

www.ashtonheights.org

Juggling Priorities as Trends Come Together By Scott Sklar, President, AHCA

All of us have been bombarded on the listserv about the Missing Middle proposals by the Arlington County Board. We had an AHCA monthly meeting program in October 2022 and again in January 2023 to cover the issue and answer questions. AHCA also polled our membership and shared those results with our members and the Arlington County Board.

Many of you testified before the Arlington County Board on January 21st, and these testimonies were exceptional. With any hard issue, there are many sides to consider and the quality of information that we all were able to bring forth was excellent. This issue is ongoing, and we are prepared and working with our 15 other sister civic associations on this issue together.

But MMH is not our only issue by far.

We are still spending a large amount of time on the Clarendon redevelopment proposal. Led by the AHCA Development Committee, with input from the AHCA Transportation and Tree Canopy Committees, our signature issue is directed on a park on the 10th Street North fire station-Verizon block. We're also raising issues of density, parking, setbacks, native plants and trees The issue of breaking up the cement caverns of development and having places residents can congregate, have programs and events – is an essential quality of life ingredient. Get ready for action on this important issue for our community.

Looming is the Arlington Board's movement to change the status quo on neighborhood parking -- and AHCA needs to be prepared with our position this year. Now is the time for some consensus building. This is a call for us to begin our internal dialogue so we are prepared for changes expected later this year.

Noise from our food establishments catapulted as an issue this year – primarily, but not limited from Don Tito's on Wilson Blvd and in some instances Darna and others. This issue is going to get worse as we have six other structures soon to be built with food establishments a stones-throw away. We need to be prepared to address these issues within the early-permitting stage, than be reactive as we now are.

All this means as Arlington changes, densifies, and becomes less responsive to its residents – we, as the Ashton Heights

Continued on page 5

February 2023

AHCA Monthly Meeting Wed., Feb. 15th, 7 - 9 p.m.

Clarendon United Methodist Church 606 N. Irving St.

7:

7:

7:

00 p.m.	Mingle and chair setup
30 p.m.	Scott Sklar, AHCA President and Committee reports
40 p.m.	Adam Reidel, Principal Environmental Management Specialist, Arlington County Department of Environmental Services.
	Mr Reidel will discuss the County recycling program as it functions today, what you can and what you can't throw in the blue bins.
	He will also discuss the history of the County recycling program, as it has been affected by changes in the local and international market for recycled goods and by the machinery available for automated sorting.

9:00 p.m. Adjourn



Editor's Note: View the newsletter in <u>full color</u> at <u>www.ashtonheights.org</u>! Mark your Calendar - articles for the March 2023 Ashton Heights newsletter are due by February 18th (<u>PLEASE BE TIMELY!</u>) Send submissions to: <u>amylmiller4@gmail.com</u>.



AHCA Membership Sign-up and dues payment form

Ashton Heights Civic Association annual dues are \$15/household or \$10/ individual member. Register for two years for \$25/ household.

Anyone who resides or owns property in Ashton Heights and is at least 18 years old may join and then vote at AHCA meetings.

Pay your dues online:

https://ashtonheights.org/ about-ahca/join-ahca/

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The Ashton Heights newsletter is distributed to 1,200+ households 8 months of the year. Our readers enjoy supporting local businesses. If you know of a local business that would benefit from advertising in the Ashton Heights newsletter, please email: <u>newsletterads@</u> <u>ashtonheights.org</u>.

Business card: \$60 1/4 page: \$85 1/2 page: \$145 Full page: \$245 Full back page: \$295 One page insert: \$325

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Transitioning to Natives? If not Nandina, then what? By Brooke Alexander, Native Plant and Tree Canopy Coordinator

What if I want to get rid of the non-native/invasive plants in my yard? This column is one of a series where we will explore this question. Reasons for planting native plants and problems caused by invasive plants have been covered in other columns, and won't be belabored here.

Today's subject: <u>*Nandina domestica*</u>. Nandina is a small evergreen shrub with multi-stalks like bamboo, red berries and some red foliage in the winter. It is common in Ashton Heights. Nandina is not native to the US and it is an invasive plant in Arlington and beyond. To the right is a line drawing to help you identify Nandina or you can visit this website for more information about the plant, as well as photos for what to look out for: <u>https://nativebackyards.com/5-reasons-you-dont-want-nandina-in-your-yard/</u>. You can also view this video that discusses this invasive plant: <u>https://mgnv.org/invasive-plants/nandina-video/</u>

What native shrubs could replace Nandina?

