



Over the Fence

News for Neighbors from the Arlington Heights Civic Association Spring 2009 Edition

Visit our website: www.ahca.info
Join our yahoo group: ahca-subscribe@yahogroups.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome Spring! It is nice to see all the flowers coming up around the neighborhood. As the weather gets warmer, I am sure we'll be seeing our neighbors more often. I look forward to seeing you at upcoming events.

Please join us for our spring membership meeting on April 21st at Patrick Henry Elementary School Library, beginning at 7 p.m. A special guest speaker will attend, state **Senator Mary Margaret Whipple**. Senator Whipple will review this year's legislative session and will be available to answer questions. Also at our spring meeting we will be addressing planning for the **2009 Arlington County Fair**. As you may know, the Fair Board recently proposed the sale of beer at the Fair, during limited hours, in combination with an outdoor concert. Many of our residents expressed concern on our Yahoo group about this possibility, and some expressed support. The Fair Board indicated that it would like to address this issue at our April meeting, so if the question of beer sales is important to you, please plan to on April 21. All civic association members are eligible to vote at our meetings. If you are not a member, please join online at www.ahca.info/about/join, or you can fill out the membership form in this newsletter and send it with your check to our Treasurer. You can also pay at the meeting by cash or check if you prefer.

Other upcoming events are our **Neighborhood BBQ and Potluck**, on Saturday, May 16, and our **Home and Garden Tour** on Saturday, June 13. We hope to see you at these great events. Further details are available below in the Community Calendar. **Volunteers are needed for the BBQ & Potluck. If you can volunteer, please contact Stacey Whyte at kandswhyte@gmail.com.**

There is a lot of neighborhood news in this *Over the Fence* regarding construction in the neighborhood and those projects the civic association has been working on getting funded. I hope you will read all about it. Also, if you want to stay up to date on neighborhood information, I urge you to please join our yahoo group. When issues arise between meetings, information can be obtained through the yahoo group. It is civic association's most efficient communication tool.

Finally, I want to thank Jason Torchinsky and Richard Bullington McGuire, who have stepped down from our Executive Committee. Many thanks to you for your service, and also that of all our dedicated volunteers. You make our neighborhood a better place to live.

All the best,

Juliet Hiznay

SPRING AHCA MEETING -- AGENDA

Please join the civic association on **Tuesday, April 21, 2009, 7 pm at Patrick Henry Elementary School Library**. Expected agenda items are: Election of First Vice-President; Special Guest Speaker: Hon. Mary Margaret Whipple, our Senator in the Virginia Senate; 2009 Arlington County Fair; Updates on Thomas Jefferson Middle School Renovation and TJ Dust Field; Vote on Neighborhood Conservation Project Priority & Update on other Construction.



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Sat., April 11, 2009, 10-4 p.m. – Arlington Home Show & Expo – The Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization is partnering with Arlington County's Housing Division to bring 50+ exhibitors to the Walter Reed Community Center at 2909 S. 16th St. The show is an opportunity for homeowners to gather ideas, see products, and talk to professionals about a wide variety of home improvements. Admission is free.

Fri., April 24, 2009, 6:30 p.m. -- Patrick Henry Elementary International Dinner & Silent Auction -- Bring a dish to share and admission is free or \$5/person (\$20/family of up to 5). There will be a silent auction, a prize raffle and entertainment. Pre-registration is encouraged. This is a fundraiser for our PTA. Donations of new or collectible items for the auction are appreciated. A big THANK YOU from Patrick Henry to all those who supported this event in past years!! Please email Santya Lanman @ s.lanman@yahoo.com for more information.

Sun., May 3, 2009 – Opening Day -- Columbia Pike Farmer's Market open every Sunday from 9-1 p.m. at Pike Park (Walter Reed & Columbia Pike) through mid-December. *The Columbia Pike Farmer's Market is now open to artisans and crafters too.* If interested, please contact Amy McWilliams at amcwilliams@columbiapike.org or at 703-892-2776.

