

ALCOVA HEIGHTS

The Newsletter of the Alcova Heights Neighborhood | Arlington, Virginia

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FEBRUARY 2008

2008 ALCOVA HEIGHTS CIVIC ASSOCIATION DUES DUE NOW

We are getting an early start on asking for dues in 2008, because in February it's still easy to remember whether you've paid dues for the current year. The Civic Association asks neighbors to contribute a modest \$10 per year per family to pay for expenses such as Civic Federation membership (\$50), Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization membership (\$40), and newsletter printing, as well as contributing to our annual get-togethers such as the Halloween Parade and Arlington County Neighborhood Day Picnic.

To pay your dues, please bring your check (payable to Alcova Heights Civic Association (or AHCA)) for \$10 to the February meeting, or give your check or cash (with a note attributing name and address) to any Association officer. Alternately, you can mail or drop your check to Mark Cole, Treasurer, at 815 S. Oakland Street.

The 2008 Alcova Heights Civic Association meetings will be Thursdays Feb. 21, April 17, June 19, Sept. 18, and Nov. 20. The meetings are held at the Arlington Baptist Church on S. Monroe St. between 7th and 8th Streets. There is a potluck at 6:30 PM, and the meeting starts at 7 PM. Babysitting is provided. Everyone in the neighborhood is welcome and encouraged to attend! Please consider bringing a canned good or cereal for the church's food pantry, as a way to say thanks for the use of the space.

The next meeting will be February 21, and our guest speakers will be the naturalist staff of Potomac Overlook Regional Park. They will present "Invasion of the Forest Snatchers," an entertaining, multimedia exploration of non-native flora in Arlington. Come learn the habits and strategies of Tearthumb (a.k.a. mile-a-minute-vine), share in the sad story of Asiatic Bittersweet, and pass judgment on that beautiful strangler, Porcelain Berry. Will the park staff survive these three and others as well? Perhaps. Will you leave with a great understanding of non-native plants, what is being done about them, and some good native plants to put in your yard? YES. Will you be glad you came to the presentation? Definitely!

We hope to see you there!

2008 NEIGHBORHOOD CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY 21: Civic Association Meeting. 6:30 PM potluck, 7 PM meeting

FEBRUARY 28: Kickoff Meeting for 7th Street Sidewalk Project, 7:30 - 9 PM at Arlington Baptist Church

MARCH 8: 5K School Walk for Diabetes at Barcroft Elementary, 9 AM

APRIL 17: Civic Association Meeting. 6:30 PM potluck, 7 PM meeting

MAY (TBA): Neighborhood Day

JUNE 19: Civic Association Meeting. 6:30 PM potluck, 7 PM meeting

SEPTEMBER 18: Civic Association Meeting. 6:30 PM potluck, 7 PM meeting

OCTOBER 25: Halloween Parade

NOVEMBER 20: Civic Association Meeting. 6:30 PM potluck, 7 PM meeting

DEC (TBA): Caroling in the Park



February is preschool registration time for the 2008-2009 school year for many of the preschools in our neighborhood and beyond. Contact the preschool of your choice now to reserve a place for your child.



MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY CIVIC ASSOCIATION PLANNING MEETING

By Sara Uzel

The AHCA held the annual planning session on January 24th. The meeting was attended by all the members of the executive board and other residents (approximately 10). Marie started the meeting with introductions and quickly moved to planning for the **regular meetings for 2008**.

Meetings will continue to be held on the 3rd Thursday every other month with a potluck dinner at 6:30 PM, with the meeting starting at 7:00 PM and ending by 8:30 PM. Additional meetings can be called if need be. The topics and dates scheduled (and subject to change) are:

Feb. 21- Presentation about Invasive Plants

April 17 - School Board Candidates Night

June 19 - Discussion of Draft Conservation Plan for Alcova Heights

Sept. 18 - Columbia Pike Development Update

Nov. 20 - Elections of AHCA officers.