I offer two options to replace the invasive plant.

Option One: *Ilex verticillata*, common name: Winterberry

Winterberry has bright red drupes that persist through the winter. After the first frost makes the fruit more digestible, drupes are a good winter food source for many birds including chickadees, cedar waxwing, cardinals, mockingbirds, and catbirds. In addition to food for wintering birds, Winterberry is a pollen and nectar producer, and provides nest sites for birds and cover for wildlife.

Winterberry is a multi-stem deciduous shrub that grows 6-10 feet tall, with equal spread. Trim the largest stems to the ground every year to keep the shrub shorter.

See photos and more info here:

https://mgnv.org/plants/native-plants/shrubs/ilex-verticillata/ For best environmental value, plant the true species, not cultivars.

Option Two:

Itea virginica, common name: Virginia Sweetspire

Virginia Sweetspire has flaming fall color ranging from orange, red, yellow, and burgundy. It leafs out late, blooms early summer and keeps its leaves late into the fall. The blooms are fragrant 'tiny white flowers in cylindrical drooping clusters' about 4-6 inches long. The multi-stemmed shrub is 3-6 feet high, and 3-10 feet wide, as it expands by suckers.

Virginia Sweetspire is a wonderful supplier of pollen and nectar for butterflies, other insects, and hummingbirds. It provides seeds for birds, as well as nesting habitat and cover for birds.

See photos and more info here:

https://mgnv.org/plants/native-plants/shrubs/itea-virginica/

Look for information on replacements for other invasive species in future newsletter issues! And be sure to view the newsletter online to see the photos in color.



Itea virginica (Virginia Sweetspire) in flower in May at the Fairlington Community Center. Photo © Mary Free



Ilex verticillata 'Red Sprite' (winterberry) in October at the Glencarlyn Library Community Garden. Photo © Mary Free





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Save the Date of May 10, 2023 Special Program: Candidates Night By Dave Schutz

The upcoming June primary will be one of the most consequential in years. This special candidates night, held on May 10, 2023 will be joint with the Lyon Park Citizens Association at the Lyon Park Community House at 414 N Fillmore St. Since it is generally very difficult for candidates who have not won a primary to succeed in November, the winners of the June primary are likely to prevail, so it's important that you have the information to make a thoughtful choice. And there are contests!

For County Board, there are at least - so far - five Democratic primary candidates for two slots: Maureen Coffey, JD Spain Jr., Tony Weaver, Natalie Roy, and Jonathan Dromgoole. Coffey and Spain appear enthusiastic about the current Missing Middle proposal, Weaver and Roy less so. The County Board primary will be the first run by the state by ranked choice voting (RCV). It's important that voters understand how this works, and there will be a short presentation on RCV in the course of the evening

House of Delegates: Ashton Heights and Lyon Park have been redistricted! After the political parties failed to come to agreement last year, the Virginia Supreme Court appointed special masters who did what is generally regarded as a very balanced job of creating political districts which match the populations on the ground, Virginia wide. For us this has had the effect of moving Patrick Hope's district generally north and away from us, he is now in the new District One. We are now in the new no-incumbent Second District, for which Adele McClure has announced candidacy and there are very strong rumors that there will be a second candidate.

Senate: Also redistricted, with the effect that Senator Barbara Favola remains the Senator from Ashton Heights, but her district (which formerly went all the way to Loudoun County) has been consolidated into Arlington. So far, she has opposition in the primary from Russet Perry, and Ballotpedia states that there will be a Republican candidate, Geary Higgins. Higgins' website however is about Loudoun County issues, so we need to clarify whether he is in fact running for Senator from Arlington County.

Controller: Ingrid Morroy is retiring, Kim Klingler is running to replace her and so far there are no other announced candidates.

A contested primary will take place between incumbent Commonwealth's Attorney Parisa Dehghani-Tafti and announced candidate Josh Katcher.

There will be a contested race for Sheriff. Jose Quiroz who recently became Sheriff on the retirement of Beth Arthur will run against Wanda Younger and James Herring.

All the above Democratic candidates will be invited, and if there are Independents and Republicans identified as candidates they will be invited too.

President's Column, continued from page 1

Citizens Association needs to stay organized, focused, collaborative with each other and with the other civic associations. Our comfort and quality of life demand it.

