every reason to believe your pre-approval is solid by working with a reputable mortgage lender.**

You need a loan officer who knows the area, knows what they are working with, knows how to connect the pieces with the timeline of sale to get it to settlement on time. You can call that you have a relationship with. You don’t typically get that with most banks, credit unions and online lenders. When presenting an offer with short notice on the weekend or an evening, **the lender needs to be available** to speak with the listing agent who might be evaluating ten offers. If there is a hiccup in the transaction you need someone who is accessible and proactive in resolving the issue.

If you, or someone you know is looking to get pre-approved, we have a list of trusted preferred lenders who can help you with your home purchase.

**Are you living in your ideal home now?**

If you are thinking of a new lifestyle, I’m glad to help with strategic planning.

**Who you hire matters** - put my 37 years of local Arlington market expertise to work for you and your largest financial investment!

**Volunteers Needed!**

AHCA MEMBERSHIP SIGN-UP
AND DUES PAYMENT FORM

Ashton Heights Civic Association annual dues are $15/household or $10/individual member or $25/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. Arlington, VA 22201.

Name(s): ______________________________________

Children (and ages) (optional): ______________________

Street address: ________________________________

Phone: ________________ Resident since: __________

E-mail: _______________________________________  

Neighborhood interests: ________________________

__________

**PAY DUES ONLINE:**

www.ashtonheights.org/join-ahca

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for Ashton Heights Residents.

With me as your advisor and project manager, I can help you sell your home faster and at a higher price. Compass front the cost of the services to enhance your home’s value. Visit our website for details on the Concierge Program.
Opioid overdoses have skyrocketed since the late 1990’s, making it the worst drug epidemic in our country’s modern history. Reports of the number of overdose deaths break records year after year. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. saw 100,306 drug overdose deaths during a 12-month period ending in April 2021 – a 29% increase during the same time the year before.

CDC figures show that over 150 people die every day from overdoses related to synthetic opioids. To put this into perspective, there are more deaths in the U.S. from drug overdoses today than from automobile accidents. Deaths linked to cocaine and semi-synthetic and natural opioids such as pain medication, continue to rise, but it’s the synthetic drug fentanyl that is the driving force behind 75% of opioid-related deaths. Arlington County is not immune to this crisis.

The Arlington County Police Department (ACPD) tracks incidents related to opioid use (see chart) and refers overdose victims to the County’s Department of Human Services peer support programs for follow-up. ACPD figures show a record-breaking year in 2021 with 156 incidents and 28 deaths. In our own Ashton Heights neighborhood, the police reported two accidental, narcotics-related deaths in late December of last year. As of March 18, 2022, we are already seeing these numbers keeping a steady pace without abatement.

Arlington County offers a number of prevention, treatment, and recovery guidance and services. Recommendations on safe storage of medication help prevent children from accessing these drugs. The County has also taken proactive measures against prescription drug misuse by installing four permanent drug-take back boxes that can be accessed anytime without questions.

The Department of Human Services (contact narcan@arlingtonva.us) provides Naloxone/NARCAN, a safe and effective medication that can reverse an opioid overdose, by mail at no cost simply by first taking a one-hour virtual or ten-minute phone training. In August of last year, Arlington became the second jurisdiction in Northern Virginia to use a state opioid response grant to distribute fentanyl strips in an effort to prevent overdoses. The test strips are an effective way to determine if a drug contains fentanyl.

Treatment facilities and resources are listed on the County website, including peer support groups and hotlines and LGBTQ+ services. There are also suggestions on how to talk to kids about substance abuse.

Supporting these efforts is the Arlington Addiction Recovery Initiative, a taskforce, comprised of treatment providers, first responders, the justice system, the hospital, and private citizens, which aims “to prevent individuals from developing a substance use disorder, increase access and awareness of available treatment resources in our community, and decrease access to opioids through diversion.”
**Abundance by Jakob Guanzon**

*Book Review by Denise Cormaney, follow all her reviews at [@findyourgoldenhour](https://www.instagram.com/findyourgoldenhour) on Instagram*

**FOUR STARS!**

The precariousness of living in poverty in America, told through the eyes of one man and his son.