Sat., May 16, 2009 (Neighborhood Day), 4-7 pm -- Spring BBQ & Potluck (rain date May 23), South Hudson Street – Please join the civic association at our Spring BBQ & Potluck for great food and lots of fun. Winners of our potluck contest and our three-legged race will get surprise gifts. We will also have a moonbounce and games. Further details will be announced on the yahoo group. Please contact RJ Thacher to volunteer at rj.thacher@verizon.net. Once again, in recognition of Neighborhood Day, Arlington Heights will be participating in the Tree Giveaway. This year's trees are Burr Oak and American Hazel. Please contact Mike Sobola for additional information at sobolas@verizon.net.

Sat., June 13, 2009, 8:30 a.m. -- AHCA Annual Home & Garden Tour, (rain date June 20) – The Mashaws once again will graciously host this annual event. The Home and Garden Tour is an excellent opportunity to collect gardening ideas and enjoy lovely neighborhood gardens, and houses too. The Tour will begin with light refreshments at the Mashaws (2908 Fifth St. South -- access from Walter Reed or from Fenwick St. or the paths from Sixth St. via Garfield). If you would like to have your garden and/or home on the tour, or if you have any questions, you can reach Rebecca Mashaw at 703-892-0162 or at rmashaw@comcast.net.

Sat., June 20, 2009, 1-8 p.m. -- 14th Annual Columbia Pike Blues Festival – FREE ADMISSION

Tues, July 21, 2009, 7 p.m. -- AHCA Summer Meeting, Patrick Henry Elementary School Library

Wed.-Sun., August 19-23, 2009 -- Arlington County Fair, Thomas Jefferson Community Center

Tues., October 20, 2009, 7 p.m., -- AHCA Fall Meeting, Patrick Henry Elementary School Library

Tues., January 19, 2010, 7 p.m. -- AHCA Annual Meeting, Patrick Henry Elementary School Library



PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR CIVIC ASSOCIATION – JOIN FOR 2009

SEND TO: AHCA, c/o Lisa Bongardt, 319 S. Irving St., Arlington, VA 22204 *NEW ADDRESS*

Name(s): _____

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Enclosed is \$20.00 for a Family Membership **Enclosed is \$25.00 for a Business Membership**

Optional: I would like to be involved with / help out with:

Becoming an officer or serving on a committee **Distributing the newsletter or other announcements**

Contributing articles for the newsletter **Volunteer for Events (social events, kids programs, etc.)**

There is a vacancy for Second Vice-President of the Civic Association. If you are interested in serving or would like to nominate someone, please contact Jay Jacob Wind at (703) 920-5193 or jay.wind@att.net

Arlington Heights Civic Association – 2009 Officers

President: Juliet Hiznay, 703-685-2596, strangefruitblues@yahoo.com

First Vice-President: Stacey Whyte, 703-271-2681, kandswhyte@gmail.com

Second Vice-President: *vacant*

Secretary: Mike Sobola, sobolas@verizon.net

Treasurer & Ad Manager: Lisa Bongardt, 319 S. Irving St. 22204,
703-851-1561, lisabergenty@hotmail.com

Neighborhood Conservation Representatives:

Juliet Hiznay, 703-685-2596, strangefruitblues@yahoo.com

Tony Halloin, 202-486-0617, ahalloin@yahoo.com

Lisa Hopkins, 703-979-5967, torylisa@yahoo.com

Social Committee Chair: RJ Thacher, 703-553-0655, rj.thacher@verizon.net

Garden Tour Hosts: Rebecca & John Mashaw, 703-892-0162,
rmashaw@comcast.net

Newsletter Editor: Megan Booth, 703-553-9712, jjmegan@verizon.net

Newsletter Distributor: Adrienne Wood, 703-685-4303, adrienne.wood@gmail.com

Webmaster: Richard Bullington-McGuire, (703-979-4380), rbulling@obscure.org

Yahoo Group Moderator: Jay Jacob Wind, (703) 920-5193, jay.wind@att.net

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Update on Efforts to Fund Jefferson Middle School Renovation

