

www.ashtonheights.org

When it Rains, it Pours By Scott Sklar, President, AHCA

We have lots of activity in September, and I have excerpted from the listserv, media and county communications to give you some flavor.

On September 10th, Arlington police surrounded the red brick apartment house at 922 N. Ivy Street with guns and dogs. The SWAT team set up a perimeter around the building and camped there from ~9 p.m. onward. Police ordered an individual inside Apt 1 with a bullhorn that they had a search warrant and he had to come out with his hands up.

Around 1 a.m., they broke the window and arrested him. Police recovered two firearms, including an AR-style rifle, and numerous rounds of ammunition after responding to a reported domestic dispute.

On September 6th, Arlington County contacted us about permit renewal for Darna. I pulsed residents on North Ivy, North Jackson and North Kenmore Streets near Wilson Blvd and received nine responses on loud noise at night. I informed the county that AHCA does not support this permit renewal until the Darna noise issue is resolved.

Beginning on September 9th, I received four reports from residents on North Kenmore Street regarding tractor trailer trucks coming from CVS going through our residential streets rather than going back onto Wilson Blvd. I just received two other such reports on September 12th. AHCA's Transportation Committee Chair Patrick Lueb is discussing with county staff. In early September, AHCA Safety & Security Committee Chair, Christina Schultz, reported lack of response of the **Arlington County Police Department** liaison office on advising AHCA on crime events status. This was spurred by the August 10th event at 7:15 a.m., where a woman walking on the N. 2nd Rd entrance into Columbia Gardens Cemetery was attacked from behind by a male wearing a white t-shirt and dark shorts. The suspect attempted to grab the victim from behind but she wiggled free. The victim recovered and chased the suspect south bound on N Jackson St. to attempt to take a picture. Police were called and they responded around 7:20. a.m. There is video of the attack and of the suspect from a building camera. Video was provided to Arlingtor Police. But not a peep on status from ACPD of a violent event in our neighborhood. I have upgraded dialogue with Chief Penn, of the Arlington County Police Department.

And County actions on Macy's and the four buildings in Clarendon are winding their way through the County approval process followed by our AHCA Development Committee chairs Jack Spilsbury & Alexander Tuneski, who I hope will give us an update at our AHCA Monthly meeting.

On September 9th AHCA's Tree Canopy & Native Plants Committee chair Brooke Alexander met with Melissa Gildea, Arlington Urban Forester to review the county proposal for aerating Gumball Park. Aeration is needed for the health of October 2024

AHCA Monthly Meeting Wed., October 16, 7 - 9 p.m.

Clarendon United Methodist Church 606 N. Irving St.

	7:00 p.m.	Mingle and chair setup; County Board candidates who desire a freewheeling conversation with individu- als may show up for one-on- one discussion.
	7:30 p.m.	Scott Sklar, President and Committee reports
g n /	7:45 p.m.	Arlington County Board candidates. Lyon Park invited! Each candidate will be invited to make a 2-minute "vote for me" presentation. Thirty second questions – some live from the audience and some previously submitted to the moderator will follow and each candidate will have a minute to respond. At 8:45 p.m., we will shift to closing statements. Scott Sklar will moderate the discussion.
	BONUS!	Our Lyon Park neighbors are hosting the School Board candidates on October 9th and Ashton Heights neighbors are invited. The event will be held at the Lyon Park Community Center. The moderator will be Michael Kunkler, Lyon Park Citizens Association President.
f	9:00 p.m.	Adjourn

Continued on page 4



Editor's Note: View the newsletter in <u>full color</u> at <u>www.ashtonheights.org</u>! Articles for the <u>November 2024</u> newsletter issue are due by October 26th. Send submissions to: <u>amylmiller4@gmail.com</u>.

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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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2024- 2025 AHCA Officers and Executive Committee

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President's Column, continued from page 1

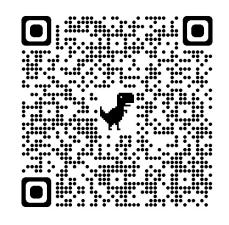
the trees, in addition to the grass on the park. As it turns out, the tufts of "grass" that are growing there on the southern end are actually a reed which only grows on soil with low oxygen. (Note, per Brooke, aeration will increase the oxygen available to the roots, in addition to water penetration into the soil. Tree (and grass) roots need (alternatively) oxygen and water. When the soil is compacted, neither is available in sufficient quantity to support healthy roots. This aeration project is planting a fast growing root plant that penetrates into the soil 6-8 inches that will make holes 1/2-1 inch in diameter. Then the plants will be allowed to rot. This will leave holes in the ground that will allow oxygen and water penetration. This is a biological solution to the needed aeration.)