It’s a story of a man trying to get his life back on track, to make a better life for his kid. Systemic forces and plain bad luck make him into Sisyphus.

The main character struggles with addiction and makes some epically bad decisions; this made him more real to me. I don’t need a story about a person who does everything right. Who among us hasn’t made some self-destructive choices along the way? But the consequences of those choices play out differently when you are on the edge of society.

Regardless of whether you think he deserved some of the outcomes, it’s hard to place “personal responsibility” on his son. We cannot blame a 7-year old for living in poverty. In a country brimming with prosperity, where does the responsibility lie?

**AHCA Development Committee Update - Clarendon Sector Plan**

*By Jack Spilsbury*

On March 19th, the County Board agreed “to advertise hearings by the Planning Commission on April 4th, and the County Board on April 23rd, to adopt the 2022 Clarendon Sector Plan Update.” The Plan is critical to future development and zoning for the Clarendon Metro area (from Kirkwood Road and N. 10th Street extending eastward towards Courthouse).

The year-long review has addressed land use, building height and density, open space, transportation, and other topics related to retaining Clarendon’s uniquely “urban village” character. In spite of our best efforts (along with four other participating civic associations), however, parts of the update are still cause for concern. These include: increased building heights and loss of planned open space on N. 10th St.; reduced step-back requirements for building frontages; potential parking issues; and noise concerns from changes allowing for use of rooftops for various amenities.

In the final stages, longstanding plans for a park on the 10th St. block that houses the fire station and Verizon emerged as especially contentious. We pushed back to preserve as much active recreational space there as possible. Eventually, staff put forward several options, ranging from a small 10,000 square foot park (alongside a new housing development or rebuilt firehouse potentially incorporating rooftop recreational space) to a full, 43,000 square foot park – the latter contingent though on relocating the firehouse on another site. Note: link to amended plan at: [https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Land-Use/Clarendon-Sector-Plan-Update](https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Projects/Plans-Studies/Land-Use/Clarendon-Sector-Plan-Update)

We were encouraged by a supportive motion at the March 9th Planning Commission. The Commissions on Forestry and Natural Resources as well as Parks and Recreation also wrote the Board in support. Finally, the five civic associations sent a third Joint Letter to make our case prior to the March board meeting. (Link to letter: clarendon-sector-plan-update - 03-18-2022-final-joint-letter-from-the-five-civic-associations-on-the-clarendon-sector-plan-update.pdf )

However, during its March meeting -- in response to urging by the Housing Commission and a speaker for the Alliance for Housing solutions -- Board members expressed interest in a fourth option co-locating affordable housing with a new firehouse, and asked for alternative zoning ordinance maps to enable this. The staff subsequently posted an “alternative” scenario that would re-zone the entire site as residential, thus eliminating the park.

The updated Plan also addresses redevelopment of the St. Charles, Silver Diner, The Lot, Joyce Motors, and Wells Fargo sites. All four 10th St./Firehouse options remain on the table. The AHCA plans to speak at both upcoming hearings. We continue to encourage input from the Community.
TURNING THE COMMUNITY CENTER INSIDE OUT!

Saturday
April 16, 2022

8 AM to 1 PM
At least 1 dozen cupcake flavors!
All the neighborhood favorites
Just like the “old days”!

DEJA-VU CUPCAKE SALE

SPRING EGG & HEN HUNT

Gather at the park at 10:45 AM
Starts promptly at 11 AM
For kids who toddle, walk, or run
(Age toddler to 10)

A joint effort of the not-just-for-Woman’s Club, the LPCA, the LPCC and the Arlington Jaycees
Learn How to Certify Your Yard as a Wildlife Sanctuary at Ashton Heights’ April 20th Meeting!
By Brooke Alexander, Ashton Heights Tree Canopy and Native Plant Coordinator, Arlington Regional Master Naturalist (ARMN)

WHAT?
Save the world one yard at a time. Plant a wildlife habitat in your yard! Work to become a certified wildlife sanctuary.

WHO?
Alda Krinsman, Audubon At Home (AAH) Coordinator for Arlington and Alexandria, and Master Gardener and ARMN member, will present the AAH program and illustrate how to create a wildlife habitat.

