

# ALCOVA HEIGHTS

The Newsletter of the Alcov Heights Neighborhood | Arlington, Virginia

## IN THIS ISSUE:

8th Street Sidewalks

Weather Woes for the Garden

Spotlight on Neighbor: Janie True

2009 Alcov Heights Block Party

Photos

Listserv Readership Continues to Grow

Community Announcements

SEPTEMBER 2009

## A RECAP OF THE SUMMER AND A PREVIEW OF THINGS TO COME

By Marie Van Ness

Dear Neighbors,

One of the things I wrote on my survey that I liked about living in Alcov Heights was the friendliness of the people, the strong feeling of neighborliness. I experience it every time I walk around the community and have the chance to see people and share a few words. This is a nice community to be a part of in many ways!

Those of us who had a chance to attend the Alcov Heights

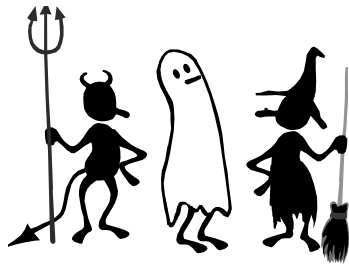
Block Party in July had the opportunity to share a good time with around 100 or more people. Karla Hagan and her South 7th St. Committee went out of their way to make sure there was fun for all.

Between the moon bounce, the face painting, and BOXCAR, the neighborhood band, we couldn't have asked for better entertainment. People gathered around and stayed for the entire time until the 7:30-ish rain clouds appeared.

Again Dellynn Periandri did a terrific job getting the grill foods and drinks to us. The tables of salads, sides and desserts from all were delicious and plentiful, a reflection of everyone's generosity. There were people who grilled and brought chairs. And the 7th Street hospitality was terrific. I think we're sold on the idea that the block party is the best and we'll do again next year! Any street want to volunteer to host the 2010 gathering??

*continued on page 2*

## ALCOVA HEIGHTS HALLOWEEN PARADE SET FOR OCTOBER 31ST



The Alcov Heights Halloween Parade will be held on October 31st starting at 3 p.m. The parade will start at the Baptist Church on the corner of South 8th and South Monroe and go down 8th to Alcov Heights Park for beverages and sweets.

In case of rain, the parade/party will be held at the Baptist Church from 3 to 5 p.m., same day.

Donations of candy and other goodies are needed. Drop off candy, cookies, etc. any time during October in the big red bin on Dellynn Periandri's front porch (3705 South 9th Street). Fresh goodies should be dropped off at the park by 2 p.m. on October 31st.

Volunteers are needed and much appreciated. To help out, please call Dellynn at 703-851-1711 or 703-271-0241 or email at bead-schef@aol.com.

**WHAT:** Alcov Heights Halloween Parade

**WHEN:** October 31, 2009; 3:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Baptist Church parking lot, 8th and Monroe

## 2009 NEIGHBORHOOD CALENDAR

**SEPTEMBER 17:** Citizens Association meeting, 6:30 p.m. potluck, 7 p.m. meeting, Baptist Church (Meeting to be preceded from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. by a special meeting to discuss the 8th Street sidewalks project.)

**OCTOBER 31:** Alcov Heights Halloween Parade; starts at the Baptist Church, ends in the Alcov Heights Park

**NOVEMBER 6:** AHCA Newsletter published

**NOVEMBER 14:** 3rd Annual Alcov Heights Hacktacular Golf Tournament; East Potomac Golf Course, Washington DC

**NOVEMBER 19:** Citizens Association meeting, 6:30 p.m. potluck, 7 p.m. meeting, Baptist Church

**DECEMBER 13:** Caroling in the Park



## BRIEFING ON 8TH STREET SIDEWALKS TO PRECEDE 9/17 AHCA MEETING

The Alcova Heights Citizens Association (AHCA) will meet this Thursday, September 17th, at the Arlington Baptist Church at the corner of South Monroe and South 8th Street. There will be a 6:30 p.m. potluck and the meeting will start at 7 p.m.

Mrs. Miriam Huey-Guy, principal of Barcroft Elementary, Alcova Heights's neighborhood school, will be the guest speaker. There will be time for Q&A.

Please bring non-perishable food items for the church's pantry.

Please note: There will be a special meeting with county staff at the Baptist Church prior to the September 17 AHCA meeting, from 6 to 7 p.m., to discuss plans for a South 8th Street sidewalk and the re-petitioning process. All residents are welcome, but neighbors on South 8th Street (particularly those living between South Monroe and South Quincy) are strongly encouraged to attend.

