



Ashton Heights News

AHCA's 2025 Top Marquee Issues By Scott Sklar, President, AHCA

Our February Ashton Heights Civic Association meeting had some excellent presentations from experts on tree canopy. We voted unanimously to have an AHCA-sponsored petition to the Arlington County Board on expanding and protecting our tree canopy. This issue was one of our civic association's earliest issues, and we have worked collaboratively with Lyon Park and Lyon Village associations. Trees buffer noise, absorb pollution, take in storm water, sequester carbon (the most potent greenhouse gas), provide a haven for diverse wildlife, and act as wind breaks.

As our signature issue, I hope we can have all our residents – parents, grandparents, and children – become active on this important quality of life, health, and environmental issue.

Another more recent hallmark issue has been AHCA's stalwart support of a park around and atop the fire department on 10th Street North. As an adjunct of the Clarendon Redevelopment Plan, we have steadfastly asserted that instead of having every inch of Clarendon center be high-rise cement buildings – we create a public green space. Not just a park, but a place to stage on-going events – making it a civic center – a central park – a community place. The Arlington staff's proposals have tiny green areas around a cement center of buildings, but our view is the exact opposite. I can best express our vision as "creation of community" space and identity.

As we urbanize, I keep emphasizing that Clarendon can be a cement copy of Ballston and Rosslyn, or we can make Clarendon a more community and people-oriented space. As we enter a more formal final process for the final approval of The Clarendon Plan, I hope you will be motivated to advocate as the approvals move forward.

While Ashton Heights is in the scheme of things, a fairly safe place to live, we have a

series of additional issues that need to be addressed.

We agreed at our November civic association meeting to inventory street corners where trees and bushes lean into or over sidewalks and into streets – which is both dangerous for pedestrians, but also for vehicles – impairing visibility that would increase car accidents. AHCA has also pushed the county to mark traffic circles to prevent damage, and the county now has put lines on the roadways near the circles to highlight them, as well as stop lines on the road at every stop sign to nurture more compliance for full stops.

Continuing to push for approaches to improve pedestrian and traffic safety has to stay a priority for our children and aging population, as well as the bikers, walkers, and runners among us.

AHCA joined our other civic associations on the Spout Run planning, to address storm water control. As mentioned earlier on tree canopy, and also on the MMH/EHO lot coverage and now Spout Run -- they represent a 3-prong approach to address storm water containment issues at a time when we are losing tree canopy, creating bigger structures (duplexes & McMansions), and urbanizing with bigger buildings and cement structures. As our climate changes, more intense weather patterns including intense rains – just make this issue worse -- harming building foundations, pooling water in roadways, ponding for mosquitoes, and adding to instability of large trees. Our involvement and awareness is paramount. Preparation and awareness has been our approach, on this issue, and frankly all the issues above – and this is what makes us a great community and civic association.

Finally, we celebrated Ashton Heights 100th anniversary and the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Ashton Heights Civic Association. We have a newsletter, a robust listserv with over 600+ members, monthly

AHCA Monthly Meeting Wed., March 19, 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
 - 7:45 p.m.** Speakers TBD – we were unable to finalize speakers prior to printing deadlines.
- Please consult the Ashton Heights listserv for an announcement with meeting details in the coming weeks.
- 9:00 p.m.** Adjourn

meetings, a formal committee structure run by dedicated chairs and co-chairs, and of course, a most amazing membership, that's YOU!

Visioning and working together, listening to each other's concerns, and helping each other so our community grows with the residents in mind – that is what AHCA is all about.

I want to thank you, in the midst of working, raising your families, working on your houses, and also giving back to your community. It's hard to juggle all our obligations, relationships and responsibilities. But your family, neighbors and friends will thank you. And as your association president, on behalf of our community – I thank you as well.



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/>

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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: newsletterads@ashtonheights.org.