As always, I look forward to your input directly. Please email me at <u>solarsklar@aol.com</u>. As important is your input to our chairs and co-chairs of our AHCA Committees, listed on page two of this newsletter. Your ideas, thoughts, and concerns are welcome. We are on this boat together, so get ready for the ride.

Have a fine last month of winter, and I look forward to seeing you at our February AHCA monthly meeting in the Clarendon United Methodist Church social hall – this time on all aspects of our Arlington recycling program.

Happy Winter!



Arlington Bunny Hop April 15, 2023 at 8 a.m.



Running to help others!

Register today for the annual Arlington Bunny Hop 5K.

Visit www.arlingtonbunnyhop.org

Drive-thru Food and Toiletries Collection for Area Shelters By Sallye Broome

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the Drive-thru Food and Toiletries Collections for Area Shelters this past year. Clarendon Presbyterian Church started these in response to the uptick of homelessness and shelter intake at the beginning of the pandemic. Our partners in this work, <u>New Hope Housing</u> and <u>Bridges</u> to <u>Independence</u> are working hard to meet the needs of every applicant.

In 2021, we collected over 1,000 bags/boxes. This year, with the pandemic waning, we collected a total of 364 bags/boxes. Unfortunately, the need for community support is still strong, particularly during the winter months. Every donation goes directly to a person or a family in need. We plan to continue the



Save the Date! Valentine's Day Cupcake Sale Lyon Park Community Center

Save the date for this annual event at the Lyon Park Community Center.

Friday, February 10 4 to 7 p.m.

Saturday, February 11 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

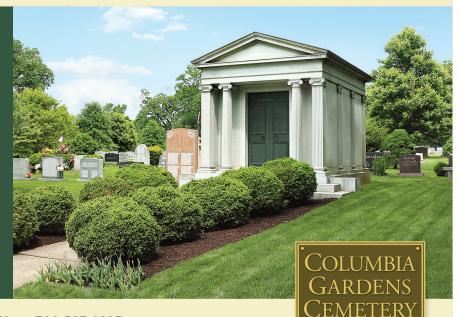
- At least 14 flavors
- A delicious neighborhood tradition
- Email jywickrph@aol.com to preorder or volunteer to bake or frost!

collections in 2023 on the second Saturday of each month, weather permitting. If you are on the Ashton Heights listserv, watch your Inbox for a reminder. **February 11, 2023** is the next collection.



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Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow: A novel by Gabrielle Zevin By Denise Cormaney Follow all her reviews at @findyourgoldenhour on Instagram

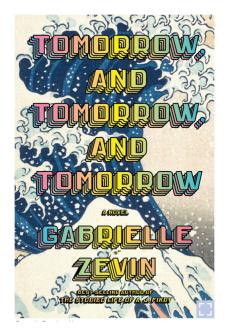
FOUR STARS!

"Sam looked at Sadie, and he thought, "This is what time travel is." It's looking at a person, and seeing them in the present and the past, concurrently. And that mode of transport only worked with those one had known a significant time."

If you read the book jacket and thought "I know nothing about gaming and I don't want to learn, this one is not for me," may I humbly suggest you reconsider?

This is a book about friendships, gender, work-life balance, and how we grow and change in those tender years of new adulthood. I loved these characters and how they handled the curveballs that eventually life throws at all of us. I keep thinking about the characters, which is the sign of an excellent book!

I think Gabrielle Zevin has officially moved onto my Must Read Authors list.



ESTABLISHED 1917

Cooking with Gas -- or Electricity? Community Safety and Security Corner By Christina Schultz

Discussions on the preferred type of stovetop can get heated. There has been even more debate recently about the hazards of using gas versus electric stoves. Increasing scrutiny on the health and environmental impact of gas stoves has turned many away from this previously preferred appliance. In 2019, California banned gas stoves in the construction of new buildings. Richard Trumka Jr., a US Consumer Product Safety commissioner, just last month controversially suggested banning new gas stoves (not existing ones). However, in the past year, 20 states with GOP-controlled legislatures have passed so-called "preemption laws" that prohibit cities from banning natural gas.