The following social events were also discussed:

May (date TBA) - Neighborhood Day Picnic (possibly with a Park Clean-up in the morning)

Aug. 5 - National Night Out (we may pass on an activity this year)

Oct. 25 - Halloween Parade

Dec. (date TBA) - Caroling in the Park

Neighborhood Directory - The directory is finally completed and we will have both paper and electronic copies. It was decided that directories would only be distributed to those who actually live in Alcova Heights. Directories will be available at the Feb. 21 Civic Association meeting. If you would like an electronic copy, please email Mark Cole at: treasurer@alcovaheightsva.com to arrange to have the file emailed to you.

Conservation Plan - Alcova Heights is working to update the Conservation Plan. Cliff Anckaitis is chairing this effort and will be sending out information via the newsletter and listserve asking for volunteers. If you are interested, please contact him at: anckaitisc@comcast.net.

Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC) - Alcova Heights participates in the NCAC. The 7th Street sidewalk project continues to move forward and it appears we might be able to get streetlights as well. Cliff Anckaitis is our representative, and we could use a second representative if there is interest.

Civic Association Leadership Structure - There has been some discussion about how to broaden our leadership structure so that our past officers are not afraid to come to a meeting after their term is over. One idea that the current board would like to investigate would be to have an elected leadership/executive committee of 6-10. These roles could be for 2 years each, with rotating terms so we could maintain some continuity. We would still have officers voted on by the neighborhood. All of these ideas need to be explored further to see if they would be feasible, and what the pros and cons of a change would be. Sara Uzel will chair a committee to investigate our Leadership Structure. If you are interested in being part of this committee, contact Sara Uzel at: suzel@techtrendsgroup.com.

Arlington County Civic Federation - Marie VanNess is looking for delegates (we can have 4) who can attend the monthly (Sept-June) Civic Federation meetings. The federation is a representation of all the Arlington County civic associations as well as other civic-minded organizations. Contact Marie if you are interested, at: mjvnness@aol.com.

Signs - New signs were purchased to announce Civic Association meetings. Marie is working on having a responsible party for each sign and Sara is investigating how they can be attached to the "Alcova Heights" signs entering the neighborhood. Keeping track of the signs is important as it is costly to replace them.

PROJECTS ISSUES:

Alleys - There is a County discussion on what the use of an alley should be, and Alcova Heights has numerous alleys and a variety of opinions on the options that are best for residents. The usage and care of alleys will be incorporated into the Conservation Plan.

Tree Give Away - The County does an annual tree give away and it was decided that Alcova Heights would again participate. We will need to find a volunteer to coordinate this effort. The tree giveaway is usually associated with Neighborhood Day in May, and the sign-up for the trees will probably be in April. If you are interested, look for more information on the Alcova Heights listserve and in the April

newsletter.

School Boundary Issue - There was a request by a family to ask the Civic Association to write the School Board to defer a potential boundary change for students that use Barcroft's Opt Out for the Modified School Calendar. A draft letter by the parent was provided, asking the School Board to defer its decision until these citizens could have a voice in the process. A Barcroft parent read the letter and made some comments and thought the concept was acceptable. A third citizen offered to make the letter more neutral. The letter was provided back to the Barcroft and the Barrett parents for comment and was then sent to the School Board.

ALCOVA HEIGHTS LISTSERVE AND WEBSITE

Our website was redesigned last year and also has a new address! Michelle Larsen, our webmaster, has been doing a terrific job keeping our website up-to-date and informative. If you haven't been to the new website, do take the time to visit www.alcovaheightsva.com. You can also sign up for the Alcova Heights Listserve, a great place to find out information about what's happening in the neighborhood. Click on the "Message Board" link from the website.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

By Margaret Rogers

I am stepping down as editor of the newsletter after this issue, as my family will be moving in the next few months. We have really enjoyed living in this great community, and we will miss all the friends we have made and neighbors we have met.

I am pleased to announce that starting in March 2008, the editorship of the newsletter will be taken over by Scot Hoffman. Scot lives with his wife, Zuraidah, and their two daughters, Saleha (age 7) and Lily (age 3), at 834 S. Lincoln Street. They've lived in the neighborhood since 1999.