Business card: \$60
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Reminder – Tree People!
Save the Date: Wed., March 12 from 7–8 p.m.
Combined meeting with Lyon Park Civic Association
By Brooke Alexander, Native Plant and Tree Canopy Committee Chair



The latest Arlington Tree Canopy study was released Sept 2024, based on the 2023 canopy.

View the study here: <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/v/1/forestry/urban-tree-canopy-assessment.pdf>.

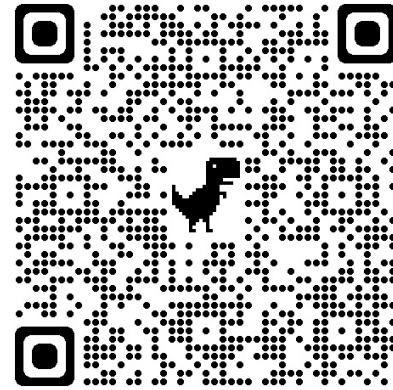
Ashton Heights and Lyon Park will have a combined meeting with Vincent Verweij, Arlington’s Manager of Urban Forestry to take a closer look at this study.

Full information about this upcoming meeting can be found on page 8 of the Ashton Heights February newsletter. Visit: <https://ashtonheights.org/2025/01/30/february-2025-ashton-heights-newsletter/> for more information.

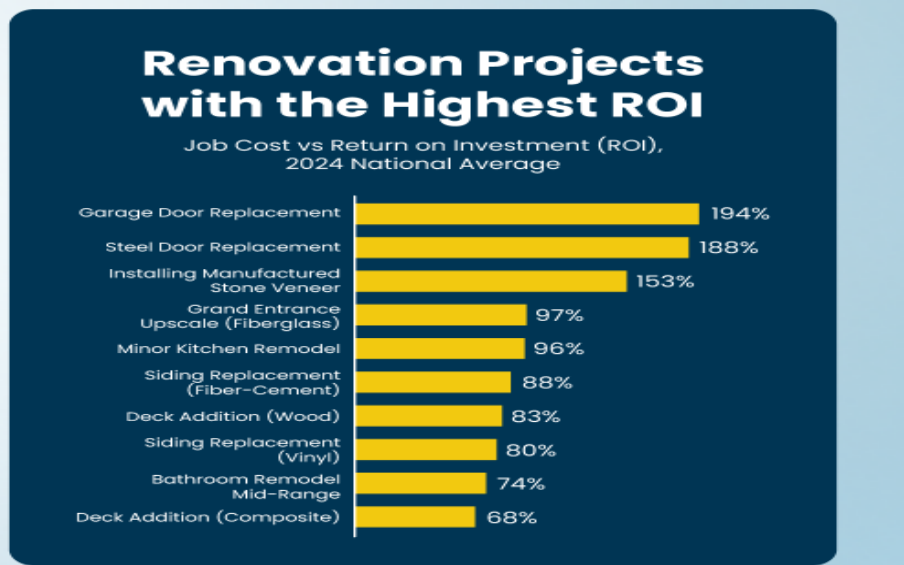
Calling for Nominations

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?

Please consider nominating yourself or a neighbor! Fill out the form at this link: <https://bit.ly/3RBQjsZ> or use the QR code below.



It’s smart to make strategic updates. But how do you decide what’s worth doing and where to spend your time, money, and effort? Lean on a local agent who knows what buyers are looking for, what quick wins you can make, and which projects have the best ROI.



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Arlington Bunny Hop



5K Charity Fun Run/Walk

April 26

8:00 a.m.

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Church

www.ArlingtonBunnyHop.org

Recycling Tips By Amy Miller

Is it time to review your recycling habits and potentially make some changes? Here are some tips adapted from the Arlington Department of Environmental Services Solid Waste Bureau "Back to Basics" brochure.

Focus on recycling these FOUR materials in your blue cart (reference photos to the right):

- Mixed paper (All office paper and newspapers. Do not include wax liners.)
- Cardboard
- Plastic bottles and containers
- Aluminum and steel cans

Do not put contaminants in the blue cart. Contaminants include:

- Pots and pans
- Styrofoam
- Single-use plastics
- Plastic and padded envelopes (aka those Amazon envelopes don't belong)
- Plastic bags, snack and chip bags and wrappers

If you're unsure, use the handy "[Where Does it Go?](#)" tool on the Arlington County website.