By Juliet Hiznay

When the School Board decided that replacing Wakefield High School was their next major capital project, an effort began to obtain the support of the Arlington Public Schools to fund interim improvements to Jefferson Middle School. Major maintenance at Jefferson has been put off for years in anticipation that it would be rebuilt. The renovation would address immediate needs, such as mechanical systems like heating and air conditioning, and the poor learning and teaching environment, due especially to the lack of natural light or good interior lighting. Parents of students with special health concerns also brought attention to the health problems associated with the dust field. The renovation came before the Board as an Information Item on March 19, 2009. The staff memorandum is reprinted below. It is also on the April 2, 2009 Agenda as an Action Item. The civic association has worked very hard to build a coalition with the Jefferson PTA, the feeder school PTAs, and the most effected neighborhoods (those whose children attend Jefferson) to get School Board support for the renovation of Jefferson Middle School. This now seems to be a good blueprint on how to get support for improvements to facilities long neglected. If funded, as appears likely, most work would be carried out in the summer of 2010.

[Reprinted from the Arlington School Board Agenda for March 19, 2009 Memorandum to School Board]

Initiated by: Clarence Stukes; Staff contact: William O'Connor

A May 2008 Facilities Condition Assessment of the Thomas Jefferson Middle School, identified a set of Capital Needs which included various repairs and upgrades to the building envelope, the electrical and mechanical systems, and the fire and life safety systems. The current cost estimate for this work (including all soft costs) is \$5,165,430; a cost intended to be shared by APS and Arlington County. The construction costs total \$4.8 million.

Since that time, an Improvement Study was undertaken with the goal of enhancing the teaching and learning environment, with special focus placed on bringing natural light into the building. This study, completed in January 2009, recommended a set of Capital Improvements with a total estimated cost of \$4,301,000, which includes construction, soft costs and furnishings. The estimated construction costs include windows, indirect lighting, ceilings, skylights, and other interior modifications and refinishing, and total \$3.8 million.

A review of the various scope items of both Capital Needs and Capital Improvements reveals the need for careful coordination and integration in order to achieve the greatest efficiency and highest quality. For example, in an individual classroom, the windows, lighting, ceiling, skylights, finishing, and mechanical work above the ceiling all need to be planned and executed in a coordinated manner. Therefore, the Capital Needs and Capital Improvements should be undertaken simultaneously. While the Job Order Contracting method could be used to deliver this work, a single almost \$9 million design-bid-build project has the potential of significant cost savings if it is bid in the current market.

The total estimated construction value at this point is \$8.6 million. The current estimate of design fees, including reimbursables, construction management, commissioning and other soft costs is estimated to be \$800,000. An allowance of \$133,000 for furnishings should be included bringing the total estimated project cost to \$9.5 million. This estimate does not include any allowance for swing space accommodations, if required.

The proposed schedule is as follows:

Commence design March 16, 2009

Complete schematic design April 17, 2009

Complete construction documents July 3, 2009

Advertise for bids July 8, 2009

Open bids August 5, 2009

Contract award August 26, 2009

Begin construction September 1, 2009

Complete Construction August 31, 2010

This should allow some portion of the exterior work to be accomplished this fall. Going forward, we will identify all of the programming requirements for the building and assess the feasibility of performing some of the interior work during the school year. It is expected that a major portion of the work would be accomplished during the summer 2010 with final completion prior to the start of school in the fall.

The FY 2009 – FY 2014 Capital Improvement Plan, adopted by the School Board on May 29, 2008, did not include funding in the CIP years for a capital project at Thomas Jefferson. It did report, however, on the funds identified out of bonds and current revenues from prior years for both the design work and the capital needs project at Thomas Jefferson. Staff is requesting the School Board revise the FY 2009 – FY 2014 Adopted CIP to include \$4,301,000 in FY 2010 for the improvements at Thomas Jefferson. The improvement funds will be combined with the previously identified funds for the capital needs and will be incorporated into one project.

Finance staff will investigate the best way to finance the complete project and bring forward recommendations to the School Board. This analysis will include any impact on debt service.

Superintendent's Recommendation: Superintendent recommends approval.

Construction and More Construction!

By Juliet Hiznay

The theme for this year, and perhaps next year as well, seems to be construction and more construction! With this will come some inconveniences, but also some long desired neighborhood improvements.

