

# ALCOVA HEIGHTS

The Newsletter of the Alcov Heights Neighborhood | Arlington, Virginia

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MAY 2011

## CONSERVATION PLAN TOPS NEIGHBORHOOD PRIORITY LIST

*By Marie Van Ness, AHCA President*

Dear Neighbors,

Before I write a bit about the update of the Conservation Plan, I want to mention a few things that will be happening in the neighborhood in the near future.

Our annual Alcov Heights Yard Sale is May 14 at the United Methodist Church parking lot. This is a fun way to sell some of your "treasures" while spending quality time with neighbors and the larger community. See the announcement in this newsletter for details.

The next AHCA meeting is May 19 at the Baptist Church. We

have invited a representative from the Arlington County code enforcement office, who has asked to come to the meeting to hear about any enforcement issues in Alcov Heights.

The Neighborhood Block Party will be Saturday, July 16 and will be hosted by our South 6th St. neighbors. And yes, Boxcar, our neighborhood band is coming back.

In the larger community, there are some events to keep in mind. There is a housing charette, or community forum, at the Sheraton Hotel during the week of June 23 to 30. There is a write-up by Ellie Merica about this important event in this newsletter.

The worst of the construction seems to be over at the Penrose site on Columbia Pike. And the Giant is scheduled to open this July.

The final influx of 1,200 personnel to the Army National Guard  
*continued on page 2*

## ALCOVA HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD YARD SALE

**WHEN:** Saturday, May 14, 2011

**WHERE:** Parking lot of the United Methodist Church, S. 7th and S. Glebe Rd.

**TIME:** Set-up 8:30 a.m.; sale hours: 9:00-1:00

**FEE:** Pay your 2011 AH Dues (\$10) Send a check to Mark Cole at 815 S. Oakland St. or bring cash or check to the sale.

**CONTACT:** Jen Ebbert (jmstrong@earthlink.net) or Paula Young (pyoung@cuna.com) to reserve your spot.



**IMPORTANT NOTE:** You will need to bring your own tables this year!

**NO RAIN DATE**

## 2011 NEIGHBORHOOD CALENDAR

**MAY 14:** Neighborhood Yard Sale, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., Methodist Church

**MAY 19:** Citizens Association meeting, 7 p.m., Baptist Church

**DATE TBA:** Summer newsletter published

**JULY 16:** Neighborhood Block Party, South 6th Street

**SEPTEMBER 8:** Newsletter published

**SEPTEMBER 15:** Citizens Association meeting, 7 p.m., Baptist Church

**OCTOBER 29:** Halloween Parade and Party, 3 p.m., Baptist Church

**NOVEMBER 10:** Newsletter published

**NOVEMBER 17:** Citizens Association meeting, 7 p.m., Baptist Church

**DATE TBA:** Caroling in the Park



*continued from page 1*

Readiness Center is due in August of this year. Some workers started the transition in April. We'll keep an eye on the traffic and any changes to neighborhood parking.

### AHCA Conservation Plan

And finally, regarding the update of our Alcova Heights Conservation Plan, here is some background on this important document.

Our last conservation plan was written in 1999. The first came out some 30 years earlier in the mid-'60s. The county recommends that plans be updated every 10 years. The value of these regular updates is that they give us, the neighborhoods, a chance to do surveys, hold meetings, and define what is important to us as a community; things we would like to have, what we want to preserve, and what we might want to change.

Alcova Heights has reaped many benefits from having good conservation plans, including the South 7th St. sidewalks and the upcoming construction of the South 8th St. sidewalks. And in the future, as we compete with other Arlington neighborhoods for project dollars, we will gain more leverage (or

points, as the county refers to it) if we have an updated conservation plan. This is particularly important as funding has become more limited.

A lot of work has been done over the past two and half years on updating our plan. Quite frankly, we haven't had many volunteers to help out, so the burden has fallen to a few concerned neighbors. Karl Veit has been with the project since the start. He has had assistance from Sara Uzel, Karen Osterloh, and Rodrigo Abela. The Alcova Heights board thanks Karl for staying with the updating effort, frequently as its lone advocate. Karl said that as we go forward, he is willing to stay on as a consultant and help where he can.