The Audubon At Home program is delivered by the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia (ASNV) in partnership with 6 regional volunteer conservation organizations including ARMN, and works closely with Plant NoVA Natives and Virginia Native Plant Society (Potowmack Chapter).

WHEN?
Ashton Heights Civic Association monthly meeting on Wednesday, April 20th. Program runs 7:40 to 8:40 p.m. Come visit with neighbors starting at 7. We meet in the basement of the Clarendon United Methodist Church, 606 North Irving Street; enter thru the door facing the parking lot.

CHILDREN WELCOME?
Yes! Make it a family project! This program will be about an hour long and appropriate for interested children 9 and up.

MAY I BUY A PLAQUE FOR MY YARD?
Yes! When your yard qualifies as a Certified Wildlife Habitat, you may purchase a plaque for your yard (see photo). It’s the only part of the program you pay for.

Meet Your Neighbor Request
Nominate yourself or a neighbor to be featured in the monthly spotlight. And before you think “No way, I’m too boring,” remember, that’s a challenge to your columnist! Your idea of “boring” is another person’s “relatable.”

To volunteer or to nominate a neighbor, reach out to me at erikacohenderr@gmail.com or complete the form found at: bit.ly/AHMYN.

Events for the Calendar

- Saturday, May 14th from 10 a.m. to noon at Lacey Woods Park – World Migratory Bird Day Festival 2022.
- Saturday, May 21st – Ballston Quarterfest Crawl. Free to attend, this event will be more spread out this year and will feature neighborhood restaurants offering food and drink specials.

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Rebecca Reynolds MSN/L.Ac.
4141 N. Henderson Rd. (#14), Arlington
401-533-2790
Timeless medicine for modern times from an Ashton Heights neighbor
RGR22203@gmail.com
A-A-Acupuncture.com

April Energy-Saving Tip
Improperly loading and running the dishwasher can raise your utility bills. To conserve water and electricity, switch on the energy-saving mode, skip pre-rinsing (but not pre-scraping) dishes, and run the dishwasher only with a full load.
Sukha Center: “Your Good Space” for Yoga and More
By Alpita Shah

I recently moved to the area from Chicago, where I had a long-standing relationship with a neighborhood yoga studio. It was a place where I practiced yoga, taught mindfulness meditation, and made some good friends. Moving to Clarendon with its many chain restaurants and retail establishments, I was skeptical of finding a home-grown studio that felt authentic and community-based.

To my pleasant surprise, nestled between Orange Theory and Pure Barre on Garfield Street, I stumbled upon Sukha Center - a tranquil space offering yoga in a variety of styles for all levels. I immediately felt welcome and at ease; fittingly, “Sukha” is a Sanskrit word that loosely translates as “comfortable, happy, and relaxed.”

Sukha Center officially opened its doors on February 7, 2022. It was founded by Damion Moss and Ahmed Jabali-Nash. “As a 100% Black-Owned and operated wellness center,” Damion explains, “we are the change we want to see in the yoga, physical therapy, and mindful movement space.”

Damion is a veteran personal trainer, having taught in Arlington for over two decades, and teaches Budokon, a fusion of yoga and martial arts. Ahmed is a highly skilled and experienced instructor of Ashtanga yoga and teaches other styles as well. Candace Harding, Ahmed’s partner, leads classes in vinyasa yoga and is a licensed physical therapist; she also has space at the studio for sessions with PT clients. Other knowledgeable teachers offer restorative/yin yoga, slow flow, and heated classes.

The Center is focused on community spirit; their upcoming “Pink Moon Meditation” on April 16th will feature breath-work and meditation classes, as well as live music, arts, and crafts. At the event, a local artist will create a new painting that will be auctioned to support an Arlington-based non-profit. As the weather warms up, Sukha Center will offer classes on the building’s rooftop and create lounge space for students, teachers, and friends to relax. The grand opening is June 4th.

What has been most gratifying about my experience at Sukha Center is that the teachers meet me where I am in my practice. They are friendly, attentive, and make time for questions. They have a personal touch that sets them apart from other gyms and fitness centers with a more corporate feel.

