



Ashton Heights News

www.ashtonheights.org

February 2026

Arlington County Issues that are Critical to the AHCA

By Scott Sklar, President, AHCA

This 2026 year will be a critically important political year for our community. There is some good news. Our new Governor will likely help support flexibility for Northern Virginia local governments in many of the issues we care about.

Over the past 18 months, AHCA in concert with other civic association presidents, developed a coalition of 22 civic associations to address MMH-EHO, and has morphed to engage in discussion on lot coverage issues, tree canopy preservation and enhancement.

This coalition's focus will go beyond the Arlington County Board which may include: developing a text message program for Arlington County residents, developing "issue" lawn signs and a car sticker program, and developing programs to outreach to younger residents. We want to maintain a kind of future not focused purely on increasing building density (which is the current Arlington County Board focus), but rather on comfort, community, environment/wildlife, and attracting building/financing approaches that are affordable to middle incomes (where MMH started).

We have four core issues that will come before the Arlington County Board in 2026 that we must be laser-focused on.

1. Tweaking EHO which is trending against our position, so as to increase the "non-built" footprint on properties and maximize tree preservation and increase native vegetation for stormwater management and preservation of avian and other wildlife.
2. Tracking final approvals on details for the hotel on the Silver Diner site in Clarendon, but also focus on our AHCA position on the lot treatment around and atop of the 10th St N firehouse as a center for recreation. The Lyon Park Citizens Association (LPCA) and AHCA have agreed to make this a joint priority and fits with our common vision of less cement, less McMansions, and more natural landscape.
3. AHCA and LPCA have a solid and ongoing tree canopy program. If you've seen the listserv and local reports, you've heard about the removal of the LPCA Gateway Tree. The County acted on the removal without honest interaction with a civic association and this has garnered attention of at least three Arlington County Board members for greater focus on tree canopy and better coordination on canopy issues. This is our chance to have a more formal vision and

Continued on page 11

LISTSERV TIP: Only reply-all to a post when you are sending information that is relevant to many of your neighbors. "Reply" sends your message to the sender only. **"Reply all" sends your message to 750+ inboxes.** Double check before you hit send! Does everyone need your response?



AHCA Monthly Meeting Wed., February 18, 7 - 9 p.m.

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

- 7:00 p.m.** Mingle and chair setup
- 7:30 p.m.** Bylaws amendment vote (see page 4 for full information)
- 7:30 p.m.** Sekas Homes is planning redevelopment of the Oak Street Apartments located at the corner of Wilson Boulevard and N. Oakland Street. Sekas is proposing a small multifamily building with 26 units, consisting of 10 one-bedroom units and 16 two-bedroom units, consistent with the 2002 Virginia Square Sector Plan. They note the County's goals with respect to replacement of the existing building's eight market rate affordable units, and intend to work with staff during the 4.1 Site Plan review process to ensure the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Master Plan and Sector Plan are met as part of the projects community benefits. AHCA has also invited the CivFed Housing Committee to come to this meeting.
- 9:00 p.m.** Adjourn



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.

Submissions for the March 2026 newsletter are due by **February 20th**. Send submissions to: amylmiller4@gmail.com. Thank you.



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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Notable Trees in Arlington and Ashton Heights

By Brooke Alexander, Tree Canopy and Native Plant Committee Chair



Arlington recognizes important examples of trees in the county in several categories. One of those categories is "Notable Trees". The county's Notable Tree program started in 1987 to identify and register Arlington's most outstanding trees. To date, 398 trees are identified as notable in the county; I count 16 in Ashton Heights.

According to the county website, "while these trees are not legally protected, notable tree status has often helped communicate the value of these trees in development projects, and led to increased conservation of our most prized natural resource."

A notable tree designation requires meeting one of these criteria: size (must be within 10% of the largest current notable tree); neighborhood value or unique species.

Last month, we featured the Troiano's Post Oak. This month, we feature a different notable tree.

We thank those who have designated their tree(s) to be on the county's list of notable trees. This helps notify the county that

we value our trees. And also these trees are big contributors to our neighborhood canopy!