Needless to say we need some new energy. Five sections have already been drafted, but there is a bit more writing to do: the introduction, neighborhood characteristics, etc. All the materials and information will then need to be put together into a coherent package. Editing needs to be done, and a completed draft will need to be reviewed and presented at an AHCA meeting. Coordination with the county staff will also need to be done before we present the final package to the County Board for approval.

I want to mention that all along we have had the availability of county staff to help us through the process. That assistance is still available. The person assigned to us in the Planning Division is Katie Henry-Brown, who worked with us when we did the County Board Walk in 2008 and is very familiar with our community. My goal would be to complete the plan by the end of this year to include final approval by the County Board.

Please consider helping out with this important project. Your assistance will be extremely valuable, whether you help with writing, editing, or organizing documents. Perhaps you have some extra time this summer, or want to gain some career experience. Whatever your motivation, this is a great opportunity to help the community and learn.

Please contact Karl at [Karlveit@verizon.com](mailto:Karlveit@verizon.com) or me at [mjvnss@aol.com](mailto:mjvnss@aol.com) or 703-979-1589.

Have a great spring and early summer. See you all around the neighborhood.

Marie

## Eye on Alcova Heights

If you have photos you'd like to submit for this regular newsletter feature, please send them to [scotthoff@verizon.net](mailto:scotthoff@verizon.net).

### Best Nest



A roosting mother robin tries to blend in between a downspout and an adobe wall at a home on 9th Street. Photo by Susi Lill.

**MEETING MINUTES:****TRAFFIC ISSUES, PIKE DEVELOPMENT  
TOP LATEST AHCA MEETING AGENDA***By David Saltiel***Minutes of the March 24, 2011 AHCA Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm

**Traffic Committee Update**

Sara Uzel provided an update on the work of the Traffic Committee. The committee developed a list of concerns based on listserv comments and discussions with neighbors. The most pressing issues appear to be:

- The Intersection of 7th and Glebe
- Speeding within the neighborhood
- Vehicles failing to stop at Quincy and 6th
- Vehicles parking too close to the intersection of Glebe and 8th
- Driver behavior at the intersection of Quincy and 7th

The committee has engaged Arlington County. In general they are pleased with the response they have received from the county. Notably, the county has already addressed the issue of parking too close to the intersection of Glebe and 8th.

**Neighborhood Conservation Plan**

Karl Veit reiterated the need for neighbors to assist in drafting sections of the Conservation Plan. Please contact Karl (Karlveit@verizon.com) to assist.

**Simplicity Urgent Care**

Dr. John Maguire, one of the two owners of the new Simplicity Urgent Care facility (Columbia Pike and Glebe) provided background on the center and took questions.

Neighbors offered a number of endorsements of care received at the center.

**Arlington County Transportation Division**

Bill Roberts (Capital Project Management supervisor) and John Martin (consultant to the county) provided an overview of the Columbia Pike multimodal street improvement project. The goals of this effort are to improve pedestrian safety, enhance traffic flow, and ensure a more consistent street design (in particular, a common five-lane design). The coun-

ty is actively seeking feedback on this plan.

Steve Del Giudice (Transit Bureau chief) provided an overview of the county's ongoing analysis of Columbia Pike public transit options, including a streetcar. A number of reviews are under way, with a view to ensuring that the county would qualify for federal funding to support whatever choice is ultimately made.

Del Giudice noted that the county estimates that more than 15,000 passengers travel Columbia Pike by bus each day, and this number is expected to increase. To accommodate this growth, he said, the county will likely need to either offer longer (articulated) buses or develop the streetcar. The streetcar option would allow the county to both reduce the number of buses (but not to eliminate bus service) and to consolidate the number of bus stops. This should ease traffic congestion associated with the bunching of buses. The streetcar project, if selected, would take many years to build.

Neighbors asked a number of questions about the impact of the streetcar project to neighborhoods and the overall condition of the Pike.

Both Roberts and Del Giudice encouraged neighbors to continue to be involved in Pike projects and to provide input and comments.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 pm.