Each day, I feel more and more at home in Arlington and am happy to have found my new “good space” at Sukha Center.

Sukha Center | 1016 N Garfield St. | Arlington, VA 22201
sukhacenter.cowtinker.com

What’s Next for Western Clarendon?
By Julie Mangis

Wednesday April 13th, 2021 - 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.
The Arlington County Board is set to consider changes to its 14-year-old Clarendon Sector Plan and zoning amendments affecting the western Clarendon area. Now is the time for the greater Arlington community to reflect and weigh in on what’s proposed for the area.

Attend this virtual program sponsored by the Arlington Committee of 100 to learn about what’s on and not on the drawing boards, timing, and what’s proposed to be changed. In the mix are a proposed convention hotel, redevelopment of the Joyce Motors and St. Charles Catholic Church sites, public park space, and a new fire station. The County Board’s actions could have a major impact on an area that’s important to many Arlingtonians for a host of reasons. Speakers:
- Scott Sklar, President, Ashton Heights Civic Association, and sustainable energy professional
- Representative of real estate development community (to be identified)

Anyone may register for this Arlington Committee of 100 program on Zoom and there is no cost to attend. Visit the website: www.arlingtoncommitteeof100.org to register. Let’s support our president as he speaks to the wider Arlington community about these proposed changes to the Clarendon Sector Plan and the effects they will have on Ashton Heights.
Update on the Macy’s Redevelopment Project
By Ken Matzkin and Jim Feaster

We attended the March 15th walking tour and briefing concerning the proposed replacement of the Ballston Macy’s building with a 550 unit rental apartment building and retail area. The most important thing to know about this project is that the developer proposes to build it completely within the existing zoning parameters of height, density, and parking accommodation. Specifically, its proposed height lies between those of the two commercial buildings across Wilson Blvd. from this site.

The photo to the right shows both ends of the proposed building’s exterior. Note that the developer has already executed a lease with a national supermarket chain, name to be disclosed at the appropriate time, for the 44,000sf 1st floor space that extends along the alley between Macy’s and The Point office building (at the corner of Wilson and N. Glebe) and wraps around the Wilson Blvd. side toward Ballston Quarter. Its exterior will be two stories high made mostly of glass. There will be pedestrian access to it, and an apartment building at large, from both of those streets. The apartment portion of the building will be set back beginning above this retail space which will give the supermarket exterior added prominence. Finally, there will be dedicated vehicle parking above this store to be accessed by a ramp from the N. Glebe Road side of the alley.

Residential parking will be provided underground at a ratio greater than required by current zoning code. Further, since the owner of The Point is also part owner of this (proposed) project, overflow parking needs can be accommodated not only in the County-owned parking garage accessed on N. Randolph St., connected internally to the building through Ballston Quarter, but also at The Point.

In addition to the planned landscaping around the building, extensive landscaping is planned for the 17th floor amenity space for residents (and their guests). All landscaped areas will be oriented towards preventing rain runoff.

The initial (virtual) SPRC meeting was held about this proposed project on March 24th – more updates to follow.

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So much happens in between issues of newsletters. Don’t miss out on important neighborhood information - subscribe to the Ashton Heights listserv today. The listserv is restricted to Ashton Heights and Lyon Park residents.

Did you know that we send out this newsletter on the listerv each month where you can read it in color?

To subscribe, email: main+subscribe@ashtonheights.groups.io or email etlyon410@gmail.com. Always include your full name and street address and we’ll get you set up to be “in the know.”

If you’re worried about getting too many emails, you can customize your delivery preferences, choosing from “individual messages, full digest, daily summary or no email”.

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The Ashton Heights newsletter is distributed to 1,200 households eight months of the year. Our readers enjoy supporting local businesses. Do you know of a local business that would benefit from advertising in the Ashton Heights newsletter?

Email: newsletterads@ashtonheights.org

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Kids, Inc. is a robust roster of willing, able local youth to help when the household hands are not enough.

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

Kids, Inc. Is not included in the website version of the newsletter for privacy reasons. Please view your printed newsletter hand-delivered by generous volunteers OR the issue that is distributed through the Ashton Heights listserv. Thanks!
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