



Ashton Heights News

www.ashtonheights.org

February 2024

Crime, Development and Transportation

By Scott Sklar, President, AHCA

Issues rise and fall within the Ashton Heights Civic Association (AHCA) over the years, but these crime, development and transportation always appear at the top of the list.

In planning for the Washington Metro and its corridor development, Washington, DC commuter traffic through Route 50, Langston Blvd-Lee Highway changes, and even Wilson Blvd, we have to address the commensurate crime issues that Metro, commuter traffic, and more densified development naturally bring along.

AHCA has worked with Arlington on bike lanes, more prominent signage and lighting for pedestrian walkways, bump-outs at intersections for shorter crosswalk distances, narrowing Wilson Blvd to reduce its use for rush hour commuters, and more prominent signage along Langston. All of this has had positive impacts, but there will still be more people commuting and housing density will increase, especially now after the County Board's Expanded Housing Option (EHO) vote.

As mentioned earlier, our AHCA Safety and Security Committee chaired by Christina Schultz, keeps in contact with the Arlington County Police Department (ACPD), as well as our AHCA Transportation Committee chaired by Patrick Lueb on interfacing on traffic calming and data analysis and efforts with the community on North Jackson and North Kenmore Streets. The AHCA working group on bar/restaurant noise chaired by Martha Casey also talks routinely with ACPD. At our upcoming February AHCA monthly meeting, we will have an ACPD representative on security and crime along

with a speaker from the local insurance industry on actions homeowners, condo owners and renters can do, to reduce certain types of crime and property loss or damage.

As mentioned in almost every newsletter, our most busy committee is the AHCA Development Committee co-chaired by Jack Spilsbury and Alexander Tuneski, which covers Clarendon redevelopment, a range of high-rise commercial and residential projects about to be built, tracking EHO policies and projects, and coordinating with other civic associations. I also have commandeered long-time AHCA ExCom member Ken Matzkin to work with the other civic associations on these issues.

As an aside, but very relevant, as you can see from our listserv traffic, we have various thought leaders within our community with different perspectives and visions on missing middle housing (MMH) that now has evolved into EHO Development (<https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Building/Permits/EHO>) allowing duplexes and other multiple housing approaches on residential lots. I do appreciate AHCA ExCom member David Phillips putting out ideas on "common ground" to begin a discussion on some AHCA consensus. I would like these efforts to continue, hopefully in parallel with our Lyon Park Citizens Association partners.

From my own perspective, I moved here as a missing middle single home buyer in 1984, purchasing a Sears kit bungalow before the Metro stops were fully opened, because it was affordable, close-in to Washington, DC

Continued on page 3

AHCA Monthly Meeting Wed., Feb. 21st, 7 - 9 p.m.

**Clarendon United
Methodist Church
606 N. Irving St.**

7:00 p.m. Mingle and chair setup

7:30 p.m. Scott Sklar, President and Committee reports

7:40 p.m. Is Ashton Heights an out of control criminal Mecca, one of the safest places in America or somewhere in between? How can we make our own homes less attractive to crime?

Come and listen to James Herring of the Arlington County Police Department discuss these issues.

8:15 p.m. As of press time, we are looking to have a local insurance agent come and speak to our group. They'll present a claims-eye view of what went wrong in home that have had fires, been burglarized, exposed liability claims on homeowners (e.g., trees falling on houses, flooding) and more.

9:00 p.m. Adjourn



Editor's Note: View the newsletter in full color at www.ashtonheights.org! Mark your calendar! Articles for the **March 2024** newsletter issue are due by **February 22nd**. Send submissions to: amylmiller4@gmail.com.

Join or Renew your AHCA Membership!

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/>

Advertise with us!

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: newsletterads@ashton-heights.org.

Business card: \$60
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Full back page: \$295
One page insert: \$325

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President's Column -- continued from page 3

where I worked, great tree-canopy and a plethora of local parks – and most importantly great people. As I had my family, the great school quality and amazing neighbors just added to this positive experience. And in my 70's, all of the above – including access to high-quality health care, local vendors and restaurants just add that extra layer of pleasure.