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Aluminum & steel
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Plastic bottles &
containers



Mixed paper

DO NOT place recyclables in a plastic bag before putting them into the blue recycling cart.

Simply Banh Mi By Ann Felker

Instagram: [@simplybanhmi](https://www.instagram.com/simplybanhmi)
801 N. Quincy St.
Arlington, VA



As winter winds blow us slowly into spring, I advise everyone to brighten their day at Simply Banh Mi, a recent addition to the Ballston restaurant scene, though beloved at its Wisconsin Avenue, bread-made-on-site, Halal, vegan and Vietnamese street food fan club location.

I hope that got your attention! If not, stepping into the revived space with its tall ceilings, open window sills crowded with thriving orchids and brilliant rainforest green color scheme will shake up your senses. Yes, that is the scent of fresh-baked, uber-crispy Banh Mi rolls, three versions of home brewed Pho, tantalizing beef and chicken, and hand shredded veggies ready for you to create your made to order meal.

John Tran, the owner, chef, greeter, manager took the recipes straight from his baker's (aka his mother, Diana My Tran's) cookbooks, prominently on display at the counter where you place your order. The kitchen staff is a skillfully hired crew who love their workplace as much as John does. The high-end kitchen equipment supports their wish to be both efficient and modern as possible while still providing the spontaneous taste and texture of freshly made Vietnamese street food.

Choose carnivore or vegan protein, spicy sauce, and tasty toppings for your personal sandwich loaf. Add a tender, crunchy spring roll, bubble tea or Vietnamese Coffee (a delight unto itself for a midday pick-up) and a French inspired pastry (colonial history of Vietnam there). Or slide these options into a scrumptious bowl of Pho with a side of bread. Eat at the cozy dining nook or take your Simply food home because it travels well. \$10-\$20 per person, economical when you consider that it is all handmade, just for you.

Because of John's preference for Halal meat, Simply Banh Mi's menu has the unique approval of many embassies near the DC location. The Tran family's Ashton Heights credentials include the fact Diana's 4 grandchildren are all Faith Lutheran Preschool alumni, who occasionally have a supportive role in keeping the family restaurant friendly and fun.

Closed on Mondays, so that they can regroup and restock, Simply Banh Mi is open 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. the rest of the week. Simply stated, you deserve a Banh Mi today.



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Save the Date – Upcoming Events

Here are just a few events coming up in our area. Underlined events are links in the online version.

- The [Lyon Park Blood Drive](#) will be held March 4 from noon to 5 p.m.
- Register to attend a [Rain Barrel Workshop](#) on Tuesday, March 25 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at Barcroft Elementary School. \$55 fee covers the barrel and supplies.
- The [National Cherry Blossom Festival](#) takes place March 20-April 13; [Kite Festival](#) is on March 29 and the [National Cherry Blossom Parade](#) is on April 12.
- The Friends of the Arlington Public Library [Spring Book Sale](#) takes place April 3–5 at Central Library.
- The [Arlington Bunny Hop](#) takes place on Saturday, April 26 - be sure to register for this neighborhood gem of an event.
- The [Arlington Festival of the Arts](#) takes place April 26-27 in Clarendon.
- The [Capital Pride Parade](#) will take place on June 7 and the Capital Pride Street Festival on June 7 and 8.

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Block Captains Needed to Restore AH Tree Canopy – Please Volunteer By Brooke Alexander, Native Plant and Tree Canopy Committee Chair

Are you concerned about AH declining tree canopy? Do you know or want to know the neighbors on your block? Become a **Block Captain!** Fifty-one block captains are needed, can you help?

Ashton Heights is launching a two-pronged approach to restoring our depleted tree canopy. The first prong is a short-term tree planting blitz that will plant small trees that will grow into big canopy trees in 100 years (see article page 8).