As we continue to face increased development pressure within our neighborhood, it may be useful individually and collectively to designate more of our trees as notable. Should you wish to explore this for your large tree, contact treecanopy@ashtonheights.org.

Next month, look for more information about other categories of trees in the county. One category, designated "Specimen Trees", are prohibited from being removed.

Here is the [county interactive map](#) showing all the trees which have been categorized in the county with info on each.

Center photo: Notable Tree at Wilson and Monroe. This large canopy tree marks the entrance to Ashton Heights at Maury Park. It is a Hackberry (Celtis occidentalis).

Hackberry leaves feed larvae of Hackberry Emperor and

Question Mark Butterflies, among others. The terrible common name comes from a misidentification by early settlers of their native 'hagberry' meaning 'bird cherry', which evolved to 'hackberry'. Hackberry drupes, like their namesake, provide food for birds and small mammals.

WHAT'S NEW AT COLUMBIA GARDENS?

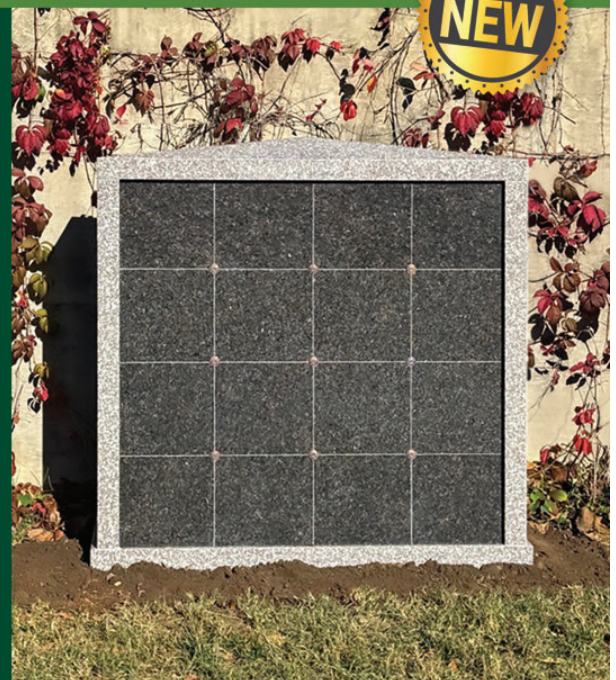
A Brand-New Columbarium Has Arrived!

With more families choosing cremation, we're expanding to meet their needs. Our newest addition to the Cremation Garden is a beautifully crafted, 16-unit granite columbarium. It's a lovely enhancement to the garden's natural landscape and offers families a serene place of remembrance.



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AHCA Bylaws Update

By Jennifer Sosin

At the regular January AHCA meeting, it was decided to appoint an Ad Hoc committee to review and refresh the Association's bylaws, which have not been revised since 2017. As an interim measure, a motion was made and carried to bring three amendments to the Association for a vote at the February meeting. These three amendments are meant to fill short-term gaps: first, to allow the Nominations Chair to appoint a committee to assist with identifying potential candidates for office; second, to describe the duties of the Treasurer (missing from the 2017 Bylaws); and third, to change the requirements for how often the Executive Committee meets to a frequency that is more aligned with current practices.

Here are the proposed amendments and they will be up for a vote at the February 18, 2026 AHCA meeting.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ASHTON HEIGHTS CIVIC ASSOCIATION BYLAWS

NOMINATIONS

Reason for amendment: The Bylaws currently provide for the appointment of a Nominations Chair, but do not describe the duties of the Chair, nor do they provide for the establishment of a Nominating Committee. The current Bylaws also specify a technology which may or may not always be the best technology.

Proposed revision to Article IV [Officers], Section 2 [new language in bold]:

Section 2. At the regular meeting held in February or March, a Nominations Chair shall be selected by the AHCA President. **It shall be the responsibility of the Nominations Chair to ensure that there is at least one candidate for each officer's position. The Nominations Chair and/or AHCA President may appoint other residents to be members of a Nominating Committee and to expand the Committee's reach into the neighborhood. The Nominations Chair and committee members shall use general outreach to residents to request candidates for any officer's position and shall report at the regular meeting in April.** The Nominations Chair shall use the listserv to request candidates for any officers position, report at the regular meeting in April. Additional nominations from the floor shall be permitted at the May meeting.