I believe our conversations are healthy, as we build our common views, share concerns, and hopefully row in the same direction on how we guide the County Board, run with our sister civic associations – all with the same vision and goals, to sustain and evolve Arlington and especially our community into the great place where we all live.

Dialogue is healthy, different viewpoints are expected, but lastly I want to state that respect for diversity of viewpoints is welcome and required. So, let us agree in 2024, not to follow behaviors by the national politicians, and work on common goals, share perspectives, and move forward together with a common vision of attributes our community should encompass.

I am excited about the new year 2024. I appreciate all the work our ExCom, committees, special working groups, and our members put into the civic association and our community. It all matters. So again, Happy New Year, enjoy the snow and winter weather!

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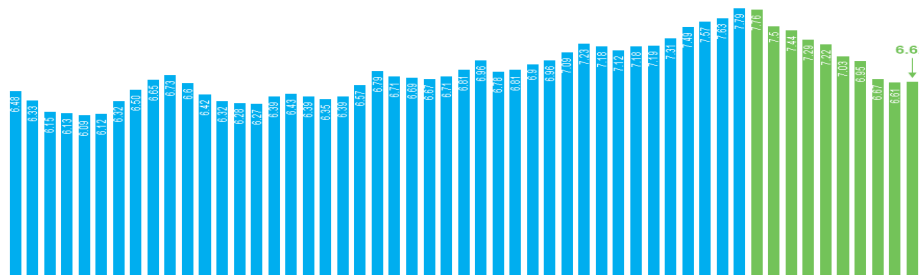
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What Lower Mortgage Rates Mean for Your Purchasing Power. If you want to buy a home, it's important to know how mortgage rates impact what you can afford and how much you'll pay each month. Fortunately, rates for 30-year fixed mortgages have come down significantly since the end of October and are currently under 7%, according to Freddie Mac (see graph below):

Mortgage Rates Fall Below Seven Percent

January 2023 – Today

U.S. Weekly Averages as of 1/4/2024



Are you curious about your purchasing power? Contact me and I can connect you with mortgage lenders who offer great rates and financing options. Are you looking to buy before you sell? Let's discuss Bridge Loans as an option. Put my 39 years of local market expertise to work for you and those you care about!

Casey O'Neal, Compass Real Estate, 703-217-9090



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Keeping Our Furry Family Members Safe During Winter

Community Safety and Security Corner

By Christina Schultz

February's national cat health month, neighborhood fox sightings, and the winter weather are good reminders to consider pet safety. Our pets need to be prepared for the cold just as we do. We often think that those fur coats protect them during winter, but they are not enough.

How a pet tolerates cold weather depends on the animal's size, weight, coat type, and overall health. Nevertheless, even dogs that are tolerant of colder weather, like huskies, are susceptible to frostbite and hypothermia. If left outdoors in the cold for too long, pets can freeze, become disorientated, lost, or injured. Experts recommend that sick, older, and younger pets be brought indoors when the temperature is below 45F. In any case no pet should be left outside for long periods in below-freezing weather.

There are added dangers lurking during the colder months. Cats, in particular, like to get under the hoods of cars to stay warm. Animals also enjoy licking up the sweet taste of an antifreeze spill, but it is toxic for pets and can severely damage their kidneys if ingested.

Then there is the salt used to melt ice from streets and sidewalks. The salt contains chemicals that can irritate a dog's paws or be harmful if ingested. Pet parents should wipe off their dog's paws after walks. And of course, despite our urban setting, predators continue to search for their next meal.

We all know that no matter how cold the temperature gets, some of our furry family members (bark!) need to venture outside to play or take bathroom breaks. We just need to be aware and prepared so that they can enjoy the cold in a safe and secure way. Just think how fabulous your dog will look in a stylish sweater and a pair of booties. Let me know if you can convince your cat to do the same since mine is skeptical.