The second prong concerns our continual loss of our neighborhood's large canopy trees. This is a petition and letter campaign to the County Board to galvanize them to find ways to prioritize the preservation of our existing tree canopy.

In order to implement this two-pronged approach, we are soliciting block captains. We need 51 block captains to cover the single family residences in Ashton Heights. And then we need people to solicit at the multifamily residences.

Block captains will be provided information on the planting blitz, and information on the petition and letter writing

campaign. Block captains will be asked to make contact with each household on their block (or absentee owner if applicable) and have a conversation with each of them about the planting



blitz consultation, and the petition/letter writing campaign.

We find that folks respond better to their neighbors than a central person. Please be open to contact with your block captain.

We aim to have block captains identified by April 15 and tentatively hope that their work will be complete by May 15, 2025. Please contact me at brooke.alexander52@gmail.com or Caroline Rogus (crogus@gmail.com) to sign up! Thank you – together, and with time, we can restore our tree canopy!



How USAID Benefits Our Community

Community Safety and Security Corner

By Christina Schultz

One of President Trump's first executive orders imposed an immediate 90-day freeze on all US foreign assistance. This includes the over \$40 billion for projects under the United States Agency for International Development – USAID. Although some waivers were later announced, guidelines are unclear and contradictory, and little money has actually moved. The freeze has forced mass layoffs and furloughs from both USAID and its implementing partners. Representatives of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), headed by billionaire Elon Musk, have taken over USAID's computer systems, including confidential data. The Agency is now mostly closed, with officials dismissed, the website shut down, and signage removed or taped over. A number of lawsuits have been filed challenging the dismissal of about 10,000 USAID employees, unpaid invoices for work completed by nonprofits and businesses before the executive order, and the stalling of medical and security evacuations from abroad. The dismantling of USAID has sent shock waves not only through Washington D.C., but also throughout the US and recipient countries.

What is USAID? USAID is an independent federal agency created under the Foreign Assistance Act and established by President John F. Kennedy in 1961. At the height of the Cold War, its objective was to counter Soviet influence abroad through development aid. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, USAID "soft power" has continued to play an integral part in the 3Ds of US foreign policy strategy – defense, diplomacy, and development. USAID has been the lead agency promoting economic development, reducing poverty, improving health and education, and supporting democratic governance in developing countries. USAID has missions in over 100 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe. Its annual budget is less than one percent of the federal budget. USAID's work abroad not only supports communities in these countries but also benefits Americans here at home.

How does USAID keep us healthy? USAID plays a vital role in improving global health by implementing targeted disease control programs, such as AIDS relief, tuberculosis treatment, malaria control, and addressing neglected tropical diseases. Its initiatives prevent child and maternal deaths through services like family planning and reproductive health, while strengthening health systems and partnering with the private sector to drive innovation. USAID's contributions include supporting the COVID-19 Global Access Facility, eradicating smallpox, and leading the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, known as PEPFAR, which has saved over 25 million lives. Additionally, USAID's child survival campaigns and its involvement in the Green Revolution have significantly reduced mortality rates and improved agricultural productivity. USAID's work means infectious diseases like

Ebola, zika, and tuberculosis are better controlled and are less likely to spread throughout the US.



How does USAID keep us safe?

USAID promotes stability in fragile and conflict-affected states, preventing crises that could require military intervention, and working alongside the US military in places like Iraq and Afghanistan. By addressing the root causes of instability, such as poverty, conflict, and governance issues, USAID helps to mitigate the spread of terrorism, drug trafficking, and mass migration. U.S. foreign assistance not only aids humanitarian efforts but also strengthens alliances and counters foreign influences. China has already offered to fill critical USAID funding gaps from Colombia to Cambodia to the Cook Islands. By fostering stable societies and promoting economic opportunity, development assistance helps reduce threats from reaching American shores.