There's more, but I focused on these highlights on the diversity, urgency, and frankly the amount of personal time any of you are making to help this community. This is what a civic association is all about -- everyone doing what they can, when they can, to make our neighborhoods safe, secure, and increase our collective quality of life.

Hope to see you at our monthly Wednesday night (3rd Wed of the month) for October and November at the Clarendon United Methodist Church social hall at 7:30 p.m. A most Happy Autumn to you all.

Calling for Nominations!

The Meet Your Neighbor column is a popular one, but we need your help. Do you know someone who we can feature in the coming months? It's been a while since we've had a spotlight and it would be great to continue this column. Please consider nominating yourself or a neighbor! Fill out the form at this link: <u>https://bit.ly/3RBQjsZ</u> or use the QR code below.



The graph below shows that the US housing inventory in the US has about 4 months' supply as of August 2024. In Arlington County, the supply was closer to 1.8 months, which shows that Arlington has a much stronger seller's market than the national housing market. This time of year, homes sit on the market a bit longer, and inventory is rising on a national basis. Arlington has seen more housing inventory although it's still tighter than the national scene.



How can I help with your unique situation? Put my 39 years of experience to work for you. **Casey O'Neal, Compass Real Estate, 703-217-9090**



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Friends of the Arlington Public Library Fall Book Sale

The Friends of the Arlington Public Library book sale will be held **October 3 to 6, 2024**.

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

Thursday, October 3 is FOAL member night.

Friday, October 4 and Saturday, October 5 are open to the general public. Sunday, October 6 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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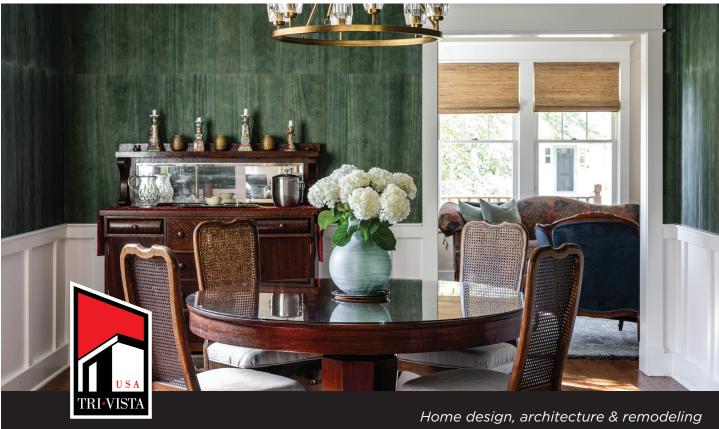


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Neighbors and Girl Scouts Mulch Gumball Park Trees By Brooke Alexander, Native Plant and Tree Canopy Committee Chair

The Key School Girl Scout Troop worked with Brooke Alexander to get their tree badge in May. Part of that work was helping mulch the trees at Gumball Park. The Girl Scouts joined Ashton Heights volunteers to distribute mulch around all the trees in Gumball Park.

Many thanks to all the helpers pictured below! Thanks also to those who donated tools for our volunteers to use: Colleen Kennedy, Scott and Colleen Dykema, John Mueller, Phyllis Shea, and Bob Furlong.

This is what the Girl Scouts learned that mulch can do for trees:

- 1. Reduce weeds
- 2. Add nutrients
- 3. Reduce water evaporation and soil erosion
- 4. Insulate the tree roots (in the summer and the winter)

And the Girl Scouts also learned the ideal dimensions of tree mulch:

- 1. Mulch should be in the shape of a donut, not a volcano.
- 2. Mulch should be no more than 2-3 inches deep.
- 3. Mulch should never touch the tree trunk; place mulch 2-3 inches away from the trunk.
- 4. Ideally, mulch should be spread as wide as the branches. Tree roots spread at least as far as their

branches; the more of this area one can cover with mulch, the better for the trees.

Stay tuned next month for a report on the biological aeration project at Gumball Park!