Top 7 Pet

Cold Weather SAFETY TIPS

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- 1 Wear a Coat or Sweater**
Even with a built-in fur coat, it's still chilly out there! Pay attention to the material and the fit when choosing a coat.
- 2 Clean Up AntiFreeze**
Antifreeze tastes sweet, but is a fatal poison. Look into antifreeze made with propylene glycol.
- 3 Stay Hydrated**
Keep the water in your pet's bowl fresh, full, and unfrozen.
- 4 Don't Overfeed**
Many people believe that they should feed their pets more in the winter. Overfeeding your pet can lead to health problems. Resist their adorable eyes!
- 5 Beware of Ice**
Slipping on ice can lead to injury. You can never be sure if a patch of ice can hold your pet's weight.
- 6 Protect Your Pet's Paws**
Paw booties are a great way to protect your pet's paws against the harsh winter weather.
- 7 Keep Your Pets IDs Up to date**
External ID tags, such as those by PetHub, can help bring your pet home quickly if they get lost.

For more pet safety tips visit PetHub.com

PetHub
Lost pets get home faster.



What To Recycle in Arlington | Single-Family Homes

RECYCLE RIGHT: Items should be **CLEAN + DRY + EMPTY**. Pull apart mixed recyclables.

METAL	PLASTIC	PAPER
<p>metal cans, aluminum foil & trays</p>	<p>plastic bottles & jugs #1-#7 (with lids)</p>	<p>juice boxes, milk, wine & broth cartons</p>
<p>containers, wide-mouth plastics</p>	<p>rigid plastics</p>	<p>cereal & food boxes, cardboard</p>
<p>mixed paper, newspaper, books, magazines</p>		

MVP
The Most Valuable Player among recyclable materials continues to be aluminum. Be sure to recycle them right = clean + dry + empty to ensure their reuse.

Please take **glass** to County Recycling Drop-Off Centers for optimal recycling

NOT recyclable in single-stream dumpster or cart

- glass • plastic bags • soiled paper • contaminated plastics • light bulbs • styrofoam • ceramics & glassware • disposable cups • wire hangers • shredded paper • food waste • bio-plastics • household hazardous materials

BATTERIES
Only **ALKALINE** batteries can go in **TRASH**. All other batteries should be treated as Household Hazardous Materials, disposed at the HHM Facility or battery drop-off locations throughout the County.

Use this **RESPONSIBLE** sticker on all non-textile surfaces – including stainless steel – without damage.

Urgent
and primary
care are just
around the corner!

PMA Health's Clarendon office is open
7 days a week with hours to fit your needs!

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Monday-Friday: 8am – 7pm

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Primary Care 703.521.6662



PMAHEALTH

URGENT CARE 4 WAYS Walk-in • Reserve Walk-in Visits Online • Book a Virtual Visit • Virtual Visits On-Demand mypmahealth.com



Annual Valentine's Day Cupcake Sale Lyon Park Community Center

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

Friday, February 9
4 to 7 p.m.

Saturday, February 10
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!

Arlington Bunny Hop

April 13, 2024 at 8 a.m.
Running to help others!

**Register today for
the annual
Arlington Bunny Hop 5K**
Visit www.arlingtonbunnyhop.org

Stay for the block party afterwards with activi-
ties for all ages! There will be live music, a bounce
house, face painting and so much more.

** The Arlington Bunny Hop has raised over
\$100,000 for Arlington charities. Sign up today to
participate in this great event! **



DARK SKIES – Part 1 **(First in a new monthly series)** **By Brooke Alexander, Native** **Plant and Tree Canopy** **Coordinator**



If You Can See the Dark is a new children's book put out by the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), which I bought for my grandchildren.

The book explains that if you can see the dark, you can see so many amazing things. And that the dark is very important for bats, birds, butterflies, nocturnal mammals, spring peepers, fish, fireflies, trees and flowers. It goes on to describe how animals use the dark and how light pollution disrupts animal daily and life cycle patterns.