Eighth Street resident Katherine Symanski has volunteered

**President's Corner** - *continued from page 1* Please come out to our AHCA meeting on September 17. This is a perfect time for many families who have moved into the neighborhood over the summer to become a part of the citizens association. We want to meet you and welcome you to the community. Our special guest that evening will be Mrs. Hughey-Guy, who is the principal of our neighborhood elementary school. As an added item, county staff will be present at the church at 6 p.m. to discuss plans for the South 8th Street sidewalks and the re-petitioning process.

There will be more opportunity for community fun at our annual Halloween Parade on October 3. There will be the parade, a chance to see some great costumes, have a party in the park and get home in time for trick-or-treating. See the front page of this newsletter for all the details. As always volunteers are needed to help.

On behalf of the AHCA, I welcome the new neighbors of the community and look forward to getting to know you.

Also, I want to wish ALL the Alcova students in every grade (as well as those going off to college) a successful year.

Enjoy the fall. And be safe. Marie

P.S. – Don't forget to complete your Neighborhood Survey. I have extras on my front porch!

to be the Alcova Heights Point of Contact to the county for this project. She can be reached via email at [chix.rules@aol.com](mailto:chix.rules@aol.com).

Below is an important update from the county about the project:

The 8th Street S. Street Improvement Project was proposed in 2004 by the Alcova Heights Citizens Association. The project passed first and second petitions as required for Neighborhood Conservation (NC) funding consideration. Following completion of the second petition in November 2005, the project was qualified to add to the queue of proposed projects, to compete for NC funding consideration, with 67 percent of the 8th Street South property owners located between South Quincy and South Monroe Streets voting in favor of its implementation. Only a 60 percent vote in favor is required for a project to qualify and compete as a Proposed Project for NC funding consideration.

All Proposed Projects were put on hold by the Arlington County Board for a period of over a year, from late 2005 to early 2007, due to a huge backlog of previously funded projects and the lack of sufficient engineering staff to develop and implement them. Following release from the "on hold" status in the Spring of 2007, the 8th Street S. project

*continued on page 4*

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## HOT (AND DRY) ENOUGH FOR YA'?!

By Alice Nicolson

Is anyone else getting the idea that global warming is real? And that it's causing our summers to become drier and perhaps our winters warmer? I know that three years is a mere nothing in geological terms, but over the past summers, we seem to have had a good 3 inches or more of rain in June, then 1 to 2 inches in July and under 2 inches in August, so that we go into the late summer and early fall below what we need to give the garden a jump-start into fall. And in '07 there was practically no rain in September either, though last year we were rescued by a hurricane with almost 5 inches in a day. Granted that we are still very close to average rainfall for this year. But if we don't get a good rainfall in September it's going to be really tough to do all the helpful things in all parts of our garden before winter.

One benefit of scant rain is that the winter annual weeds have mostly not begun to germinate in the lawn. That means there is still time to lay down some corn gluten or other germination inhibitor to reduce the amount of chickweed, annual bluegrass and speedwell in your lawn (remember, though, that this will not affect the summer annuals like crabgrass that are so visible right now; they germinate in spring.) Alternatively, there is still time to rake out or dig up all the currently showing weedy summer annuals and the annoying perennials like violets, woodsorrel and ground-ivy. By cleaning out these weeds and leaving only the turfgrass, you can prepare this area of lawn for a fall overseeding. Rake in a light topdressing of county leaf mulch before you scatter the seed, and plan to water lightly twice daily to keep the seedbed moist until the grass germinates. Bear in mind though that on a given area, you can either sow seed or use a germination inhibitor, but not both!

Reseeding annuals and perennials tend to move around in the garden; where you planted them originally may not be where they'd like to be. I used to have a nice tall bed next to my driveway that featured daylilies in summer and New England asters in fall. Over the years the asters have declined but are now showing up vigorously on the other side of the drive, where there used to be a large mass of "Goldsturm" rudbeckias (they have almost vanished from my garden, alas!) Likewise, I used to have Nigella (love-in-a-mist) reseeding every year in the gravel drive, but they've disappeared entirely; shade is probably to blame for this one.

Columbines in many shades once filled the bed along my



porch, but now I have Alstroemerias (pink) in quantity as well as Tradescantia "Zwanenburg" (deep blue) and a light pink Mirabilis (four-o'clock). The competition may have discouraged the columbines, but that bed also gets more shade than before. In the same bed, what used to be a number of pretty white garden phlox has thinned out to mostly skimpy, mildewed magenta blooms. I'm happy to see flowers almost anywhere, but perhaps I should be adding some nice leaf mulch to that bed in hopes of encouraging plants to stick around where I originally wanted them. On the other hand, serendipitous combinations of plants can be wonderful!