DUTIES OF THE TREASURER

Reason for amendment: The Bylaws currently include no description of the Treasurer's duties.

Proposed for insertion as Article V [Duties of Officers], Section 6 [new language in bold]:

Section 6. The Treasurer shall have responsibility for maintaining a record of the Association's income and expenses; for ensuring payment of Association bills; for overseeing the collection of all payments, including dues; and for ensuring the Association completes all regulatory filings. The Treasurer shall also have responsibility for, at the Annual Meeting, providing the Membership with an annual report on income and expenses for the prior year and estimated income and expenses for the coming year.

Section 6A. All Association revenue shall be held in an Association bank account approved by the Executive Committee.

Section 6B. The Treasurer has authority to pay any bill provided that the Executive Committee has approved payment. Executive Committee approval of an annual budget shall constitute approval of expenses that are within and consistent with that budget.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Reason for amendment: The Bylaws currently require monthly meetings of the Executive Committee, which is not aligned with current practices. This amendment would reduce this requirement two meetings annually.

Proposed revisions to Article VII [Executive Committee], Section 3 [new language in bold]:

Section 3. Regular monthly meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held at a time and place decided upon by the Committee. **The Executive Committee shall meet in person or virtually or by conference call at least two times a year at a time and place decided upon by the Committee.** The President shall preside at Executive Committee meetings. Special meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the President and shall be called upon the written request of four members of the Executive Committee. Notice of all Executive Committee meetings shall be given to all Executive Committee members at least three days in advance thereof.

A Recap of the January AHCA Meeting Presenters

By Jennifer Sosin

At January's AHCA meeting, we heard from five of Arlington's non-profit leaders who described their work in keeping Arlington's safety net strong, how they work together and collaborate, and what Arlington's lower-income and immigrant residents are experiencing in the current environment.

All of Arlington's safety-net non-profits rely on the community's generosity to support them—with funds, with volunteer time, and with skills. To learn more about these organizations or how you can help, they're listed below:

- Arlington Free Clinic – Lesley Daigle, CEO (arlingtonfreeclinic.org). AFC provides comprehensive healthcare, including dental care and behavioral healthcare, to Arlington residents who have no access to health insurance.
- Arlington Thrive – Melanie Anderson, Executive Director (arlingtonthrive.org). Thrive provides emergency support and assistance to Arlington residents to help them achieve financial stability.
- Aspire Afterschool Learning – Paula Fynboh, CEO (www.aspireafterschool.org). Aspire provides afterschool and summer learning programs to historically underserved third through eighth grade students in south Arlington.
- Challenging Racism – Moe Bryant, Executive Director (challengingracism.org). Challenging Racism leads programs that increase understanding of institutional and systemic inequities and that give participants tools for creating communities of belonging.
- Doorways – Diana Ortiz, President and CEO (www.doorwaysva.org/). Doorways provides services, shelter, and supportive housing for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and their families.



Photo by Jennifer Sosin. L to R: Monique Bryant, Executive Director, Challenging Racism; Melanie Anderson, Executive Director, Thrive; Lesley Daigle, CEO, Arlington Free Clinic; Paula Fynboh, CEO, Aspire Afterschool Learning; and Diana Ortiz, President and CEO, Doorways

Lyon Park Plant Sale

By Susan Bell

Despite the cold, 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 18** 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, and more! Most plants will be \$5.00.

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

If you're starting seeds, please consider adding some for the sale. And PLEASE plan to donate potted up – and labeled – plants to the sale.

We ask that you don't share anything on Arlington's list of invasive plants (Check: <https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2013/10/Invasive-Plant-List-2-19-15.pdf>). 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 18.

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



Featured photos: Bee Balm (top) and Golden Ragwort (bottom)

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Virginia Elections 2026 – What to Expect

By Betsey Lyon

Virginia holds elections every year, giving registered voters an annual opportunity to flex their voting muscle. What will be on your ballot in Arlington on US Election Day, Tuesday, November 3? One constitutional amendment is in flux, so please read on.