Back row: Louise Marshall (ARMN), Girl Scout leaders and scouts: Ellen Cathopoulis, Sophia Cathopoulis, Emmi Olson, Colette

Anderson, Skylar Galliani, Miriam Coleman, Sara Guerrero, McKenna Olson; Front row: Ella (neighbor), Brooke Alexander. (Missing from photo: Faye Freas-Smith, John Tschetter, Joe Reid, Ron Rosenberg, Fay Johnson, Laurie Fischler, Rosanna Butterfield, Foster Wang, John Thomas and Steve Smith)

Pumpkin painting Hay rides Rose garden Beekeeping

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The Hidden Hazards of Data Centers Community Safety and Security Corner By Christina Schultz

You may have noticed a growing number of generic buildings as you drive in Loudoun County. These faceless structures, many within walking distance of homes, are data centers. Data centers process, transmit, and store the vast amounts of data that we rely on - from Internet searches to document and photo storage to our favorite streaming services. They house cloud services and are essential for AI learning. With over 300 data centers in operation or proposed across the commonwealth, Virginia has the largest concentration of data centers in the world, currently processing about 70% of the world's Internet traffic. Roughly 80% of the industry is located in Loudoun County alone. Ashburn, known as "Data Center Alley," has become the capital of the data center industry in the United States. But keeping our digital world running comes at a cost. With little regulatory oversight, data centers have an outsized impact on the environment and communities.

Data centers consume a significant amount of electricity, and demand is growing. In 2022, they accounted for 2% of the global electricity demand. In the United States alone, it is predicted that data centers will consume 6% of the total electricity demand by 2026. Dominion Energy, Virginia's largest electric utility, predicts that data centers will be the biggest driver of rising energy demand in the state over the next 15 years. It plans to open a new natural gas plant in Chesterfield to meet this demand, despite its pledge to decarbonize its Virginia grid by 2045. The corporations that operate these centers are not currently required to contribute to infrastructure upgrades. Instead, costs are subsidized by consumers through our monthly electric bills.

While economic development advantages of the construction of data centers are a boon for state and local coffers, environmental groups say the growth threatens Virginia's natural resources and the health of local communities. Our neighbors in Loudoun County complain the centers' 24/7 operations produce a constant humming sound that never stops. In addition, data centers require vast amounts of water. One Google data center, for example, requires an average of 450,000 gallons of water daily for cooling. Loudoun County's water use has increased exponentially due to data centers, a surge that



has environmentalists worried about the state's drinkable water supply. Globally, data centers are estimated to produce 1.5% of the global greenhouse gas emissions, on par with the airline industry. Storing and managing a mere 100 gigabytes of data creates a carbon footprint of 0.2 tons of CO2. Continued growth of data centers is projected to continue in the near future.

Just the Facts in Virginia

(from the Sierra Club Virginia Chapter and the Piedmont Environmental Council)

- Dominion Energy states that data center growth will require an additional 8 gigawatts of power by 2028, over four times the 1.7 gigawatts produced by the North Anna nuclear facility.
- According to data collected from Loudoun Water, potable water usage for data centers has increased by 250% in the last four years with the heaviest use in July-October.
- In addition to the over 40,000,000 square feet of data center space currently built in Virginia, there's over a hundred development projects for an additional 180,000,000 square feet in the pipeline. For comparison that is equivalent to 1,000 Walmart Super Centers of space!
- At least 14 of the proposed data centers in Virginia are considered "gigawatt campuses" – facilities that will require more than a gigawatt of power.
 1 Gigawatt is the equivalent amount to provide energy to 750,000 average homes.
- Only a handful of data center applications have been denied by localities despite overwhelming community opposition.

Subscribe to the Ashton Heights Listserv!

So much happens in between issues of newsletters -- especially when we take a break in December and over the summer. Don't miss out on important information; subscribe to the Ashton Heights listerv today.

Email: main+subscribe@ashtonheights.groups.io.

Always include your full name and street address and we'll get you set up to be "in the know." Did you know that you can set your preferences on how you receive email from the listserv? If you're worried about receiving too many emails or missing out, some options include:

- Individual messages
- Full digest (up to 12 messages grouped together in 1 email)
- Daily summary (one email each morning containing only the list of topics posted to the group the previous day)
- No email (receive no email, but view messages on the groups.io website)

New Phone Policy Implemented in Schools By Sara Guerrero, 7th grader at Gunston Middle School

As the leaves begin to fall and the heat wave releases its grasp on Ashton Heights, children and adults alike are getting back into the groove of the school year. The school buses have resumed their job of taking kids to school in the morning and dropping them off in the afternoon. However, this year something is different. Several middle and high schools are experimenting with Yondr pouches, devices designed to lock students' phones away for the school day.

Yondr pouches are small bags that students will be required to place their phones in at the beginning of the school day, and then carry them to their classes or leave them in their lockers (depending on the school). Once the flap on the Yondr pouch is closed, the bag will be automatically locked with magnets. At the end of the day, students must line up to get their phone unlocked by a machine. The pouches were designed with the intention to help people feel more present and be able to focus more.