Finally, after more than a decade in planning and construction, streetscape improvements are under construction on Columbia Pike between South Garfield Street and South Oakland Street. In addition to new sidewalk on both sides of the Pike, pedestrian friendly streetlights will be installed and street trees planted (reportedly red maple). At this time, some of the large light poles remain lighting the new Carlyle style lights can be installed. Also expected on Columbia Pike is a water line replacement project. Some disruption of traffic can be expected for this project, though all efforts will be made to minimize the impact during rush hour. Super Stops at the bus stops on the Pike are also in the works, though it is unclear when construction on that project will begin. More information is available on CPRO's website at www.columbiapike.org.

On our northern border, the county is replacing the Gravity Three Supply, a major water line. That is the reason the multi-use trail at S. Highland St. has been diverted. The work area is the access road along Arlington Blvd. and Washington Blvd (Rte 27) to the Pike. We can expect some noise during construction, but I am told that road closures will be limited to daytime work on location at our side streets. Washington Blvd. will not be closed. Any disturbance of green space or to the trail will be restored upon completion of the project. The county's urban forester has been informed of the project and is working with the project manager to protect trees.

Construction of the Garfield Street (0-100 block) street improvement project has begun. This is a project funded through the county's Neighborhood Conservation Program. You may have seen the trucks on the street for the water line replacement. The Fenwick Street (0-100 block) street improvement project has been funded and is in the design phase. Also on South Garfield just south of 2nd Street, is a Missing Link sidewalk project that is likely to be completed this spring.

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Compiled by Juliet Hiznay

1. Switch to compact florescent light bulbs
2. Install low flow shower heads and toilets
3. Reduce use of plastic bags (use totes instead)
4. Use a push mower or electric mower
5. Compost & Recycle
6. Hang your clothes to dry them
7. Install water filters on your tap instead of using bottled drinking water
8. Install water barrels (with insect screening) to irrigate garden and lawn
9. Recycle your hazardous waste properly, including batteries (alkaline batteries too)
10. Turn your thermostat down in the winter and up in the summer; program thermostat for less energy use when you are not home.
11. Unplug electronics when not in use
12. Walk and bike more; drive less
13. Buy Local or Grow Your Own! (reduces transportation cost, improves nutrition)
14. Take care of your shade trees or plant new shade trees

*Adapted from Arlington's AIRE program. More detail is available on the web at:

www.arlingtonva.us/portals/topics/ClimateTipCards.aspx.

\$8000 Home Buyer Tax Credit Basics

The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 offers an \$8000 maximum tax credit for first-time homebuyers buying homes as their primary residence between January 1 and December 1, 2009. A First-Time Home Buyer is anyone who has not owned a home within the last 3 years. If an unmarried couple jointly buys a home, and one person owned a home (within 3 years) and the other did not, they can "designate" the tax credit to that person who will be able to claim it on their individual tax return. This rule also applies for parents to co-sign on a mortgage. The parents own a home, their son or daughter is FTHB— and may claim the tax credit. Income Limits can be more complicated and first-time homebuyers should always seek advice from a tax expert. The income number is always based on Modified ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME (MAGI). Single taxpayer: MAGI of \$75,000 or less, Married taxpayer: MAGI of \$150,000 or less. There is also a provision for those single and married who EXCEED the income limits to claim a partial tax credit. A "tax credit formula" has been created to determine the dollar amount. For example, if a single tax payer's

MAGI is \$82,000, their partial tax credit is \$5200. Taxpayers can choose to claim their tax credit on either their 2008 tax returns or wait until the 2009 tax year to file. For example, if they exceed the income limit in 2008 (which would only qualify them for a partial credit) but their income has been decreased in 2009 due to a temporary layoff or cut back in over time, they can wait until 2009 to claim the tax credit (for the full tax credit).

A FTHB can borrow the dollar amount of the expected tax credit from a relative and pay it back when the tax credit is received. It could be used towards down payment and closing costs. FHA and VA loan programs will allow it. VA 100% loans are now available to \$812,500 in the DC area. Higher loan amounts are also available with a down payment equal to 25% of the purchase price above \$812,500. The FHA has just implemented new limits in March 2009 for its loan guarantee programs that will allow it to insure mortgages of up to \$729,750 with only 3.5% down payment. (This loan cap also applies to the FHA 203K renovation loan program).