Filing deadlines apply to our candidates for US Senate, US House, and Arlington County Board. Candidates have until April 2 to file to be on the (probably) June Primary ballot. If the Primary date changes, so may the filing date. Candidates who don't primary currently have until June 16 to file to be on the November 3 General Election ballot. Here's what you'll be asked to vote for:

- **One US Senate seat.** Incumbent: Sen. Mark Warner. Candidates at this early date: <https://www.vpap.org/elections/us-senate/>
- **One US House Seat, District 8**, which includes all of Arlington. Incumbent: Rep. Don Beyer. Candidates so far: <https://www.vpap.org/offices/us-representative-8/elections/>
- **One Arlington County Board seat.** Incumbent: Matt DeFerranti. Declared candidates: <https://www.vpap.org/offices/arlington-county-county-board-at-large/elections/>
 - Arlington Democratic candidates always appear on the state primary ballot, generally held in June. Republicans vary how they field candidates.
- **One Arlington County School Board seat.** Incumbent: Bethany Zecher Sutton. She announced she will run again.
 - Arlington Democrats select their School Board candidates in a caucus open to the public online and in person, typically in May. Republicans may endorse a candidate before the General Election in November.
- **Three constitutional amendments** that the Virginia legislature passed in January will be on the November ballot: [HJ1](#), to provide access to abortion in the constitution, [HJ2](#), which would restore voting rights to formerly incarcerated people, and [HJ3](#), which would protect same-sex marriage in Virginia.

NOTE: If the public approves the redistricting amendment in April that has passed the state legislature, our state Primary may be moved from June to August, to allow for reorganization into new districts.

Proposed Redistricting Amendment Special Election

As of our editorial deadline, our state legislature was advancing for possible public voting on April 21, constitutional amendment [HJ4](#). It would allow the General Assembly to conduct a mid-decade redraw of its congressional district map ahead of the 2026 midterm elections. The concept of redistricting off-schedule with the US census started in the Texas legislature and has expanded to several states. Some states also have decided to redistrict ahead of schedule, while others have declined political pressure to do so. Virginia hoped to release proposed redistricting maps on January 30. Watch media reports for announcements about this evolving constitutional amendment.

2026 Election Dates and Deadlines

- **April 21** - Special Election for Redistricting Amendment (tentative at publication time).
- **May 1** – Virginia Primary early voting starts.
- **May 17 and 23** – Democratic School Board Caucus, open to registered voters; Virginians don't register by political party. Online voting opens May 2. Republicans don't habitually caucus, but may announce a candidate endorsement before the November election.
- **June 16** – Virginia Primary (likely). REGISTER TO VOTE IN THE PRIMARY by June 5. If voters pass the Redistricting amendment in April, the Primary likely will move to August.
- **September 18 to November 3** - General Election early voting starts.
- **November 3** - US General Election Day at your regular polling place. REGISTER TO VOTE IN THE GENERAL ELECTION by October 23. Register/vote after the deadline for a provisional ballot ONLY.

Save the Date – Upcoming Events

Save the date for these events coming up in our area. Underlined words are links in the online version.

- Join MoCA Arlington at [Art After Hours](#) to celebrate the opening of four new exhibitions for 2026 on Saturday, February 21 from 5 to 8 p.m.
- The [Feel the Heritage Festival](#) will take place at the Charles Drew Community Center on Saturday, February 21 from noon to 5 p.m.
- Join the [Woman's Club of Arlington](#) as we celebrate the Country's 250th anniversary and learn about the skills and trades employed at Mount Vernon and Arlington House during the Colonial period. The program will be held on February 24 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. All are welcome and the event is free. RSVP: womansclubarlington@gmail.com.
- Head to Arlington Central Library for [Climate & Cuisine: A Panel Discussion Featuring Author and Climate Scientist Mark Easter](#) on Wednesday, February 25 from 6 to 7:45 p.m. Registration is recommended; first come, first served seating. Be sure to check out the entire [Arlington Reads series](#) – the library's premier author talk program.
- Take part in a [free rain garden workshop](#) on February 28 from 9:30 a.m. to noon at the Lubber Run Community Center. Please register.
- Community Concert at the Lyon Park Community Center on **Tuesday, March 24 at 7:30 p.m.** The Lyon Park Community Center, with assistance from DC Musicians Local 161-710 and the Music Performance Trust Fund, commemorate Women's History Month with an evening of music by women, performed by women! Neighborhood old timers will see some familiar faces, as principal players from the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra join our neighbor Susan Robinson performing music for flute, harp, and strings. This concert is free and suitable for older, concert-ready kids. It will be about 90 minutes, including a short intermission, and a post concert Q and A and reception with the artists.