Here in Virginia, the US Energy Information Administration reported that 28 percent of Virginia housing units had natural gas cooking appliances. This is lower than the national average of 38 percent for American households with California and New Jersey having the highest, approaching 70 percent, and Maine and Florida at the lowest end with 8 percent. In response to the Richmond City Council's September 2021 climate resolution, which committed to phasing out gas use, the House of Delegates passed House Bill 1257 in February 2021. The bill would have prohibited the state, counties, cities, and towns from adopting measures that would restrict access to gas utility service and propane. The final version of HB 1257 does not include the gas ban preemption and preserved the guidelines for cities and counties to divest municipal gas utilities, requiring at least three vears' notice of intent to suspend service.

Clarendon Resident Seeking Residential Garage Space for a Shoe Workshop

Drew Altizer, 27, full-time consultant and parttime traditional bespoke shoemaker, is looking to lease a space to keep shoemaking equipment and work on this craft in his free time. He only needs around 150-200 square feet (not even a full garage).

Please call/text Drew at (240)753-3568 or email drewaltizer6@gmail.com.

Gas stoves have been reported to release pollutants, such as methane, that are linked to asthma and



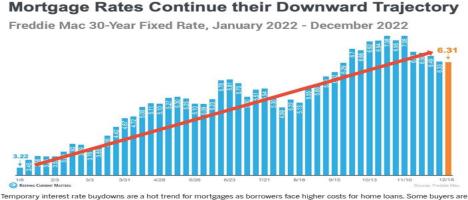
worsening respiratory conditions. A December 2022 study in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health found that indoor gas stove usage is associated with an increased risk of current asthma among children. The study found that almost 13 percent of current childhood asthma in the US is attributable to gas stove use. Other studies have shown that these stoves emit significant levels of nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide and fine particulate matter which without proper ventilation can raise the levels of indoor concentration levels to unsafe levels. According to the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers, an improvement in ventilation can prevent indoor air pollution while cooking.

On the flip side, a 2020 study by the National Fire Protection Association presents a significant disadvantage for electric — greater fire risks. Households with electric stoves reported fires at a rate 2.6 times higher than those with gas stoves. Equally staggering, the death rate in electric-cooking homes was 3.4 times higher than those with gas appliances and the injury rate was nearly five times greater. The main causes of these fire-related accidents boil down to human error, including unattended stovetops, sleeping cooks, and forgetfulness. It's not necessarily the stovetop itself that is unsafe to use.

If you are considering switching to an electric stove, incentives are being offered under the Inflation Reduction Act. You may be eligible for a rebate of up to \$840 on a new electric or induction stove and up to an additional \$500 for switching from gas or propane. It is up to you.



The graph below shows the rise and fall of mortgage rates in 2002. <u>Rates have dropped slightly below 6%</u>, and we have seen an increase in buyer activity. This year, experts agree we may see the return of greater stability and predictability in the housing market if inflation continues to ease and <u>mortgage rates</u> stabilize. The housing market, once adjusted to the new normal of higher mortgage rates, will benefit from continued strong demographic-driven demand relative to a shortage in the home supply.



Temporary interest rate buydowns are a hot trend for mortgages as borrowers face higher costs for home loans. Some buyers are exploring alternatives to traditional mortgages in a period of rising rates. Buydowns can be a less costly alternative to traditional fixed rate mortgages. Mortgage rates inched down in December from their peak in November and are at 6% as of early January 2023. Contact me with questions on financing options, and I can recommend some lenders who offer some creative loan programs.

If you want expert advice on whether it's the right time to buy or sell, let's connect. Put my <u>38 years of local Arlington market expertise</u> to work for your largest financial investment! Contact me for a confidential strategy meeting.



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Recycling in Arlington By Barbara Taylor

Confused about recycling in Arlington? So was I until I spoke with Adam Reidel, Principal Environmental Management Specialist in Arlington's Department of Environmental Services.

First, I learned about a helpful website: **arlingtonva.us/ government/programs/recycling-and-trash/wheredoes-it-go**. The site allows you to enter the name of an item, say "plastic bottle" or "coffee lid", and learn whether it can go in your blue bin for recycling or should be put in the trash.

I asked Adam how Arlington is doing on the recycling front, and he gave us an A-minus, explaining that our recycling loads are 30 to 50% cleaner (i.e. composed of acceptable items) than those of surrounding jurisdictions, which makes them more valuable to purchasers of the material.

The move to recycling glass only at designated county locations has been a huge success. Since the start of glass collection at the drop-off centers in March 2019, Arlington has collected and recycled over 10 million pounds of glass. The County collects and recycles approximately 150 tons (300,000 pounds) of glass every month. Fun fact: the only glass we can recycle includes bottles and jars. Broken mirrors, vases, and so forth should be wrapped in newspaper and put in your trash bin.