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## IT'S SPRING, AND NATURE'S IN A RUSH TO GROW

By Alice Nicholson

In the garden it seems as though everything happens at the same time, beginning in the second half of April and running through May. There are plant sales every weekend. The nurseries and big box stores have a huge stock of annuals and perennials. The lawn starts to grow rapidly, and the vegetable plot absolutely **MUST** be dug! Winter weeds bloom and go to seed before you get them pulled. Warm weather makes the irises and peonies last only a day or two. And wind blows the dogwood's white bracts off just as you're starting to enjoy them.

We start to sleep with open windows, which means that we hear the early dawn chorus of birdsong. (Incidentally, the British call this time of day "sparrowfart," for some odd reason.) Birds are busy building nests, and we find the occasional sad broken egg on the lawn. Pollen levels are incredible; a yellow coat from the oaks and pines particularly. Even if we're not allergic, almost all of us do sneeze and sniffle some.

We're sure to get another cold spell before the real heat of summer. And if we've already planted our tomato and pepper plants, they may suffer a setback. And yet it seems silly to wait when the air is so warm. Perhaps this year we'll risk it and get an earlier crop of tomatoes.

Don't mulch around your plants just yet. You need the sun to warm up the soil. Around Memorial Day you can do a round of weed removal and then put down a good layer of shredded leaves or other organic mulch material around your veggies. This will keep the soil from drying out fast and getting too hot in midsummer.

By the way, put your cages, stakes or trellises in when you plant or sow seed. Things will shoot up so fast, you may have trouble retrofitting the supports. If you're growing carrots or other root crops, try digging in a couple of buckets of coarse builder's sand into the row before you seed. The roots will grow better.

Late summer- and fall-blooming plants like chrysanthemums, asters and goldenrods are growing tall. Now is the time to cut them back by half. They'll look pretty bad for a week or two but will branch out and grow vigorously and fuller than before. If you cut back or pinch this new growth by half at the end of June, you'll have even bushier plants than ever, though they may bloom a little later than usual. You might try doing the second pinch on only half of the plants; this will extend the blooming period. (If you don't pinch at all, the plants will probably flop.) Don't try to pinch lilies or daylilies, though!

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## COMMUNITY MEETINGS TO DISCUSS PIKE HOUSING CONCERNS

By Anne Elliott (Elly) Merica [merica@erols.com](mailto:merica@erols.com)

You have likely seen the new development along Columbia Pike such as the apartments at Halstead and Siena Park. Penrose Square, the development being built at the intersection of the Pike and S. Barton Street, will include rental apartments, a new Giant food store and pharmacy, and other retail around a town square. Arlington Mill, a new community center and affordable housing project, is due to start construction soon.

As this new construction causes land values in the area to increase, the affordability of the existing apartment communities for working adults, the elderly and families with children is seriously threatened. In an effort to maintain as much affordable housing as possible while still inviting more affluent residents who can bolster the ability of the Pike to attract retail and other amenities, the Columbia Pike Housing Study was initiated. Groups of neighborhood civic leaders and

county planners have been meeting to set goals and get the selected consulting team oriented to the area and the issues. So far, the team has identified seven sample sites that are being used to test development schemes. The idea is to see what combination of density, building types, renovations, new construction, private and public funding and tax credits can be used to get a viable mix. The initial schemes were presented in February. In May there will be another team meeting, open to the public. From June 24 to 30 at the Sheraton, there will be charettes or community forums to review the schemes.

While these studies are useful to determine whether higher density will allow infill development without displacement, or whether townhouses can be interspersed within a given footprint, it is difficult for the consultants to address the specifics of any site without input from the residents and immediate neighbors. Please participate, and encourage friends to join us, especially those who live in the affected apartments. The meetings will be announced on the county website: [http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/CPHD/forums/columbia/CPLU\\_HStudy\\_FAQ.aspx](http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/CPHD/forums/columbia/CPLU_HStudy_FAQ.aspx)

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*Roseanne*

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## AHCA TRAFFIC COMMITTEE IDENTIFIES PRIORITIES

*By Sara Uzel and Mike Kigin*

The traffic committee (Sara Uzel, Mike Kigin, Judy Kigin, Laurie Miller, Susan Johnson) was re-activated in January 2011 and has been quite busy communicating with the county on a number of issues raised by neighbors.