Tree Canopy Updates By Brooke Alexander, Tree Canopy and Native Plant Committee Chair

REMINDER: As of press time, we still have 28 FREE canopy trees to place. Contact trecanopy@ashtonheights.org for a free consultation.



Deadline: February 28 for the possibility of spring planting.

REPLACEMENT OF TREES REMOVED FROM UTILITY STRIP

To those who had a tree removed from the utility strip in front of your house (or your neighbor's house) as part of the County Tree Maintenance Program in Fall 2025, know that the AHCA Tree Canopy and Native Plant subcommittee will be working with County staff to plan and plant replacement trees.

Please be in touch if you'd like to know more about this process! Contact trecanopy@ashtonheights.org for more information.



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Is Digital Detox the Cure You Need?

Community Safety and Security Corner

By Christina Schultz

Are you shocked when your cell phone informs you at the end of the week that you have spent 5 hours and 34 minutes average per day of screen time? Do you instinctively reach for your phone every time you hear a ding? Are you stressed constantly trying to keep up on messages, emails, and social media posts? You aren't alone. The average person receives 146 push notifications per day, which equates to about one notification every ten minutes. Teenagers often experience a higher volume, with studies showing a median of over 237 notifications daily. The average smartphone user checks their phone between 96 and 205 times per day. Approximately 54% of Americans cite boredom as a reason for using their smartphones. Gaming addiction is now recognized as a medical condition. Other studies have found that as smartphone use increases, so does anxiety. Perhaps taking a break from your digital devices is just what the doctor would order.

Digital detox is a commitment to intentionally reduce, limit, or even eliminate the use of tech devices, including smartphones, computers, tablets, TV, and social media platforms. This can range from a few hours a day to multi-day total disconnection from technology. The goal of taking a break from contact connectivity and screen time is to reduce stress, improve mental health, focus on real-world commitments, and encourage in-person connections.

Today's world is structured around constant digital connection – from having to answer work emails all day to taking online courses. This reliance on technology has made it difficult for many of us to go even a few hours without using a computer or phone. Rethinking your relationship with technology through a temporary digital detox can help you evaluate your use of apps, social media, and overall screen habits, giving you a healthier perspective when you return. Defining why you want to step away can help you maintain your detox when temptation arises. Time away from social media is especially valuable because many platforms are deliberately designed to keep users engaged which can become an unconscious source of anxiety due to comparison and fear of missing out. A digital detox can also improve work-life balance, and support better sleep, since the bright light from screens suppresses melatonin production and makes it harder for the brain to wind down.

A digital detox can be tailored to suit your needs and lifestyle. It can range from completely stepping away from digital devices, as seen in technology-free wellness retreats, to simply limiting time spent on social media, gaming, or other apps. Most smartphones have built in tools to limit time on apps. To get the most out of a detox, it helps to replace moments of boredom-driven device use with activities that benefit your mind and body. Planning a successful detox involves committing to a realistic time frame, setting clear

goals, filling your free time with enjoyable activities (see box), and embracing the mental and physical freedom that comes with

disconnecting. Many people notice benefits within hours of disconnecting, while others prefer starting with a two-day break, such as over a weekend. A detox does not need to be long or extreme nor does it mean eliminating all technology. It can begin with gradually reducing use of problematic apps and increasing time away at a pace that feels comfortable and sustainable for you.

