

### www.ashtonheights.org

### Spring has Sprung and Ashton Heights is Amazing! By Scott Sklar, President, AHCA

I have been around a broad swath of Ashton Heights admiring the great trees and flowers in everyone's yards. Camellia trees and cherry trees in bloom. Lenten Roses, daffodils, crocuses – all in flower!

My bird houses have young birds chirping, and the squirrels are plentiful. You can smell the beginning of Spring and it is invigorating.

Brooke Alexander leads Ashton Heights' effort to protect tree canopy and native plants. As Arlington loses tree canopy, this is the season to replant, repair, and replenish our plant life. Brooke is listed on the inside page under our Committee Chairs if you need to reach out to her.

Spring is our rainy season, and as you know, our rains are becoming more frequent and at greater intensity. Water runoff is an issue and trees and ground cover are the best remedy. This year we begin to be taxed on our runoff, and remedial actions like rain barrels and pervious payments allow some tax forgiveness. Chris Lewicki is our AHCA lead on stormwater, please reach out if you need assistance.

I am getting contacted on noise mostly from lawnmower and leaf blowers being an issue. A personal ask is to make sure whether you do your own work or hire yard workers, they start after 10 a.m. <u>Consumer Reports</u> rates leaf blowers on noise, battery length, and durability. And Consumer Reports also has an article on the <u>Best & Worst</u> <u>Battery Lawn Mowers</u>.

These issues and actions directly impact the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

When everything starts blooming and growing, we have had numerous conversations on the AHCA listserv about branches that block stop signs and make it difficult to see at intersections in our residential neighborhood for walkers, bicycle riders and automobile drivers. Please trim your branches and politely cajole your neighbors to do so. Say "AHCA President Scott Sklar asked me to" and show them this newsletter article.

As a teenager, I hate when my parents would say this, but "while you're at it," working outside on your yards, lawns and gardens --- look around for flower pots, pails, tires, and other items that collect water and become breeding grounds for mosquitoes. This is the time to begin mosquito prevention early.

I also have bird baths and I change my water every other day. Mosquito eggs hatch in 48 hours and one female mosquito lays over 200 eggs at a time. Also mosquito dunks for birdbaths last for 30 days, and most contain BTI, a April 2024

### AHCA Monthly Meeting Wed., April 17th, 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
ous ,	8:00 p.m.	Topic: Toddler and Dog coexistence. There have been some tense moments between toddler parents and residents with unleashed dogs in Ashton Heights parks in
se ole and ents		recent months, and we can only expect that this will be exacerbated as the weather warms. We expect a presentation from Bruce Caviness of Arlington's Field Rovers whose responsibilities include
it," vns wer lat g	8:30 p.m.	sorting out these conflicts. Topic: Deer management. Bill Browning and Marion Jordan will present on the County's decision making on limiting Arlington's deer population - mechanisms being discussed include contraception, sterilization and euthanasia. This is a contentious issue and
o nale me. last		a contentious issue and the County is trying to decide its approach. Bring your most polite and open minded self to the discussion.
	9:00 p.m.	Adjourn

Continued on page 3

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Editor's Note: View the newsletter in <u>full color</u> at <u>www.ashtonheights.org</u>! Mark your calendar! Articles for the <u>May 2024</u> newsletter issue (last issue before the summer break) are due by April 19th. Send submissions to: <u>amylmiller4@gmail.com</u>.

### 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:

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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: <u>newsletterads@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

### 2023-2024 AHCA Officers and Executive Committee

President Scott Sklar solarsklar@aol.com 703-522-3049

VP Programs Dave Schutz porgschu@verizon.net

VP Membership Jim O'Brien jimob1@verizon.net

**Treasurer** Doug Williams treasurer@ashtonheights.org Secretary Chris Armstrong carmstrong07@gmail.com

> Members at Large Margaret Beach mbetc@aol.com

Jim Richardson jabrichardson@verizon.net

David Phillips davidphillips1@msn.com

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### **Committees**

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### Lubber Run Farmers Market Opens April 20, 2024

Mark your calendar! The Lubber Run Farmers Market begins its seventh season on April 20. The market, in the K.W. Barrett Elementary School parking lot at 4401 N Henderson Rd, will be open every Saturday, rain or shine, from 8 a.m. to noon through November 23, 2024. Come on out and enjoy a visit with baby goats from Faerie Springs Farm, or join a project focused on climate change at the Arlington Art Truck. Sit, sip, and chat while listening to live music. And, of course, shop the wide variety of locally grown or locally prepared foods on offer at our open-air market!