What is light pollution? Light pollution is defined by [DarkSky.org](https://www.darksky.org) as the human-made alteration of outdoor light levels from those occurring naturally. With light pollution, we can negatively affect many parts of our world, including migratory birds, pollinators, sea turtles, and mammals, including humans.

I'll talk today about a couple of examples of light pollution effects on wildlife and our ecosystem. Looking close to home, let's examine fireflies and salamanders, both of which I have in my yard. Fireflies are often used as study subjects to look at the impact of light pollution on insects. There is still more to learn about how insects interact with excess light. But according to the Xerces Society, it has been established that the negative effects include "disruptions to navigation, circadian rhythms, and recognition of visual cues; increased vulnerability to predation; and desensitized vision".

I'm so excited to have Eastern red-backed salamanders in my

yard. Originally, I was only aware of them in the leaf litter in my outside basement entrance. So, I've always left half of each step with leaves, for their habitat. However, since I've been leaving my leaves in my yard, I've found them in 3 other places in my yard. Such fun!

Turns out, Eastern red-backed salamanders can live 25 years (in captivity). As part of our local ecosystem, they feed birds that forage in leaf litter, and small mammals. These salamanders, in turn, eat a wide variety of small invertebrates. And, they are nocturnal. They have evolved to forage at night to avoid predators. With increased light, they are more visible to predators, so they forage less, which reduces their growth, and reproductive output. Reduced foraging reduces their winter survival when they do not feed and rely upon stored fat for energy.



An adult Female Red-Backed Salamander (Plethodon cinereus) found in Hubbardston, Massachusetts under a log on 3/20/2022
Photo by Alex Karasoulous

Further afield, here is a 10 minute YouTube video about light pollution and its impact upon sea turtle reproduction (Guardians of the Night: Reducing Light Pollution on Sea Turtle Nesting Beaches: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5ID9MU1bCQ&t=150s>)

Stay tuned for future articles about DARK SKIES, including ways to reduce the impact of our excess outdoor lighting! Meanwhile, see [www.DarkSky.org](https://www.darksky.org) for more information.

LYON PARK CHILI

**5:00pm
to
7:30pm**

**At the
Lyon Park
Community
Center**

COOK-OFF

Sunday March 3rd

Adults \$10, Kids ages 3-10 just \$5, Kids under 3 are free!
Contact Kim Franklin (BlufftonJoy@gmail.com) or
Elizabeth Sheehy (Elizabeth.R.Sheehy@gmail.com)
to contribute chili, cornbread, salad or to volunteer.

A PLACE TO CELEBRATE AND REMEMBER

The event center at Columbia Gardens Cemetery is a lovely setting for welcoming friends and family to celebrate the life of your loved one. Our light-filled, elegant reception room opens onto two large bluestone terraces, surrounded by gardens. From small, intimate gatherings to large sit-down receptions, we can assist you with catering, flowers, linens and music for a memorable event.



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Snow!

By Logan Fry

This January, kids up and down Oakland Street gathered in the mini park to celebrate numerous snow days and only two days of school that week. It was a wondrous sight, since it had not snowed in two whole years. Hours were spent modifying a slope and building a better track for kids to sled on. Everyone had lots of fun and enjoyed their time sledding.

Others gathered at the hills of Thomas Jefferson to enjoy the snowy days. Some of the neighbors even built a snowman. It was a beautiful sight for kids who were snow-deprived for so long. Even though everyone was having fun, there were still people hard at work.

Snow may have let kids have a fun snow day, but it did not stop the mail carriers, snow plowers, and garbage people from doing their job. Thank you to all of the hard workers out there who worked on a snow day.



Save the Date

We have lots of events coming up in our area -- here are just a few to put on your calendar. If you're reading this newsletter issue online, all of the underlined text below are hyperlinks that will take you to the website with more details on each of these events.