A technology detox provides an opportunity to reset and reflect on your relationship with digital devices, fostering greater appreciation for what matters most. Even if you choose to return to regular technology use or decide a full detox isn't for you, taking time to evaluate how you interact with your screen can offer valuable insight into building healthier digital habits moving forward.



Suggested Offline Activities to Replace Online Fixation

- Take an exercise, art, music, history, or language class through [Arlington County](#).
- Challenge your family and friends to a board game.
- Pick up a physical book, newspaper, or magazine from the [library](#).
- Take a [hike or a walk](#) around the block for some fresh air and bird watching.
- Try a new cooking or baking recipe.
- Explore our area's free museums .
- Plant [native flowers](#) or an herb garden.
- Visit a neighbor or invite them to your house.
- Finally tackle those chores or home improvement tasks.
- Get some rest by taking a nap.

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Pollinator Pathways in Ashton Heights: Insecticides and their Effect on Pollinators

By **Melania Flores**, Pollinator Pathway Subcommittee Chair, AHCA Tree Canopy and Native Plant Committee

Last month we wrote about why feeding adult pollinators is not enough to keep our preferred critters and ecosystem safe. They also need a place to lay their eggs and raise their young, and most pollinators require specific native plants to reproduce. This is why growing native plants is important.

But still, pollinators are facing an uphill battle. Overall, our beloved butterflies have declined by 22% between 2000-2020. The number one reason for this is the use of insecticides. (See: <https://www.plantnovanatives.org/dealing-with-insects> for more detailed information).

When I joined this initiative, I asked: what is an insecticide? The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation shares: "An insecticide is a pesticide that is used to kill insects. Other pesticides can still harm insects (like certain herbicides and fungicides), but insecticides are the most toxic since they are designed to kill insects." Sad fact: this organization is named after the *Glaucopsyche xerces*, the first butterfly known to go extinct in North America due to human activities.

Pest control companies advertise mosquito control insecticides as "safe". But I learned that EPA pesticide regulation does not guarantee preventing harm to not-targeted species (such as butterflies, native bees and other pollinators).

The NOVA Bird Alliance indicates that mosquito sprays also kill pollinators and other insects essential to the ecosystem, as their components are "broad spectrum", which may affect other insects as well. (See: <https://www.nvbirdalliance.org/news/to-spray-or-not-to-spray>).

Plant NOVA Natives also points out that killing a wide range of insects reduces the food source for birds that eat mosquitoes, as well as other mosquito predators, such as dragonflies.

The broad use of insecticides is, therefore, affecting the populations of pollinators and defeating our purpose of protecting them. Informed decisions in your household can make a difference to reverse this trend.

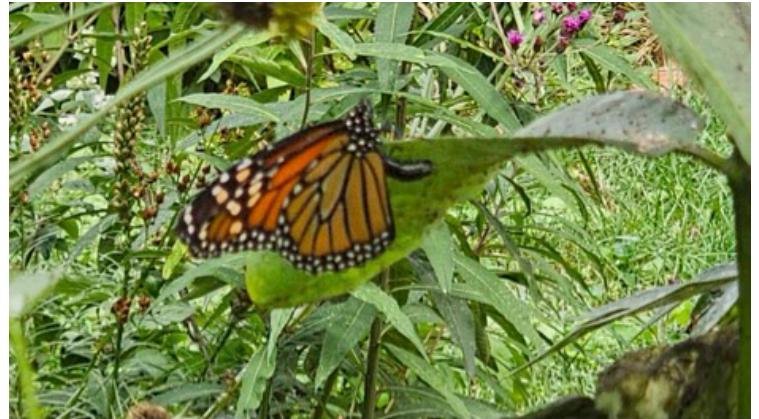
The [Pollinator Pathway Initiative](#) pledges that your household:

1. Plant more natives: Introduce them into your garden in amounts that you are comfortable with.
2. Do not spread insecticides: Insecticides, even those labeled as "safe", are the main killers of pollinators.

Who can sign up? Households that comply with the two requirements mentioned earlier in this article can join Ashton Heights' Pollinator Pathway.