Potted herbs and other plants for the garden will be available early in the growing season followed by fresh-cut flowers beginning late spring. As always, the market offers a great array of seasonal fruits and vegetables along with fish and pork products, goat cheeses, roasted nuts, sweet and savory baked goods, and a variety of prepared food and drink.

Parking is in the south end of the school parking lot (limited) and in the nearby Lubber Run Community Center garage (ample) at 300 N Park Dr starting at 8:00 a.m. For more, see <u>https://lubberrunfarmersmarket.org/</u>, where you can subscribe to our e-newsletter, or follow us on Instagram (<u>LubberRunFM</u>) and Facebook (<u>LubberRunFM</u>)

See you at the market on April 20!

### President's Column continued from page 1

bacteria that is only toxic to mosquito larvae. BTI is harmless to people, plants, pets, birds, beneficial insects and ONLY hurts mosquitoes.

While a few of us in Ashton Heights have solar-battery systems, where we never lose electric power, everyone else needs to have their tress trimmed so that in these times of heavy winds or heavy rains they do not break the electric lines running from the pole to your house, or your cable or telephone line connections. Intense winds and heavy rains are occurring more frequently. While the electric company has crews trimming along high-voltage electric lines (something you should NOT do), lower voltage wires for electricity, cable and telephone/Wifi that run onto your property needs preventive protection.

So the arrival of spring is just a great time, but we all have some planning and work to do. I know you'll enjoy it. And I wish you an exhilarating and wonderful Spring 2024!



### **A-A-Acupuncture**

Rebecca Reynolds MSN/L.Ac. 4141 N. Henderson Rd. (#14) Arlington, VA 22203 401-533-2790

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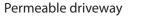
### SEEKING: Stormwater Mentors for Ashton Heights

Do you have expertise in any of these areas that you are willing to share with others in Ashton Heights?

Rain barrels

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- Tree planting
- Conservation landscaping (with native plants)
- Rain garden (with native plants)



The Ashton Heights Stormwater Committee is setting up a peer-to-peer learning network so neighbors can help each other reduce flooding damage and reduce stormwater pollution reaching the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay. Please be in touch with one of us if you can mentor your neighbors in any of the areas listed above.

The county's stormwater <u>website</u> and <u>stormwater manual</u> have lots of details, including webinars and workshops, on designing and installing each of these items. (These are useful whether you choose to apply for a rebate or not.)

### **Ashton Heights Stormwater Committee**

Christine Lewicki, Chair, <u>chris22203@gmail.com</u> Margaret Beach, Member, <u>mbetc@aol.com</u> Brooke Alexander, Member, <u>brooke.alexander52@gmail.com</u>



### Lyon Park Plant Sale – April 20, 2024

One of Spring's not-to-be missed events is the annual Lyon Park Plant Sale which supports maintenance of the Lyon Park

Community Center. Mark your calendars for **Saturday, April 20th**! As you work in your gardens, please consider potting up some of your favorites to donate to the Plant Sale. We can only sell what our neighbors donate, so please be as generous as you have in the past. Most plants will sell for \$5.00.

The details – Saturday, April 20, 2024 from 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. We'll be under the big tent in the park, rain or shine. Please bring your donations to the park by 10:00 a.m. on the 20th.

A "DIG-YOUR-OWN," hosted by Deborah Barber, the creator and steward of the wonderful gardens around the Lyon Park Community Center is back this year. The beautiful native plants will be in full bloom, and



you can dig some for your garden during the Plant Sale. Deborah and volunteers will guide diggers to the areas that are available for digging. Plants are \$5.00 per shovelful, \$1.00 per seedling. Please bring pots or newspaper for your selections.

Interested in volunteering for the sale or dig-your-own? We'll begin set-up around 9:00 a.m. and can always use extra hands to put up the sale tent, set up tables and arrange plants, and take it all down at 2:00 p.m.

Questions? Contact Susan Bell at sibell703@outlook.com.