How does USAID help us prosper? USAID offers numerous economic benefits right here at home. More than 80% of companies that have contracts with USAID are American, including many small and veteran-owned businesses. American farmers supply over 40% of the food aid USAID delivers, and on average, the U.S. government purchases \$2.1 billion in crops from American farmers each year. There are numerous agricultural benefits in Virginia (see graphic). USAID implementing partners have reported that they have laid off or furloughed about 13,000 American workers, to which may be added DOGE's proposed reduction of USAID staff from about 10,000 to 611. From farmers in Kansas to NGO workers in North Carolina, the Foreign Assistance Stop Work order is hurting American workers and the U.S. economy. The loss of USAID means U.S. states will lose an estimated \$3.34 billion in direct economic benefit, even as the full international impact has yet to be seen.

USAID Supports Virginia Agricultural Producers



Virginia Tech hosts a USAID-funded Integrated Pest Management Lab, which manages armyworm in Africa and deploys pheromone traps in Bangladesh.

Virginia State University has received >\$3M from USAID to train agriculturists in South Sudan and manage invasive plant species throughout East Africa.

11 Large-Scale Virginia Farmers fulfill direct orders for humanitarian food assistance.

Virginia Businesses: Mars, Inc and USAID have a joint \$7M project to improve agroforestry in Indonesia. Birdsong Peanuts collaborates with

Come One – Come All! Help with our 2025 Canopy Tree Planting Blitz

By Brooke Alexander, Native Plant and Tree Canopy Committee Chair

When I moved to Lyon Park in 1978 and then Ashton Heights in 1992, there were many blocks that had 100% tree canopy over the streets. These are gone. And sadly, we lost the tree at 5th and Jackson Street, as well as many other large canopy trees.

One way to increase the number of large trees in our neighborhood is to plant more canopy trees. Then water and wait for 100 years.

Neighbor, Susan Mandel planted a scarlet oak tree in 2018, under the Tree Canopy Fund program. She has cared for it diligently. And in seven years, it's as tall as the gutters on the house. Here's a photo of Susan, proud owner of her scarlet oak tree. Take a walk by and see it in person at 3723 6th Road North. Thank you, Susan, for your contribution to our canopy. You are an inspiration, particularly to those with limited yard space.

Ashton Heights is starting our 2025 canopy tree planting blitz. Please join us! The 2023 Civic Federation Tree Assessment identified 2,323 spots for trees in Ashton Heights. According to Betsey Lyon, Ashton Heights has 1,200 single family houses. I'd be happy if we added an average of one tree per house.

That would be 1,200 out of 2,323 possible sites. We aim to plant in early Dec 2025.



Here are the first things that need to happen:

1. Locate places to plant trees (see call for Block Captains in article on page 6) and sign up for a free (no obligation) consultation. This free consultation will help you determine if another canopy tree might fit on your property. You will be approached by a neighbor block captain with more information on this consultation. There is no obligation with this expression of interest.
2. Fund this: We need money to pay for these trees. Virginia Trees for Clean Water Program has grants up to \$50,000. They have \$1 million dollars available in 2025, on a rolling basis (we need a grant writer); AHCA

has pledged to contribute financially; we need people to approach local businesses to request support; and there will be a modest charge.

Coming next month – next steps for the canopy tree planting blitz!



Spring FLING

Saturday, May 10 | 12:00 – 3:00 pm
Columbia Gardens Cemetery Grounds

Fun activities for children and adults:

- Paint a rock for a Mother's Day gift
- Meet our rosarian for rose growing tips
- See how honey is made and put on a beekeeper suit
- Get planting advice from the Tree Stewards of Arlington
- Play a game of cornhole
- Refreshments served



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New Exhibitions and Programs at MoCA Arlington

By Catherine Anchin

Hello Ashton Heights! It has been nice to see many of you visit the museum this winter. We've just opened five new exhibitions recently, so there is a lot for you to see when you next visit.