Every quarter, County Environmental Services staff sort through 100 of our bins to study what we dispose of and in which bin, with the goal of providing better information to us about proper disposal practices. Some issues Adam mentioned include putting recyclable items in plastic bags and then depositing them in the blue bins. Doing so turns the whole bagful into trash that can't be recycled. Adam also is concerned about lithium batteries being placed in either our trash or recycling bins because they're a fire hazard when crushed. He mentioned as one problematic example greeting cards with recorded messages that contain lithium batteries. (Alkaline batteries can be put in the trash.)

I was most confused about plastics recycling, but it's simpler than I thought. Adam said that plastic labeled #1 through #7 is all recyclable. #1 and #2 plastics are the most valuable and comprise 95 percent of the plastic we put in our bins. Together with #5 plastic, #1 and #2 account for 98 percent of what we discard that can be recycled.

I asked about advice staff had previously given that nothing smaller than four inches could be recycled. Adam said that caused *Continued on page 9*

Recycling in Arlington, continued from page 8

a lot of confusion among people who wanted to know if 3.75 inches was too small! The County dropped that advice and now tells us just to avoid putting very small items, such as plastic bottle caps, in our blue bins because they fall through the cracks of the recycling machinery. (It's fine if the cap is still attached to the bottle.) Even the tops of takeout coffee cups can be recycled, as can deli containers (not Styrofoam), yogurt cups, plastic clam shells, and most such food containers. But plastic film (Saran Wrap), bags, plastic straws, Styrofoam, and other non-food-container plastics like CDs and toys can't be recycled, nor can flimsy plastics like the plant flats we get from nurseries.

Adam explained the processes (lasers and ballistics!) by which all of this plastic is sorted in recycling facilities. Machinery can actually distinguish among the various plastic numbers and sort them accordingly. They are then bailed and sold.

There are some nuances to paper recycling. Shredded paper can't be recycled and should be put in a bag in the trash. Milk containers, juice boxes, broth cartons, and the like with a waxy coating can be recycled, but coffee cups, which have an interior plastic coating, and the coated paper used to wrap deli meats, can't be. As you already know, newspapers, magazines, books, cardboard, and mixed paper are all recyclable. Even paper with a bit of metal attached, like a spiral notebook, can be recycled.

Regarding metal, aluminum (cans, foil, food containers) is our most valuable recyclable. It takes 75 percent

less energy to produce a new aluminum can from old aluminum than from new, so there is a big market for the material. And here's a factoid from Adam: 75 percent of all aluminum ever manufactured is still in circulation, so let's keep it going!

Where can we do better? Using our green organics carts. Adam cited the "ick factor" when explaining reluctance to dispose of our kitchen waste in our bins. He explained that we can line the bin with newspaper and wrap the stuff in paper if we're afraid it becoming slimy or smelly. Also, paper towels, pizza boxes, paper napkins, uncoated cardboard salad containers, and other soiled paper can go in that cart along, of course, with yard waste.

Arlington's recyclable materials are processed at several locations in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Trash is incinerated in a facility Arlington owns jointly with Alexandria that produces electricity. Adam explained that the facility uses up-to-date technology to minimize emissions and pollution.

I was surprised to learn that in some years Arlington makes a profit from our recycled materials, though Adam called the recycling cycle "boom and bust." Last year the program netted more than a million dollars, but the market is cooling, and our recycling contracts are becoming more expensive, so we may not see such surpluses in the future.

Here is an illustration from the Environment Services website that summarizes what can and can't be recycled in Arlington. Cut it out and save for reference as you work to improve your recycling habits.



NOMINATIONS

Ashton Heights neighbors, help strengthen our community! Nominate yourself or a neighbor for the "Meet Your Neighbor" newsletter column. Nominations are welcome via email (erikacohenderr@gmail.com) or by filling out the form at the following link: <u>bit.ly/AHMYN</u> -- Your community looks forward to meeting you!

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Ashton Heights Pet of the Month

Meet Odin, the Pet of the Month! Odin loves to play with his many friends in the neighborhood, is always happy to meet new people (even if his expression never changes) and loves living in Ashton Heights.



Happy Valentine's Day!

Photo by Monstera



For privacy reasons, the Kids Inc. listings are not included in the online version. Please consult the PDF posted to the Ashton Heights listserv or the hand delivered newsletter.

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