### International Dark Sky Week — April 2 to 8 By Brooke Alexander, Native Plant and Tree Canopy Coordinator



### A total solar eclipse over a big swath of North America is coming on April 8, 2024!

By the time you read this newsletter, you will have heard how rare this is for us (the last total solar eclipse visible anywhere in mainland US was February 1979), where you need to travel to see this total eclipse, and that we will have partial (87%) solar eclipse in Arlington (Total Solar Eclipse on April 8, 2024: Path Map and Times), that NASA is live streaming it (2024 Total Eclipse, and how to protect your eyes while viewing.

This article is about the bigger picture and our night sky heritage. From DarkSky International:

- Until recently, our ancestors experienced a sky brimming with stars—a night sky that inspired science, religion, philosophy, art and literature, including some of Shakespeare's most famous sonnets;
- The natural night sky is our common and universal heritage, yet it's rapidly becoming unknown to the newest generations;
- Recall that without the natural night sky, we could not have navigated the globe, or walked on the moon.

Light pollution is reducing our ability to see the stars. Van Gogh painted 'Starry Night' in southern France in 1889, inspired by the Milky Way. Now, like so many parts of the world, the Milky Way can no longer be seen from there.

Celebrate International Dark Sky Week, April 2-8. DarkSky International's <u>Night Matters Lecture Series</u> is available for free. Sign up <u>online</u>. Watch them all and learn what Navajo, Insects, Astrophotography and the Human Brain have in common. Here are the Lecture titles:

- Tuesday, April 2 at 2pm: Dark Sky: Our Vision for 2024 (what DarkSky does)
- Wednesday, April 3 at 2pm: The Impact of Artificial Lights on Insects
- Thursday, April 4 at 2pm: Navajo Perspectives on the Night Sky
- Friday, April 5 at 2pm: Astrophotography With and Without Light Pollution
- Sunday, April 7 at 2pm: The Mind After Midnight: Light, Sleep, and Circadian Disruption

Show your support for the night sky by taking the <u>Dark Sky</u> <u>Pledge</u>:

"I pledge to protect the night by following the Five Principles for Responsible Outdoor Lighting, using lights only when and where I need them, and learning more about the impacts of artificial light on wildlife, habitats, and my community."

### DARK SKIES - Part 3 Safety and Dark Skies By Brooke Alexander, Native Plant and Tree Canopy Coordinator



Many believe that brighter light outside at night makes us safer. This is not necessarily the case:

- 1. Bright light creates glare, and results in hiding spots at the edge of the glare.
- 2. Bright light constricts our eyes' pupils, making it difficult for us to see in low light conditions. Again, this shows up in looking beyond the glare. More of an issue for us older folks.
- 3. Lighted spaces that are hidden give criminals the light and privacy to work. Don't give criminals a well-lit hiding space!
- 4. See more info and photos at <u>Outdoor lighting at night</u> <u>doesn't do what you think it does to reduce crime and</u> <u>increase safety | DarkSky International</u>

As we've learned earlier in this series, bright outside lighting is harmful to our ecosystem and our health.

Knowing these two pieces of information, how do we use light to stay safe without negatively affecting our environment?

The keys are to a.) minimize the amount of light around our houses at night; and b.) minimize the amount of time these lights are lit. Add a timer and/or a motion detector to your outside lights. Then the light goes on when it is needed for people coming and going. An intermittent light is more noticeable to neighbors and passersby. More people noticing makes us safer.

Here are a couple other thoughts on how to increase the safety of our homes.

- 1. The Arlington Police department recommends minimizing hiding places outside your exterior doors, and first floor windows. In these areas, they suggest lowering shrub height to below 3 feet, and trim trees so that the lowest branches are higher than 6 feet in these areas.
- 2. Another way we keep safe is watching out for our neighbors. Know your neighbors and their habits. We can keep each other safer.

Note related article (page 4) on International Dark Sky WEEK, in advance of the Solar Eclipse.

Stay tuned for next month's discussion on dark skies, energy and climate.

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### "...PMA Health has everything we were looking for...

convenient location and parking; helpful, friendly and competent staff; accessible and knowledgeable providers. We would recommend PMA Health to anyone in the area." Urgent Care Monday-Friday: 8am – 7pm Weekends: 9am – 2pm

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### Our Beautiful Cemetery By Sara Guerrero, 6th grader at Gunston Middle School

As the weather gets warmer, Columbia Gardens Cemetery has seen more activity. The vegetation is blooming and kids can sometimes be seen playing in between the tombstones. Many others are also coming to visit the gorgeous graveyard.