We have five wonderful exhibitions that highlight contemporary artists from the region, including two artists from the mid-Atlantic who won our SOLOS exhibition award, a MoCA Arlington resident artist's first exhibition, an exhibition in our community gallery featuring collage by fifth graders from APS's Cardinal Elementary, and a painting exhibition of regional artists who use abstraction as a method of creating artwork.

Our current shows are:

- *A Passage of Force Through Matter: Current Painting*
- *Brandon Morse: Gradually, All At Once*
- *Joshua Challen Ice: Something To Do With My Hands*
- *Milan Warner: Where Growths Sleep But Cannot Dream*
- *Moments: Hardships and Joys We Carry*

In addition to our exhibitions, we also offer a variety of programs at both the main museum on Wilson Blvd and our second location, the Innovation Studio + Store at Amazon's HQ2 in National Landing. The full list of programs can be found on the Public Programs section of our website, mocaarlington.org.

If you're looking for wellness, join us for Yoga in the Galleries in our main museum's Tiffany Gallery on Saturday mornings and Monday evenings. We also offer monthly Sound Baths in the Tiffany Gallery and will launch Wellness Wednesdays on Wednesday evenings at the Innovation Studio + Store. Our wellness programs require registration, so please be sure to visit our [website](#) or Eventbrite to reserve your spot.

Passages & Vessels, our free monthly poetry series, takes place on the last Wednesday of each month at the main museum. On March 26, please join us in the Tiffany Gallery at 7 p.m. for a special reading by Fairfax County Poet Laureate Angelique Palmer. Enjoy an evening of spoken word and refreshments as Angelique shares her poems with our community.

We also offer a variety of weekend art workshops for adults, so if you're looking to experiment with a new skill or want to meet people, check out our offerings on the [Education section](#) of our website.

And for those looking for [summer camp](#), registration is now open! MoCA Arlington is known for its high-quality camps that lead students on visual arts adventures exploring 2D and 3D media, various artistic techniques, and contemporary artists working in the world today. Camps are offered from June 23 through August 22, for ages 5-7, 8-10, 11-14, and 14-18. Registration is available online via our [website](#).

Many thanks for all your support of the Museum of Contemporary Art Arlington! See you soon.



Photos courtesy of MoCA Arlington



Editor's Note: View the newsletter in **full color** at www.ashtonheights.org! If you have an idea for an article, reach out, we'd love to have you. Articles for the **April 2025** newsletter issue are due by **March 21st**. Send submissions to: amylmiller4@gmail.com. We appreciate you.

Lyon Park Plant Sale – Save the Date!

The melting snow is a much-needed reminder that Spring is not far off when it comes to gardening. To help you with early season garden planning, mark your calendars for this year's Lyon Park Plant Sale. The sale will be held on **SATURDAY, APRIL 19, from 11 am – 2 pm** in Lyon Park. Look for us under the tent, rain or shine!

The plant sale features favorite, primarily native plants donated from Lyon Park and Ashton Heights gardeners, so you know they'll grow well for you in your garden. We'll have plants that love sun, plants that love shade, houseplants and more. Most plants will be \$5.00.

Are you a green thumb when it comes to houseplants? If you have houseplants, please root clippings soon, and pot the rooted clippings in early April. Houseplants sell best when they are established and look healthy in a pot.

Deborah Barber will host Dig-Your-Own from Lyon Park's flourishing native plant gardens during the plant sale.

PLEASE plan to donate potted up-and labeled-plants to the sale, but don't share anything on the Arlington list of invasive plants. Check this link: <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2013/10/Invasive-Plant-List-2-19-15.pdf> you're not sure.

We can only be successful in raising funds for Community Center maintenance if we have plants to sell! Bring donations to the park by 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 19.

QUESTIONS? Contact Susan Bell at sibell703@outlook.com



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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)

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: gr8est9@gmail.com. Include your child's name, birth year, contact information and list the jobs that they are interested in being contacted for hire.