Despite teachers and administrators' claims that Yondr is helping kids focus and improving test scores, many students are still against the new policy. "It's a lot of effort," admitted Logan Fry, an eighth grader at Thomas Jefferson Middle School. Fry goes on to talk about the long lines to get your phone unlocked at the end of the day, and the fact that the pouches are often easily breakable. "It's annoying," she claims. Others opposed to the new restrictions claim that the pouches are pointless because since most high



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schoolers have Chromebooks, they chat with each other anyway.

However, most teachers are saving



that they've noticed a positive change in their school community since the introduction of the Yondr pouches. Some are describing their campuses as more positive and engaging. Others say that their students are more active and social during breaks. Officials from Eastlake High School in Colorado Springs, Colorado mention how students used to use their devices to film fights and then post them on social media. Cassandra Berry, the principal of Eastlake, now states that the fights have become far less frequent, due to the severe lack of impetus for them. "They're all working on their work," Berry claims.

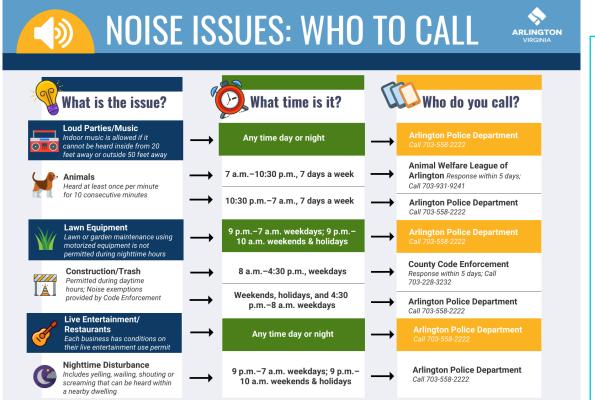
Whether students are pleased or frustrated by the new Yondr pouches, several schools in APS and in the country are testing out the new policy. Most students are unhappy with the new restrictions because they feel annoving and pointless, yet several teachers and administrators are claiming to see positive change. No one can tell for sure if the Yondr pouches will be canceled or sent out to all the public schools. For now, all we can do is wait.



Save the Date

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

- The **Fall E-Care** event will take place on Saturday, October 5th from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. (rain or shine) at Wakefield High School. Learn more at <u>arlingtonva.us/E-CARE</u> or call 703-228-5000.
- The **Rosslyn Fall Fest** takes place on Saturday, October 5th from 1 to 6 p.m. at Gateway Park. Enjoy live music, food trucks and other fall fun for all ages.
- The <u>Columbia Pike Wellness Festival</u> will take place on October 12th from 1 to 5 p.m. at the Arlington Mill Community Center.
- Arlington Restaurant Week will take place October 14–21, 2024. Click here for participating restaurants.
- Lyon Park Annual Yard Sale and Parade of Costumes will take place on October 26th and the annual Lyon Park Halloween Bonfire on October 31st. The yard sale is a rain or shine event and you must prepay by Monday, October 21. Rent one space for \$15 or two for \$25. For more information, or to volunteer to help, contact Margaret scrymser@scryms23@comcast.net.
- **BE A VOTER!** Early voting has begun for the November 5, 2024 general election. The complete list of voting options can be found here: <u>https://vote.arlingtonva.gov/Early-Voting</u>. **Additional dates of importance:**
 - October 15: Last day to register to vote or update an existing registration.
 - October 16: Same day registration begins.
 - October 25: Last day to apply for a mail ballot.
 - November 2: Last day of early voting.
 - November 5: Election Day!



Wondering how to address a noise issue? Here's a handy chart that helps to explain the process.

The first steps in addressing a noise issue is to contact your neighbor directly, contact the property manager and/or civic association for help before making that call. If you don't get any resolution, this chart may help.

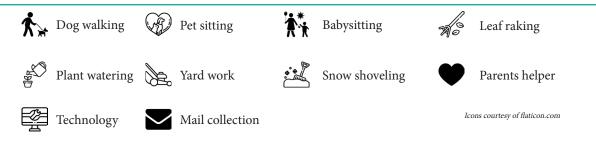
Full details can be found <u>online</u>.

The <u>Arlington County Noise Control Ordinance</u> is in effect 24/7/365. The ordinance defines "daytime" as 7 a.m. -9 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. weekends and <u>holidays</u>.

Please Note: To enforce the Noise Control Ordinance, Code Enforcement, Police, or AWLA staff must witness the violation. Due to resources and response times, some issues correct themselves before staff can witness them and cite a violation.

KIDS, INC.

Our local youth are ready to help when the household hands are not enough. If you would like to be added to this list, please send updates to Ann Felker: <u>gr8est9@gmail.com</u>. Include your child's name, birth year, contact information and list the jobs that they are interested in being contacted for hire.



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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