In future newsletters, we will write about invasive species common in our neighborhood and sustainable ways to manage mosquitoes.

To read more about the Pollinator Pathways Initiative, please go to <https://www.plantnovanatives.org/pp>. To join, email: melaniaflores@gmail.com.



*Monarch Butterfly laying eggs in our Common Milkweed at N. Ivy.
Photo: Steven Widmayer*

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Landscape Contractors Association Award Winner
 "Top 100 Companies To Make Your Life Easier," Washingtonian
 "Top 100 Green Industry Companies," Landscape Management
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President's Column – Continued from page 1

agreement and I expect we will see some movement on this in the first half of this year.

4. Overall, AHCA has good relationships with the county. I am in continual dialogue with the Arlington County Board members and their staff, and our AHCA Committees are also in contact with Arlington Commissions and Advisory Committees, and Arlington County staff within their issue areas. Because of a variety of issues, in 2026 we will be establishing a fundamentally new relationship with specific County offices. This has been a long time coming and sorely needed.

Finally, I was extremely honored to have five organizations at our AHCA January monthly meeting of nonprofit service associations focusing on education, immigrant support, and healthcare – all focused in making our county and community a better place to live while supporting and caring for all of our residents.

And that's what this is all about – quality of life for our families, our local businesses, our neighbors, and our communities. Thank you for your interest and participation, and a most happy, healthy and fulfilling 2026.



Recommended on the Ashton Heights Listserv

Recommendations are always being solicited on the Ashton Heights listserv; here are some recent ones.

Wisdom teeth removal:

- Dr. Buzkin
- Dr. Gentile
- Dr. Roca
- Dr. Pashapour

Firewood:

- A Better Burn
- Remington
- Five Star Firewood
- *A note of caution with firewood: be on the lookout for [spotted lanternfly eggs](#). If found, eggs can either be squashed individually or scraped off and put permanently into rubbing alcohol or hand sanitizer.*

Critters in the attic:

- Potomac Pest Control
- Adcock's
- The Master Trapper

Subscribe to the Ashton Heights listserv today. Email: main+subscribe@ashtonheights.groups.io and include your full name and street address and we'll get you set up to be "in the know." You can set your preferences on how you receive email from the listserv? Options include: individual messages, full digest, daily summary or no email.

National projections show home prices rising about 1.6% this year, with some communities experiencing even stronger appreciation. In Arlington County, single-family homes are expected to see a 3.8% increase from 2025 to 2026. Northern Virginia continues to show notable resilience, driven by steady demand for homeownership – an investment that remains strong over the long term. If the next chapter is on your mind, just reach out whenever you want to chat.



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Door-to-Door Utility Scam

By Sean Buckley (originally on the Ashton Heights listserv)

I recently had a salesman visit their home claiming to be with "NOVA Energy" and working with Dominion Energy. He offered a "technician visit" for an "energy-saving program" supposedly subsidized by the state of Virginia and Arlington County. After looking into it, this appears to be a common utility scam. Please be aware of the following:

- Dominion Energy Policy (2026): Dominion has stated that they **never** send representatives door-to-door without a prior appointment to discuss energy savings or technician visits.
- False Claims of Partnership: While Dominion has local infrastructure projects (sometimes labeled "NOVA" in project documents), they do not partner with third-party door-to-door sales teams to offer subsidized home visits.
- Official Programs: Legitimate Arlington County and Virginia state energy programs (such as those from the [Arlington Initiative to Rethink Energy](#)) do not involve unsolicited door-to-door solicitation.
- The Risk: These visits are often used to see your energy bill. Showing a bill allows scammers to see your account number, which can be used to "slam" your account (switch your service provider without your consent) or steal your personal information.



Safety Recommendations:

- Do not show your energy bill or provide any personal account information to anyone at your door.
- Verify directly: If you are interested in a real energy audit, contact [Dominion Energy](#) directly at 866-366-4357 or visit the [Virginia Energy Sense website](#).
- Report suspicious activity: If you encounter these solicitors, you can report them to the [Arlington County Police](#) non-emergency line at 703-558-2222. I submitted an online report to the Arlington County Police and they asked for a recording of the interaction that was available from my Ring doorbell.