Here is a list of current priorities:

1. Traffic light at 7th & Glebe - This intersection is dangerous for multiple reasons: blind spot going South on Glebe before the light, intersections do not align, red light runners, and speeding through the intersection from all directions. The county is working on a response to various alternatives suggested by the community. In response to one such suggestion, a large warning sign has already been placed on Glebe between 6th and 7th, approaching the intersection.

2. 6th and Quincy - This intersection is very wide, and a majority of drivers do not stop when turning left onto Quincy Street, often into the path of cars turning right onto

6th. The county is working on a response to various alternatives suggested by the community.

3. 7th and Quincy - We requested a four-way stop sign at this intersection. The county completed a traffic study of the intersection and it does not qualify based on the criteria for four-way stop signs.

4. General speeding - We requested signs to remind drivers that they are in a residential area. This request is under consideration. Speed bumps on Quincy between 7th and 6th are also still under county study.

5. Parking too close to Glebe Rd. makes it difficult for cars to turn onto and off of 8th Street. A new sign to restrict cars from parking too close to the intersection was installed by the county.

6. Several other issues were raised with the county which are still being studied.

If you have a specific issue you would like to have reviewed by the traffic committee, please send your requests to Mike Kigin ([mikekigin@verizon.net](mailto:mikekigin@verizon.net)) or Sara Uzel ([Suzel@techtrendsgroup.com](mailto:Suzel@techtrendsgroup.com)).

## ALCOVA'S BUDDING PHILANTHROPIST

*By Kelly Holly*

The devastation in Japan after the massive earthquake and tsunami on March 10 triggered an outpouring of sympathy and assistance to the island nation. This global goodwill

moved one of Alcovia Heights's youngest residents, 5-year-old Sami Stewart, to get involved.

"I saw [our neighbors] helping people there, and I wanted to help too," Sami said.

Her idea was simple: She would sell strawberry and raspberry plants from her backyard for \$1 each and donate the proceeds to help people in Japan. After a modest marketing effort on the neighborhood listserv by her father, she held her plant sale on April 23. It was an unqualified success. She sold all 50 of her plants (including a restocking of raspberries) and even collected donations from people who came not for berry plants but just to support her cause.

In the end, her parents matched what she made, and Sami donated \$126 to the American Red Cross's Japan Earthquake and Pacific Tsunami fund.

"I felt happy that I helped people and could give them money," said Sami.

To learn more about how you can contribute, visit [www.RedCross.org](http://www.RedCross.org).



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### BARCROFT PTA TO HOLD FUNDRAISER AT P BRENNAN'S

The Barcroft Elementary School PTA will hold a fundraiser at P. Brennan's Irish Pub and Restaurant on Monday, May 16, from 4:30 to 10:30 p.m.



During the event, the PTA will receive 15 percent of all eat-in and take-out orders. P. Brennan's is located at 2910 Columbia Pike (at the intersection of S. Walter Reed). Garage parking is available. Tell your server that you support the Barcroft PTA.

### RISING BARCROFT KINDERGARTNERS GROUP

If you are a parent of a rising kindergartner who will be attending Barcroft Elementary School this August and would like an opportunity to get to know other parents and kindergartners, you can contact Julie Rotherham at [julielusher@yahoo.com](mailto:julielusher@yahoo.com). She will be organizing playgroups during the summer break to allow kids to get to know each other before they start school and have some familiar faces in their classes that first day.

### NEIGHBORHOOD NUPTIALS

In an obvious attempt to lure attention away from a certain earlier wedding in London, Chris Marquez and Danielle Ring of Lincoln Street were married on Sunday, May 1. "It was a small ceremony at home followed by a gathering of family and close friends," according to the bride.

### ANGR EXERCISE MAY 16-20

The Army National Guard Readiness Center will participate in a National Level Exercise from May 16-20. Full

details are not available, but officials have sent notification that there will be a helicopter landing in the soccer field near the center on May 17 and 18. The Arlington County Emergency Management Office, Police Department and Fire Department have been notified and will be providing support.

Contact: Bruce S. Miller,  
[bruce.steven.miller@us.army.mil](mailto:bruce.steven.miller@us.army.mil).