### Interested in native plants?

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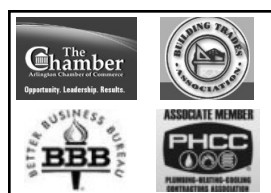
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**8th Street Sidewalks** - *continued from page 2*

remained in the queue of Proposed Projects seeking NC funds. It has accumulated a sufficient points score at this time to compete actively at the Fall 2009 (December) NCAC Funding Session. In preparation for the upcoming funding session, County staff has evaluated the previously proposed project of 2005, and revised it to conform to current County and Federal (ADA) design guidelines, mandates and standards, as needed. Additionally, some properties on 8th Street S have changed hands since 2005. As such, County staff needs to present and re-petition the Proposed Project on 8th Street S, between South Quincy and South Monroe Streets, to inform all current property owners within the project limits of the design concept that will compete actively for NC funds this December.

**What Has NOT Changed?**

- The proposed sidewalk will be on the north side of 8th Street S, entirely within the public right-of-way, between South Quincy and South Monroe Streets.
- On-street parking will be retained on both sides of the street.
- Nubs will be added at the South Quincy Street intersection to complement the existing speed humps, and reduce pedestrian crossing distances.

- No changes will occur to the existing concrete curb and gutter on the south side of the street or to the existing Carlyle-style streetlights.

- A 4-foot wide utility (grass) strip will be constructed on the north side, located between the curb and sidewalk, for street tree installation.

- ADA disability access ramps to the current VDOT standard will be installed at intersections to improve connectivity between the segments of proposed crosswalk and the network of existing adjacent sidewalks.

**What HAS Changed?**

- The proposed concrete sidewalk on the north side will be 5 feet wide instead of 4 feet, to conform to the recommendations of Arlington's Master Transportation Plan.
- The street width will be 32 feet curb to curb, instead of the existing 36-foot street width. This will be accomplished by moving the existing curb on the north side in by 4 feet, to minimize impacts to adjacent properties and complement the existing speed humps by improving the chances of cut-through traffic slowing down.

**What's NEXT?**

If you are a property owner on 8th Street S, between South Quincy and South Monroe Streets, please attend the revised concept design presentation and re-petitioning meeting, that is scheduled for Thursday, September 17, 2009, from 6 to 7 p.m. at the Arlington Baptist Church, prior to the commencement of the AHCA meeting at 7:00 p.m. Petitions will be distributed to 8th Street S property owners at the meeting, fol-

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**IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO PAY YOUR  
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With the Alcovia Heights Block Party memories still fresh and the Halloween Parade just around the corner, it's easy to see just what you get for your AHCA dues money. So please, if you haven't already, support the association by becoming an active, dues-paying member.

Also, your input is important and needed! Please consider adding your energy and talents to the work of the AHCA board. Stand for one of the open at-large seats or volunteer for a committee.

**PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR CIVIC ASSOCIATION**

AHCA dues are \$10 per household. Please send your dues to: AHCA, c/o Mark Cole, Treasurer, 815 S. Oakland St., Arlington, Va. 22204

lowing presentation of the revised concept design by county staff. It is important that property owners within the project limits attend this Neighborhood Conservation Program meeting. See you there!

*By Sena B. Wijesinha*

*Capital Projects Coordinator, Arlington County, Ph:*

*703-228-7933; [snijesinha@arlingtonva.us](mailto:snijesinha@arlingtonva.us)*

## THERE'S STILL TIME TO TURN IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY

*By Karl Veit*

*AHCA At-Large Member*

As you know, we distributed the Alcov Heights Neighborhood Survey along with the newsletter at the beginning of July 2009. By end of August, we've received 53 completed survey responses, or roughly 10 percent of the residences. That is not a bad response rate for this type of survey, particularly since we include a number of multi-family dwellings where the response rate is usually lower. So thanks to all who responded.

Please note, we will continue accepting responses until the data compilation is finished, around October 1. So if you haven't filled yours out, there is still time. Since we update the Neighborhood Conservation Plan about every 10 years, this is a unique chance to voice your opinions on conditions (past and future) where we live.

## ALCOVA HEIGHTS LISTSERV ADDS MORE SUBSCRIBERS

AHCA Listserv  
Subscribers: **340**

Since the July 2009 newsletter, 12 neighbors have joined the Alcov Heights email listserv. There are now 340 subscribers.