Many kids, such as the ones who live on N. Oakland Street, have spent years playing and hanging out in Columbia Gardens. They'll bike, run, or walk around its lovely grounds. Fun games are invented beneath the trees and special places are formed with pinky-promises. In the colder months, children can even be seen sledding, or waging snowball wars. Many kids have come to know this cemetery like the back of their hand.

Other people have also been seen enjoying Columbia Gardens' beauty. More people have been seen taking walks around the cemetery, sometimes with friends. Others have taken the opportunity to get some exercise and go for a run or a jog while the weather's nice. Many loved ones have been coming out to see their friends or family members buried at Columbia Gardens, leaving gifts or sitting on the carved stone benches for a moment.

Let's face it, our cemetery is beautiful. The wide assortment of tombstones makes for a special place everywhere you look. People leave meaningful gifts, everything from rocks placed by little kids to favorite childhood hot wheels cars. The greenery and plant life is also gorgeous at our cemetery. So remember, whenever you feel like taking a walk on a sunny day, come check out Columbia Gardens Cemetery



Photo courtesy of the Columbia Gardens website

### Friends of the Arlington Public Library Spring Book Sale

The Friends of the Arlington Public Library book sale — **April 18 to 21, 2024**.

This bi-annual event is for all ages. All proceeds from the sale directly support funding for library programming and collections.

Thursday, April 18th is FOAL member night.

Friday, April 19th and Saturday, April 20th are

open to the general public. Sunday, April 21st is open to the general public and is half-price day on books.

Full details about the book sale can be found here: https://arlingtonlibraryfriends.org/about/faqs/





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### Monthly Recycling Tip By Amy Miller

### Use the County-provided collection carts!

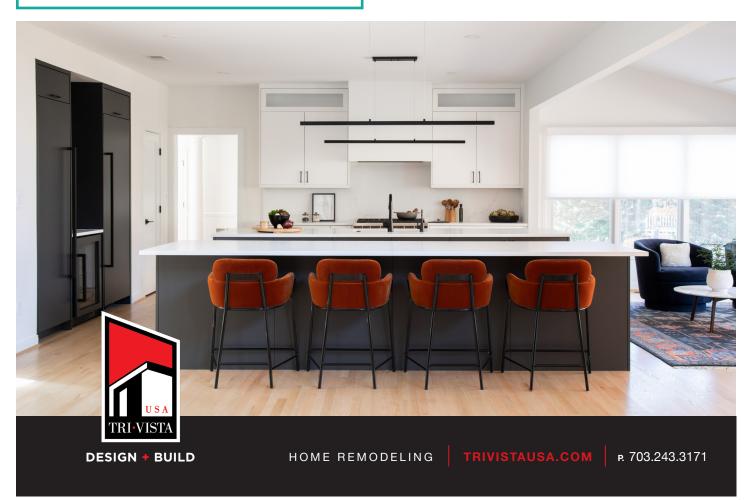


Did you know that these carts are designed to be lifted by the

truck and prevent personal injuries to the collection staff?

And bonus -- the colored carts make it easy for collection staff to easily identify what goes where.

Condensed information from a Solid Waste Bureau flyer from 2023.



### Go Dog Go – On a Leash Community Safety and Security Corner By Christina Schultz

A spate of incidents in the neighborhood reminds us that laws exist to protect our safety, even keeping your dog on a leash. While some dog owners believe their pets are well-behaved and friendly enough to go off leash, a dog is still a living, independent being. It is possible that it won't cause harm, but there is no way to know for sure.

Dog leash laws exist for a number of reasons. The biggest danger of an unleashed dog is the possibility that it can

attack people. Some people, particularly children, may be afraid of or allergic to dogs so do not feel comfortable encountering dogs roaming unrestrained. Furthermore, it's in the interest of the owner to keep their own dog safe. Our urban area has a fair share of wildlife, such as raccoons and foxes, some of which may carry rabies or other diseases. And we all know that dog that enjoys a good squirrel chase right into the street where car accidents can occur. Dogs are also known to eat random items they come across. Besides your own pet, leash laws keep other dogs safe. Unfortunately, dogs approaching and attacking other dogs are a common occurrence.

Only two states, Michigan and Pennsylvania, have laws that address some form of control or restraint for all dogs. Several states have impound laws for loose dogs, while others require that dogs only be leashed in specific locations or at certain times. The vast majority of states, including Virgina, give local governments the right to require leashes.