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



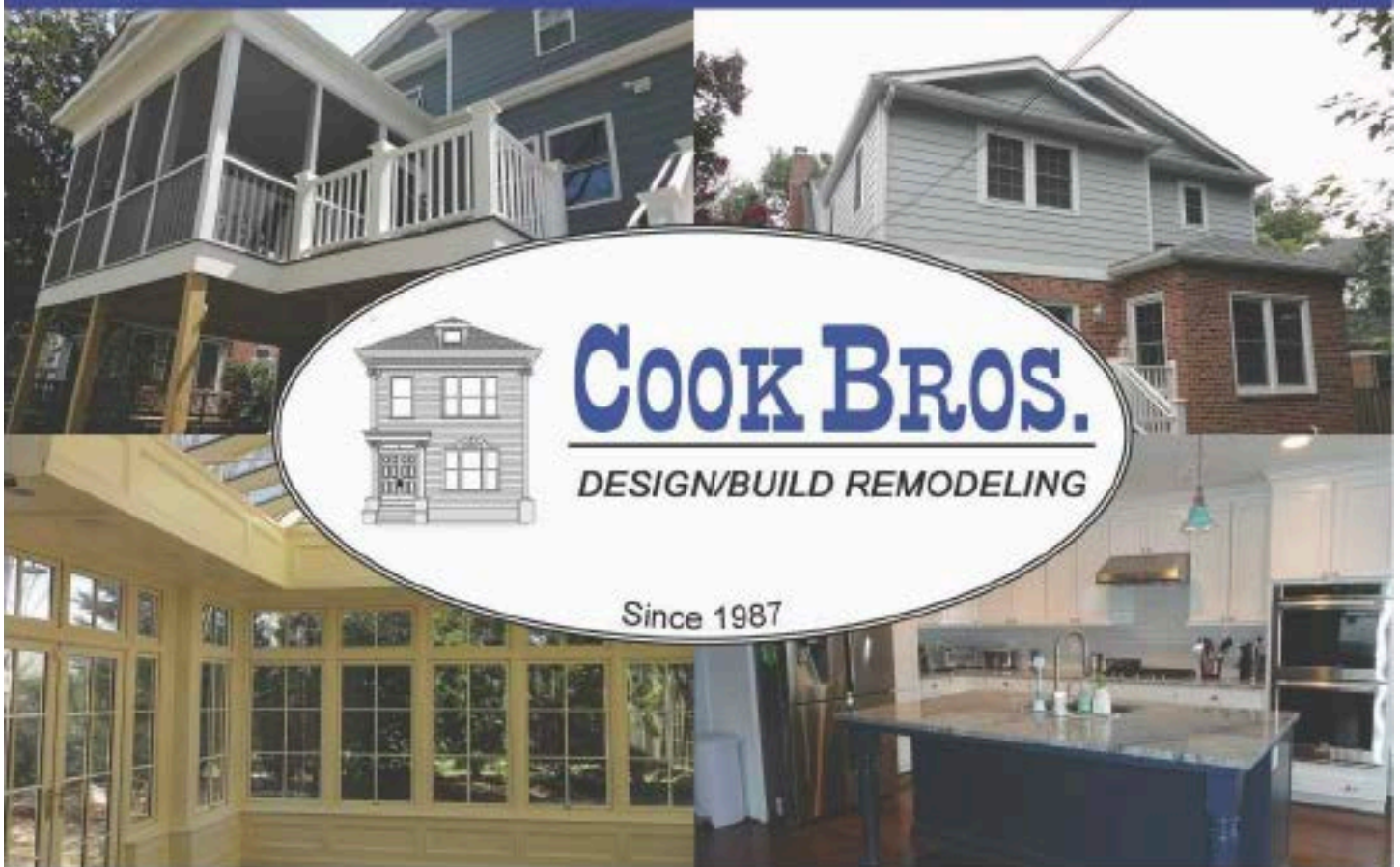
Mail collection

Icons courtesy of flaticon.com

**Please consult the newsletter that
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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