If you'd like to stay current with what's happening in the neighborhood, subscribe today. Go to [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Alcov\\_Heights](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Alcov_Heights) and sign up using a Yahoo account, or simply send a message to [Alcov\\_Heights-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Alcov_Heights-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) from the e-mail account you would like to sign up with.

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## SPOTLIGHT ON A NEIGHBOR

### LONG-TIME RESIDENT JANIE TRUE HAS SEEN A WORLD OF CHANGE IN ALCOVA HEIGHTS

When Janie True first moved to Alcov Heights, she and her husband could look out the front door of their 9th Street bungalow and, in her words, "see nothing but open fields" across Columbia Pike.

"No houses. No apartments. No nothing," she said. "If you wanted to go to Annandale from here, you had to go on a dirt road."

That was 1953.

More than half a century later, Janie still lives in that bungalow, having raised four children (three boys and one girl) with her husband, Kermit, now deceased.

When we spoke to Janie recently, she was in the midst of an emotionally turbulent time. She's battling cancer and had been through a bad couple days. That morning, she received news that her ailing sister in North Carolina had died. All this came close on the heels of a surprise announcement from her 92-year-old brother-in-law that he would be getting married.

"Can you imagine?!" she laughs. "Ninety-two! Walks with a cane, and he's getting married."

Janie was raised in Jackson, North Carolina, one of six children (one brother and four sisters, including a twin). She first came to Washington in 1943 to start a government job after finishing her degree at Louisburg College in North Carolina.

She took a job in a congressman's office and eventually ended up working for the infamous Senator Joseph McCarthy. She'd left his services to start a family though before his anti-Communist subcommittee hearings started in the early '50s.

Janie says one of the biggest early improvements in Alcov Heights was when they installed sidewalks on her street.

"It's so hard to raise three boys—you know they're so hard-headed anyway—on a street without sidewalks," she says. "They didn't know where the yard ended and the street began."

Janie's husband Kermit passed away in 1990. Her children have grown up and moved off to Dale City, Hampton, Va., Jackson, N.C., and Ohio. But she continues a fairly active life,



with gardening, volunteer work and even bowling, which she picked up in college on a set of outdoor lanes.

"I've bowled forever," she says. "Back then, they said girls weren't supposed to do that sort of thing,

but I said I'm going to do it anyway.

"I'm pretty old to be bowling now, but I keep right on. I still enjoy it, regardless of whether I bowl it down the gutter or down the middle."

She says her best recent score is close to 200!

Janie is active with the Barcroft Women's Club, where she says one of her roles as a senior member is "to make sure the club is kept together."

She also does volunteer work with the Arlington United Methodist Church. She's currently working on a large quilt to commemorate the church's 150th anniversary and has even taught quilting to some of the children in the neighborhood.

"I like doing almost everything," she says.

Asked to name her favorite area restaurants, Janie demurs.

"I have to tell you, I'm not much on restaurants," she says. "I love cooking. I have a garden. I make things and eat them without going to a restaurant. I much prefer that."

A lot's changed in the days since Janie and her family first came down that dirt road to Alcov Heights. "It's bigger. And a bit noisier. And a lot of the old-timey people have moved away," she says.

"But I just like the whole neighborhood. I really do."

Janie stands on the porch of her neat, white bungalow and looks out at the houses that stand between her and those open fields of yesterday. She moves quietly to one side and points out a nervous-looking mourning dove that's nested in one of her hanging plants.

"Silly old bird," she says. "I guess she just thought this was a nice place to stay."



## 2009 Alcova Heights Block Party

*photos by Elaine Stewart*



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## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

### Alcova Neighbor Earns Smithsonian Prize

Alcova Heights resident Dan H. Nicolson has won a 2009 Smithsonian Institution Secretary's Research Prize. The award, which recognizes excellence in recent research by Institution employees, carries a \$2,000 grant. Nicolson, a retired employee of the National Museum of Natural History, won the Taxonomic Literature prize, along with colleague Laurence J. Dorr, for their work on "A Selective Guide to Botanical Publications and Collections with Dates, Commentaries and Types (2nd ed.)"

### Skate Stars Flock to Kettler Iceplex

Thirteen of the world's top skating competitors, including world, U. S. and Olympic champions, will be at the Kettler Capitals Iceplex atop the Ballston Common Mall on September 26 at 5:00 p.m. The event, which features such notables as Brian Boitano, Ilia Kulik, and Emily Hughes, will help the Michael Weiss Foundation raise money to aid future Olympic skaters. Tickets are available at [www.michaelweiss.org](http://www.michaelweiss.org). For more information, contact Margie Weiss at 703-675-1553.