- Have you signed up for the **Arlington Public Library Winter Reading Challenge**? Go to: <https://library.arlingtonva.us/for-readers/winter-reading/> and from now until March 1, 2024, keep track of your reading using the library app or a winter reading bookmark. Once you've read three books, visit your preferred library location to claim your prize. You'll also be entered to win a set of four tickets to either a Washington Wizards or Washington Capitals game.
- [Free paper shredding](#) is held the first Saturday of every month (unless it's a holiday weekend) for Arlington County residents. The next date is February 3, 2024 and then March 2, 2024.
- On **Wednesday, February 7th**, enjoy an afternoon of live acoustic music performed by "[PhEd-Up with Phriends](#)". They'll play classic pop, folk and blues favorites through the decades. This takes place at the Langston Center from 2 to 3 p.m.
- Have you ever wanted to learn how to design, build, plant and maintain a rain garden on your property? Then register for the [Rain Garden Workshop](#) held on Saturday, February 10th from 9:30 a.m. to noon.
- Head to Central Library on Monday, February 12th for [Family Art Night](#). Children of all ages and their adults can come to work on process-oriented art. First come, first served until capacity is reached.
- March 5, 2024 is the [Presidential Primary Election](#). Virginia is an open primary state, meaning that voters do not register by political party. Be sure to cast your primary vote! Key dates:
 - February 12, 2024: last day to register to vote or update existing registration
 - February 13, 2024: same day registration begins
 - February 23, 2024: last day to apply for a mail ballot
 - March 2, 2024: last day of early voting

Restaurant Review – Padaek By Vinh and Susan Nguyen

Website: padaekdc.com
2931 S. Glebe Rd., Arlington, VA 22206
703-888-2890



*Photo courtesy of the
Padaek Instagram page*

The Washington area is blessed with an amazing tapestry of global food, with the next wave perhaps Lao cuisine. We saw early glimpses at popups in Union Market, then Thip Khao really opened eyes in 2014.

The owner/chef is Seng Luangrath. Born in Laos, she fled to Thailand at the age of 12 and started cooking then. Chef Seng transformed an older Falls Church Thai restaurant into the first Padaek in 2010, then opened Thip Khao, recognized by Food and Wine, Michelin, and the James Beard foundation. We are lucky to have the next Padaek in Arlington, with the chef herself in the open kitchen. It's a new, bright and lively place with colorful decorations, with hand-painted flowers on the walls.

The menu blends regional Thai and Lao cooking. We sampled some fine Thai options, but really focused on the Lao offerings. At the risk of gross over-generalization, we found all dishes packed with flavor, with unabashedly more intense and earthier notes than Thai counterparts.

A good introduction is the tamarind glaze in *Peek Gai* (fried chicken wings) or *Chuenh Taohu* (tofu). The glaze is sour, sweet and savory all at the same time while brightened with chili peppers and chopped scallions. A favorite starter are the Curry Puffs, similar to samosas but with a sharper curried potato filling. We loved the *Sai Qua* pork sausage infused with herbs. Skip the Spring Rolls,

others do it better. The *Laab* and *Nam Khao Thadaeu* salads showcased bright, intense herbs mixed with minced chicken and diced tofu, respectively. Steamed sticky rice is a frequent sidekick, helping moderate the intense flavors.

Drunken Noodles was a fine version of this Thai staple, but you should give the Crab Noodles and its umami bomb a try. The *Khao Soi Gai* soup blended a delicious curry broth, grilled chicken thighs, and chewy egg noodles. Other mains we loved were *Pla Makham* (fried catfish), and *Pieng Gai Khao Laam* (roasted poussin chicken marinated with lemongrass and turmeric).

There is only one dessert on the menu, "Flying White Rabbit" – a scoop of gelato over black sesame sticky rice – but don't miss it. If you see the *Bua Loi* dessert (rice and taro dumplings in coconut milk) on the specials menu, get it too!

There's a decent wine list, and the Lao beer is worth a try. We can't wait to go back and try everything else!

KIDS, INC.

Our local youth are ready to help when the household hands are not enough.