In Arlington, county code 2-6 requires that all dogs must be leashed even when owners are present. The only exception is if the dog is in a dog park (there are eight in the County) or on private property and under control. In any case, handlers are legally responsible for their dog and any injury it causes. Violations of the leash law can result in summons to appear in court and a fine of \$100.

In a presentation by a local insurance agent during a recent Ashton Heights Civic Association meeting, it was noted that a significant percentage of homeowner insurance claims results from dog bites. While no mention was given about dogs off leash, it's a reminder that dogs can be unpredictable. So for the protection and safety of you and your pet, as well as our community, please remember to leash your dog whenever you leave your house.

### What do I do if I encounter an off-leash dog:

If you feel comfortable, you should respectfully ask the owner/handler to leash their dog. You may want to reason by expressing your concern about the unleashed pet (e.g., fear of dogs, allergies, proximity to other dogs). If that doesn't work or you don't feel comfortable engaging with the handler, there are several Arlington County numbers you can call for assistance.

- Park Maintenance (703) 228-6525: This is the number listed on signs to call to report violations of unleashed dogs; however, many residents have reported that this number often goes unanswered.
- Field Rovers (571) 238-0265: These are mobile units that inspect facilities. They operate daily from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.
- Park Rangers (703) 228-0052
- Animal Welfare League (703) 931-9241
- If you believe that you or someone else is physically in danger, you should call emergency services at 911.

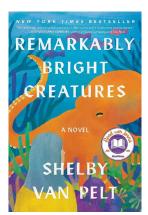
### *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt By Denise Cormaney Follow all her reviews at @findyourgoldenhour on Instagram

### FOUR AND A HALF STARS!

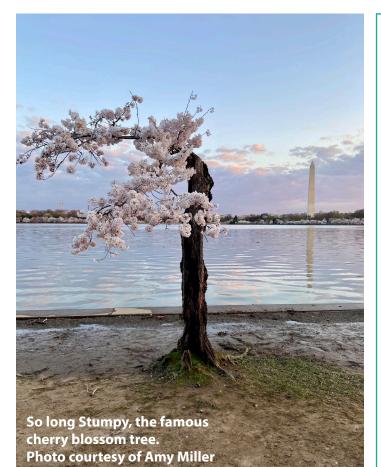
"It seems to be a hallmark of the human species: abysmal communication skills — Why can humans not use their millions of words to simply tell one another what they desire?"

Am I the last person on earth to read this one? I listened to the audio and it was a delight without being light. I loved the characters, especially the unique voice of Marcellus.

When I heard the premise, I hesitated. This was the pick for my local book club, so I was out of excuses. I'm so glad I read it! It's excellent on audio. Now I need to watch the Netflix doc "My Octopus Teacher" that friends keep recommending.







### Save the Date

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



you to the website with more details on each of these events.

- <u>Free paper shredding</u> is held the first Saturday of every month (unless it's a holiday weekend) for Arlington County residents. The next dates are April 6 and May 4.
- The <u>Arlington Bunny Hop</u> 5K is on April 13. Be sure to register to walk, run, stroll or volunteer!
- The National Cherry Blossom Festival will take place from March 20 - April 14, 2024. Highlights include the opening ceremony (March 23rd), the Blossom Kite Festival (March 30th), Petalpalooza (April 6th) and Parade (April 13th). A full list of events can be found here: https://nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/all-events/
- The <u>Earth Day -- Every Day Festival</u> on Langston Boulevard will be held Sunday, April 21 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- The <u>Northern Alexandria Native Plant Sale</u> will be held on Saturday, April 27 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

In Arlington County, VA, January 2024, the median sold price for all properties for January was \$645,000, representing an increase of 1.3% compared to \$636,500 in January 2023. For single family homes the average median price in January 2024 was \$1,297,650 – up 9.2% from January 2023. June was the peak closing month in 2023 and in 2022 it was May.



Have you had thoughts of preparing for a move? Let's connect! 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



Casey O'Neal Associate Broker 703-217-9090 <u>casey@caseyoneal.com</u> <u>www.caseyoneal.com</u> Compass Real Estate

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### LOCATION

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Please consult the newsletter that is posted to the Ashton Heights listserv or the hand-delivered newsletter for a full list of kids who are available for hire!

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