### Barcroft Opens New Fitness Track



Barcroft Elementary School inaugurated its new fitness track in a ceremony held August 25. The 1/8-mile loop was built with nearly \$17,000 in community donations and is open for use by Barcroft families, friends and neighbors.

The school has also begun Family Fitness Fridays and Saturday Morning Soccer Fun, open to all neighbors. Contact Principal Miriam Hughey-Guy at 703-228-5838 with any questions.



### County E-CARE Set for October 3

Arlington County's Department of Environmental Services will hold an E-CARE hazardous materials disposal event on Saturday, October 3, at Thomas Jefferson Middle School from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., rain or shine. In addition to disposing of household hazardous materials, residents can donate recyclable items like bicycles, computer equipment, shoes, clothes, eyeglasses, and medical equipment (wheel chairs, walkers, crutches, ankle braces, etc.) Computers monitors will be accepted for a fee of \$15.00 per item. Television recycling fee: \$20.00 each. (No wooden consoles). Compost bins will also be on sale for \$17 on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, visit [www.arlingtonva.us/des](http://www.arlingtonva.us/des).

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### AUMC Pumpkin Patch to Open October 16th

The 5th Annual Pumpkin Patch at Arlington United Methodist Church (at the corner of 8th Street South and Glebe Road) will open on Friday, October 16 and run through Saturday, October 31. Hours of operation will be from 3 p.m. until dark, Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. until dark on weekends.

Pumpkins arrive on Wednesday, October 14 at 5 p.m. All neighbors are invited to come help unload the truck. Free pizza and sodas provided. All pumpkins come from an Indian Reservation in Farmington, New Mexico. Proceeds from the sale help to underwrite the church's community outreach and ministry.

The church's fall children's festival will be held Saturday, October 24 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the church. Moon bounce, face painting, storytelling, autumn crafts, and much, much more. For more information, contact Abi Foerster at [pastorabi@arlingtonumc.com](mailto:pastorabi@arlingtonumc.com).

### 2009 Alcova Heights Hacktacular Set for November 14

Calling all golfers! The 2009 Alcova Heights Hacktacular, an annual neighborhood golf hackstravaganza, will be held on Saturday, November 14, at Hains Point Golf Course. Hardly any golfing ability required. For more information or to sign up, contact Scot Hoffman at [scotrhoff@verizon.net](mailto:scotrhoff@verizon.net).



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### Real Estate Market Trends

The Northern Virginia Association of Realtors® reports on July 2009 home sales activity for Fairfax and Arlington counties, the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church and the towns of Vienna, Herndon and Clifton.

A total of 2,053 homes sold in July 2009, a 10.55 percent increase above July 2008 home sales of 1,857.

Active listings decreased by 25.62% from last year, with 7,439 active listings in July, compared with 10,002 homes available in July 2008.

The average days on market (DOM) for homes in July 2009 decreased by 31.87% to 62 days, compared with 91 days in July 2008.

Sales prices continue to remain lower than those realized last year. The average sales price in July fell by 5% from July 2008, to \$460,807, compared with last July's average of \$485,225.

The number of pending home sales in Northern Virginia in July shows an increase of 10.21% at 2,266 compared to 2,056 in July 2008.

Consumer confidence has improved and home sales have definitely picked up this year. Most of the activity involves first time buyers snapping up bargain-priced properties in the lower price ranges.

### ***Buyers: It's a great time to buy!***

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### Accepting New Consignors!

N. Va. Clothing Exchange-Fall 2009  
**MEGA CHILDREN'S CONSIGNMENT SALE**  
Infant to Teen Clothing, Toys, Furniture, Equipment, Books,  
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Receive up to 60% of the sale of your items

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#### Drop Off

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Sun. Sept. 20th 3pm-8pm

Mon. Sept. 21st 10pm-2pm

#### Consignor Shopping

Wed. Sept. 23rd 5pm-9pm

#### Public Shopping

Thur. Sept. 24th 10am - 9pm

Fri. Sept 25th 10am - 8 pm

Sat. Sept. 26th 9am - 3pm (1/2 Price Sale)



Arlington Forest United Methodist Church  
4701 Arlington Blvd-Rt 50 & Henderson Rd



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**IS YOUR VIEW OF CHURCH  
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**MAYBE IT'S TIME  
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11 AM Sunday Morning Worship



Connecting People With Christ  
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today.**

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MOON BOUNCE AND GAMES FOR THE KIDS AND FOOD AND BEVERAGES PROVIDED.  
ALSO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR FREE MOVIE NIGHTS FOR THE KIDS. COMING SOON**