Scot's background is in news writing and editing. He received his bachelor's degree in journalism from Virginia Tech and has worked at newspapers in Christiansburg, Virginia, and Roswell, New Mexico. He also managed a Washington, D.C., transcripts newswire for 11 years. He currently works as a writer/editor for the National Geographic website.

For any newsletter-related matters, you can reach Scot via email at scotrhoff@verizon.net or editor@alcovaheightsva.com. Welcome, Scot, and thanks!

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS TO REPRESENT ALCOVA HEIGHTS AT THE ARLINGTON COUNTY CIVIC FEDERATION (ACCF)

By Marie Van Ness

Alcova Heights is a member of the Arlington County Civic Federation (ACCF), an organization of some 82 Arlington county-wide organizations (civic, homeowners), which has been going strong for some 90 years. The ACCF acts as a voice for Arlington by "organizing, discussing and presenting local issues to county officials and assisting member organizations."

I attended the Dec. 4 and Jan. 8 meetings. However, our Civic Association needs to find at least 2 more delegates who would be willing to attend the meetings representing Alcova Heights. We can have 4 delegates, and with monthly meetings from Sept to June, it could be manageable if the responsibility were shared. The meetings are held on the 1st Tuesday of the month, from 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM, and take place at the Hazel Conference Center at the Virginia Hospital Center - parking is available and free. The meetings are efficiently run by Roberts Rule of Order. It is my understanding that one has to be an official delegate in order to ask questions of the various presenters, so it's important to have consistency. So far the subjects covered at the meetings have been: a presentation by the School Board (Dec. 07), a proposal to amend the County Zoning Ordinance to permit Accessory Dwellings (ADS), and the Arlington Medical Reserve Corps (Jan 08). The County Board was invited to the February meeting (Feb. 5).

If you have an interest in finding out more about the ACCF and you think you might be interested in being a delegate for Alcova Heights, please e-mail me at: mjvness@aol.com or call me at 703-979-1589.

SCOUTS, ARE YOU INTERESTED IN HELPING OUR ALCOVA HEIGHTS ENVIRONMENT?

The community has a great project for a (middle or high school age) Boy Scout or Girl Scout troop interested in organizing and leading our community in an Alcova Heights Park clean-up. The stream especially needs attention! If you know of a scout troop looking for such a service project, have them contact Susan Johnson, at: sjohnsoi@gmu.edu. Susan will provide further details and will assist the troop in getting the project organized within the Alcova Heights community.

5K SCHOOL WALK FOR DIABETES



WHEN: Saturday, March 8 at 9:00 AM

WHERE: Barcroft Elementary School, 625 S. Wakefield St.

Please mark your calendar to join the students, teachers, families of Barcroft Elementary, and our entire community for the 3rd 5K School Walk for Diabetes on Saturday, March 8, at 9:00 AM. Help us to raise awareness and funding to support education about the disease and to promote a healthy lifestyle. We invite you to walk with us to demonstrate your dedication to curing, care and commitment. Local business and organizations are invited to help sponsor or participate. Please contact Margie Simpson for additional information, 703-685-2627.



MILESTONES

Welcome to the neighborhood, **Lincoln Bonner Ray**. Linc was born November 7. Congratulations to Erika and Corey Ray on the arrival of their newest family member.

Do you know of someone celebrating a milestone in the neighborhood? Email editor@alcovaheightsva.com for inclusion in the newsletter.



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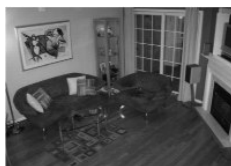
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NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE VOTES TO APPROVE ALCOVA HEIGHTS SIDEWALK PROJECT

By Karla Hagan

I am delighted to report news from the December 13 Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee meeting that funding was **approved** by a unanimous vote of NCAC membership for Alcova Heights' first priority project - sidewalks, curb, and gutter on 7th Street between Oakland and Quincy. Sidewalks that have been a loooong time in the making are on their way to reality!

The project was priced at a total of \$383k and includes the installation of a 4' sidewalk and 4' utility strip on both sides of the street; tree plantings in the utility strip on both sides of the street; corner intersection nubs at 7th & Oakland and 7th & Quincy; replacement driveway aprons; retaining walls and/or grading if necessary on the south side of 7th; a reduction in the roadway by 4' with the retention of street parking on both sides; and restoration of the roadway with surface paving.