Send updates to Ann Felker:
gr8est9@gmail.com



Dog walking



Pet sitting



Babysitting



Leaf raking



Plant watering



Yard work



Snow shoveling



Parents helper



Technology



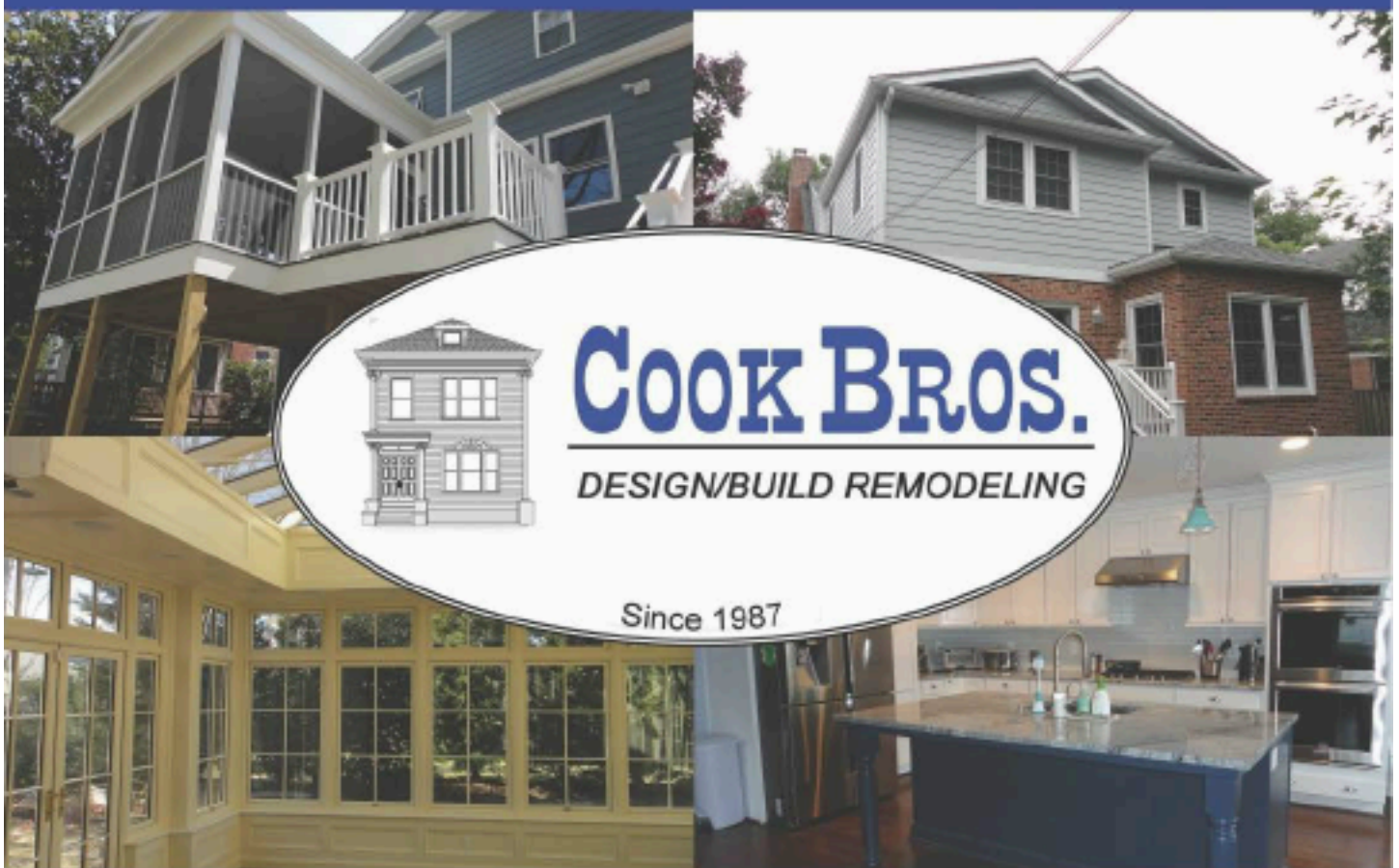
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Icons courtesy of flaticon.com

**Please consult the newsletter that
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listserv or the hand-delivered
newsletter for a full list of kids who
are available for hire!**

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