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Update on Efforts to Replace the TJ Dust Field

By Juliet Hiznay

Last fall the civic association voted to seek replacement of the dust field with a surface that could withstand the level of play and eliminates the dust problem. Working together with other civic associations and PTAs, as well as residents concerned about the health and environmental impact of the dust, there is now county support to replace this field. A meeting of stakeholders took place in February, which included civic associations, schools, residents, sports leagues and the Fair Board. The stakeholders unanimously concluded that the field should be replaced with a synthetic surface. The County has already set aside about two-thirds of the funds needed, and Parks Department staff has been working on a plan for replacement and sources of funding. County staff is working to identify funds, but it is not known yet if adequate funds will be available to install the preferred surface (synthetic) this calendar year. It should be noted that no work on the field replacement is likely to occur prior to this year's County Fair. The project has not yet gone out to bid, so the best-case scenario would be for installation to begin in the Fall of 2009, with a playable surface available upon completion of the project.

To My Arlington Heights Neighborhood with Affection

By Stacey Whyte, AHCA First Vice President

On a late afternoon in early March 2000 after days of packing, cleaning and moving, my husband Keith and I found ourselves laying on the bare wood floor of the living room in our new house—elated but exhausted first-time homeowners. We knew we had to get up eventually as we had an entire house waiting to be unpacked but when facing the knowledge of the work left ahead it seemed easier to lie on the hardwood and convince our tired bodies we were comfortable.

The first knock took us by surprise because all family and friends recruited for the move had long since dispersed and we knew no one else in the immediate area. Once we hauled ourselves off the floor and opened the front door a petite lady greeted us with a smile as lovely as the giant potted lily she was carrying. In Spanish-accented English the woman welcomed us to our new home and explained she was our neighbor from across the street. When she left we not only had a beautiful lily but also a note with her name and number “just in case” we needed anything. We were still marveling at the kindness and generosity of our new neighbor when another knock echoed through our empty living room. This time we were welcomed by a woman we had glimpsed working in her garden next door when we had arrived that morning. She came bearing a casserole dish filled with homemade tabouleh and grilled chicken. This new neighbor informed us “nobody should have to cook for themselves on the first night in their new home.” When she took her leave we had a wonderful home cooked dinner in one hand and her name and phone number in the other “just in case” we needed anything. Our afternoon continued on in much the same way with two more sets of neighbors dropping off plates of brownies and a third couple inviting us to join their family the following week for Easter dinner. We also found we had gained three more notes with names and phone numbers “just in case” we needed anything. By the time my mother called to check in on us that evening, Keith and I felt as though we had been adopted by our entire street. It was then we realized we not only owned our first house but we had truly found a home.

It has been just over nine years since that first neighbor knocked on our door. Since then the community on our street has shared many things—from the ordinary to the extraordinary. We have shared birthdays and barbecues, births of children and the loss of parents. We came together in the street in the hours following September 11th and we helped each other through the destruction of a local hurricane. As will happen in life some cherished neighbors have come and gone but certain things remain the same in our wonderful Arlington Heights neighborhood—the welcoming spirit, smiling faces, friendly greetings and the knowledge that we aren't just neighbors, we are a community. And when a new neighbor arrives we greet them with a token of welcome (we recommend brownies!) and our names and phone numbers “just in case.”

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Neighborhood Conservation Update

By Juliet Hiznay

Arlington Heights' first priority proposed project for Neighborhood Conservation funding is Irving Street (0-100 block). The project would install curb and gutter, address drainage, install Carlyle style streetlights, and provide gateway treatment. The final petition is now under way. Assuming street approval, the project will be eligible for funding this year, and most likely would be funded in the fall, or possibly in the Spring of 2010. The next stage would be full design and then construction.

The remaining projects in queue are for Carlyle style streetlights for: South Ivy St. (7th-9th), South Highland St. (7th-Columbia Pike) and 9th Street South, and Fifth Street South.