The next step is for the recommendation by NCAC to appear before the County Board for final approval in February 2008.

From that point, the requisite engineering and final design will be completed by Fall 2008. There will be a block meeting once funding has been approved where residents will be provided with an update on the current design. Residents of 7th Street between Oakland and Quincy are encouraged to attend; other interested neighbors are invited as well. This kickoff meeting will be in the basement of the Baptist Church at the corner of 7th and Monroe on **February 28, 7:30 - 9 PM**, in the Fellowship Hall.

After the completion of the design, the project will enter into the construction queue. Early Spring 2009 is the best case for completion of construction, and the latest it is expected to be completed is July 2010.

Thanks much to Cliff Anckaitis for his representation of Alcova Heights on this committee (reps HAVE to go to monthly meetings or else our neighborhood could get kicked out of the program!). Thanks also to all on the block who have been an integral part of this process: Bill Cogswell, Bob Dawson, Mike Rhode, Dana Pulley, and all the block residents who signed on for approval in 2004. This project will help link our neighborhood together, and its approval allows for other Alcova Heights Neighborhood Conservation projects to work their way up to funding. Congratulations, all!

Karla Hagan, Block Rep, 7th St sidewalk project, 703-979-1959, hepcats@comcast.net



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It's TAX TIME! FILING HELP IS AVAILABLE AT COLUMBIA PIKE LIBRARY

Low-moderate income taxpayers can get help filling out their tax forms at the Columbia Pike Library from Feb. 2 - April 15. Volunteers are available on Tuesdays from 1:15 - 7:45 PM, and on Thursdays and Saturdays from 10 AM - 2 PM. No appointments are necessary, and volunteers will help people on a first-come, first-served basis. Spanish speakers are available. Bring identification, Social Security Number or Tax Identification Number, tax return from 2007, and W-2 form(s).

According to the Arlington County Library's website, no paper forms for Virginia state taxes will be available there this year. They recommend downloading Virginia tax forms from www.tax.virginia.gov. The library will have basic Federal tax forms, but they are also available online from www.irs.gov/formspubs/index.html.



Conforming Loan Limits May Increase Dramatically

President Bush and leaders in the House of Representatives reached a tentative agreement on 1/24/08 on an economic growth package that includes a measure to allow government-sponsored enterprises **Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to buy mortgages up to \$730,000**, a significant increase over the current limit of \$417,000. In addition, **Federal Housing Administration (FHA) - backed conforming loan limits would be increased as well - from \$362,000 to \$730,000.**

The increased limit on loans eligible to be bought by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac would be temporary, expiring Dec. 31. It was not clear if the higher FHA limit would be temporary or permanent. The Bill isn't expected to be signed for up to 6 weeks.

This proposed plan offers more subprime mortgage holders opportunities to refinance into federally insured loans, and home buyers can purchase a home with a loan value more than the current conforming loan limit of \$417,000, saving thousands of dollars.

It's Time To Buy!

Market timing is an art, not a science, but you can improve your odds of buying wisely. Don't pay attention to the national media. Fear has sidelined buyers even in good markets, and that's exactly when you need to take advantage, before other buyers wise up. Be ready to pounce when you see the home you want.

The best buys are ultimately selling, and best doesn't necessarily always mean cheap. It means the homes with the highest likelihood of profitable resale. Desirable homes will leave the market first.

Market conditions will change, so be ready. Now's the time to buy a better house while prices are low, interest rates are low and inventory is still high.

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ACTIVITIES AROUND ARLINGTON

FEEL THE HERITAGE FESTIVAL

WHEN: FEBRUARY 16, 12 - 5 PM

WHERE: DREW COMMUNITY CENTER, 3500 S. 23RD ST.