### 8TH STREET SIDEWALK PROJECT

Final design plans have been signed for the upcoming construction of sidewalks on South 8th St., and county real estate bureau staff will soon begin initiating temporary easement and construction agreements with property owners as needed. Property owners on South 8th Street should be on the lookout for an agreement arriving in the mail and should respond promptly to avoid delays. Construction is currently anticipated to begin in late summer or early fall.

Contact: Suzanne Manlove, S. 8th Street sidewalk representative, [suzannemanlove@yahoo.com](mailto:suzannemanlove@yahoo.com) or 703-892-1462; or Sena Wijesinha, county representative, [swijesinha@arlingtonva.us](mailto:swijesinha@arlingtonva.us).

### WANTED: PIKE FOLKLORE

As a part of the ongoing Columbia Pike Documentary Project, George Mason University professor Debra Shutika and her graduate students are seeking residents to be interviewed for an oral history of the Pike. Both long-term and more recent residents are needed. The interviews, scheduled to take place between May 23 and June 23, will be compiled and likely housed at the Central Library.

Anyone interested in participating should contact Marie Van Ness at [mjvness@aol.com](mailto:mjvness@aol.com) or 703-979-1589.

### TASTE OF ARLINGTON MAY 22

Now in its 24th year, Taste of Arlington

will be held from noon to 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 22. Admission is free but tickets are required to sample the food and drinks. Tickets are currently for sale online (<http://www.tasteofarlington.com/tickets.html>) for \$20. Tickets sold on the day of the event are \$25.

### ALCOVA HEIGHTS LISTSERV ADDS MORE SUBSCRIBERS

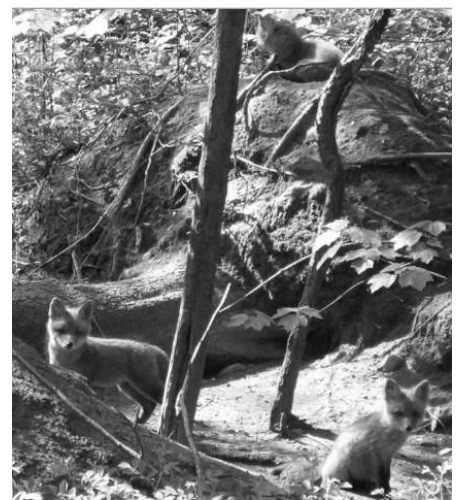
The Alcov Heights neighborhood listserv has reached 404 participants. If you'd like to stay current with what's happening in the neighborhood, subscribe today. Go to [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Alcova\\_Heights](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Alcova_Heights) and sign up using a Yahoo account, or simply send a message to

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### FOX NEWS



Three fox pups warily await the return of their mother in Alcov Park. Photo by Jenn Wurzbacher.

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## Northern Virginia Market Trends

The Northern Virginia Association of Realtors® reports on February 2011 home sales activity for Fairfax and Arlington counties, the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax & Falls Church, & towns of Vienna, Herndon and Clifton. A total of 1,017 homes sold in February 2011, a 5.48 % decrease from 1,076 home sales in February 2010.

Active listings on the market decreased 4% from last year, with 3,495 active listings in 2/11, compared with 3,645 homes available in 2/10. The average days on market (DOM) for February 2011 increased by about 43% to 77 days, compared with 54 days in February 2010.

Sales prices rose compared with those realized last year. The average sales price for homes in Northern Virginia in February increased by about 6% from February 2010, to \$441,826, compared with last February's average of \$415,369.

The number of new pending home sales in Northern Virginia in February showed an increase of about 24% at 1,640 compared to 1,326 new contracts pending in February 2010.

### Arlington County Statistics

comparing 2010 to 2011:

Condos - Avg. Sold Price was \$365,403 in 2/10 - up 22% in 2/11 to \$445,512.

Single Family Attached - Avg. Sold Price was \$526,679 in 2/10 - down 6% to \$495,908 in 2/11.

Single Family Detached - Avg. Sold Price was \$667,993 in 2/10 - up 9% to \$730,872 in 2/11.

Mortgage Rates are still attractive! The following rates are average quotes with no points: 4.875% up to \$417,000, 5% up to \$729,750, 5.75% over \$729,750

Great product - 10/1 Arm at 3.875% up to \$417,000. 80/10/10 loans are also being offered by some mortgage lenders.



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