Dog walking



Pet sitting



Babysitting



Leaf raking



Plant watering



Yard work



Snow shoveling



Parents helper



Technology



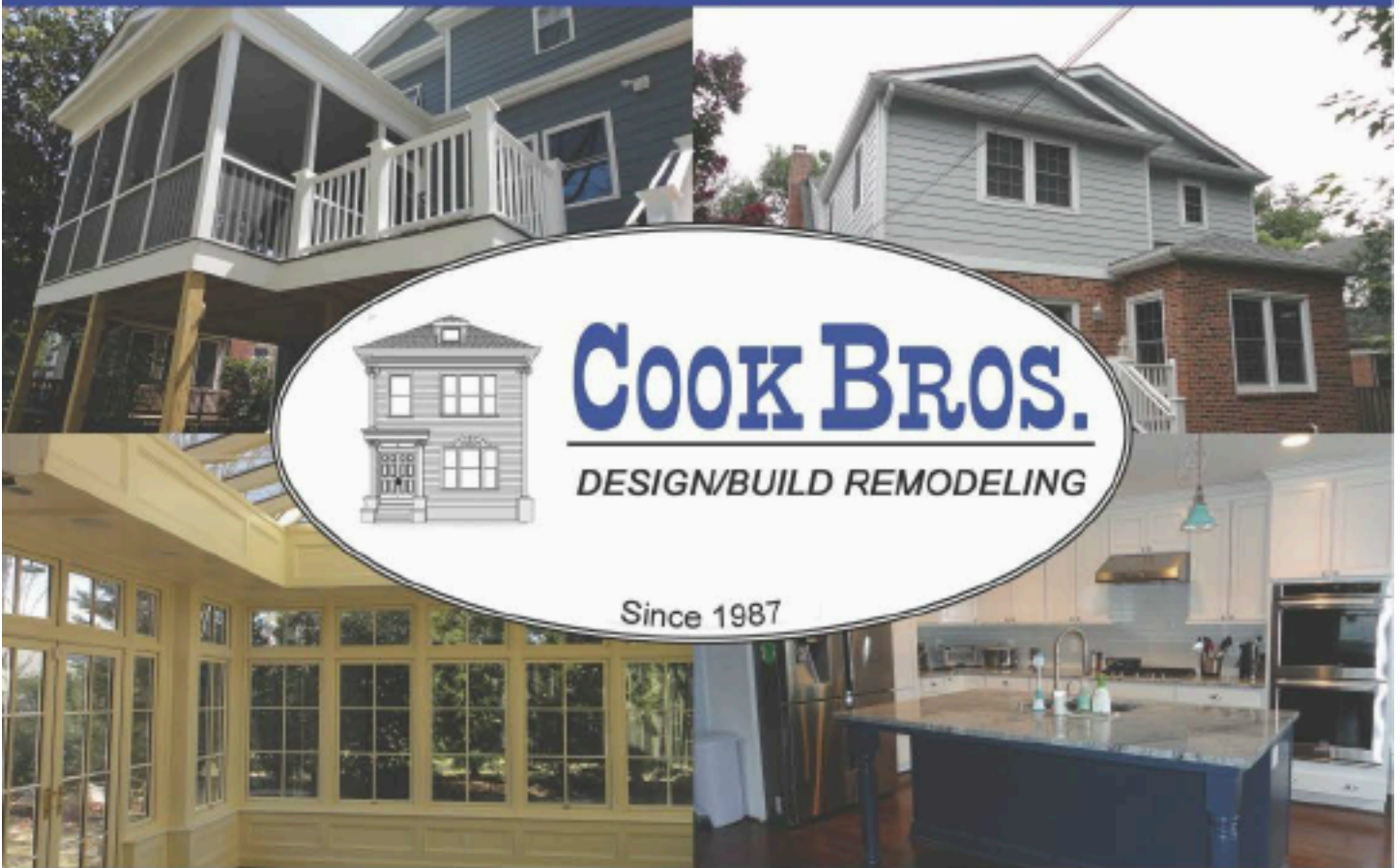
Mail collection

Icons courtesy of flaticon.com

**Please consult the newsletter that
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