Celebrate the rich culture and history of African-Americans at the 16th Annual Feel The Heritage celebration! Enjoy an array of music and dance performances by regional artists, great food, and craft vendors. For more information, see <http://www.arlingtonva.us/Portals/Topics/BlackHistoryMonth.aspx>

A CONVERSATION WITH JOURNALISM LEGEND HELEN THOMAS

WHEN: MARCH 2, 2008, 2:00 PM

WHERE: ARLINGTON COUNTY CENTRAL LIBRARY, AUDITORIUM

Often called "The First Lady of the Press," veteran White House reporter, author and Hearst Newspapers columnist Helen Thomas looks back as an eyewitness to history and delves into her story when she sits for a conversation with Arlington Public Library Director Diane Kresh. This event is in recognition of National Women's History Month. A book signing will follow the remarks. The event is free. For more information, call 703-228-6321.

BREAKFAST GATHERING - COLUMBIA PIKE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY NETWORK

WHEN: WED. MARCH 19, 2008, 8 AM

WHERE: WALTER REED COMMUNITY CENTER AT 2909 S. 16TH ST.

Please plan to join us for the 3rd gathering of our growing group of local business people and individuals from government and non-profit groups who are interested in strengthening the Pike's existing community of small businesses. The event will be held from 8:00 to 9:30 AM at the Walter Reed Community Center, and is sponsored by CPRO. Our special guest, County Board Chairman Walter Tejada, will share his vision for South Arlington and his thoughts about the importance of maintaining and growing our diverse business community here. This networking event will also give you an opportunity to learn about changes coming to the Pike, introduce yourself and your organization, meet other area entrepreneurs, and discuss ways to promote your business and the Pike as a whole. For more information contact Pam Holcomb at 703-892-2776, or via email at pholcomb@columbiapike.org.

ARLINGTON HOME SHOW & EXPO

WHEN: SATURDAY APRIL 12, 2008, 10 AM - 4 PM

WHERE: WALTER REED COMMUNITY CENTER AT 2909 S. 16TH ST.

For the second year, CPRO is partnering with Arlington County's Housing Division to bring more than 50 exhibitors

to the Walter Reed Community Center. This creates a convenient way for area homeowners to gather ideas, see products, and talk to professionals about a wide variety of home improvements. Whether you are thinking about remodeling a bath or kitchen, waterproofing a basement, installing energy efficient replacement windows, building a deck, or starting any of a number of other projects around your home, this is the show for you. The show will run from 10 AM to 4 PM and admission is FREE to the public.

FREE MOVIES AT ARLINGTON CENTRAL LIBRARY AUDITORIUM (1015 N. Quincy St.)

Sponsored by Planet Arlington and the Library. Call the library for more information.

Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin (2002) THURS., FEB. 21, 6:30 PM (83 minutes)

A film by Nancy Kates, Producer, Bennett Singer, Director, Sam Pollard, Executive Producer.

He was there at most of the important events of the Civil Rights Movement - but always in the background. The film presents a vivid drama about one of the most enigmatic figures in 20th Century American history. One of the first "freedom riders", an advisor to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and A. Philip Randolph, organizer of the march on Washington, intelligent, gregarious and charismatic, Bayard Rustin was denied his place in the limelight for one reason - he was gay. But when the 1963 march on Washington was proposed, the civil rights leadership recognized there was only one man who could organize it - Bayard Rustin. After its overwhelming success Rustin forged the fragile alliance between the labor unions, the civil rights movement and the Democratic Party that was responsible for much of the landmark civil rights legislation of the 1960s.

Adio Kerida (Goodbye Dear Love) (2002) THURS., MAR. 20 6:30 PM (82 min.)

A film by Ruth Behar.

Distinguished anthropologist Ruth Behar (recipient of a McArthur Genius Award) returns to her native Cuba to profile the island's remaining Sephardic Jews and chronicle her family's journey to the U.S. as Cuban-Jewish exiles. Highlighting themes of expulsion and departure that are at the crux of the Sephardic legacy, Behar seeks reconciliation with Cubans on the island and advocates for the possibility of return and renewal. She debunks the myths about the country's Jewish community and unravels the influence of interfaith marriage, Afro-Cuban santería, tourism and the embargo on contemporary Cuban-Sephardic cultural identity. The result is a bitter-sweet, lyrical and often humorous portrait that few know exists today. Narrated by Elizabeth Peña. Spanish and English subtitles.

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