

**STREETCARS ON COLUMBIA PIKE? BY LANDER ALLIN**

The Columbia Pike community may be one step closer to the creation of a streetcar system along the Pike. In the next month, both the Arlington County Board and the Fairfax County Board of supervisors are scheduled to vote on the proposed "Modified Streetcar" concept that would link Pentagon City to Bailey's Crossroads. The concept is the "preferred alternative" that was chosen after a study in 2004 and 2005 of alternatives for enhancing transit along the Pike.

The proposal calls for a five-mile long route that would run from Pentagon City, up Columbia Pike to Route 7 into Skyline. Streetcars would run every 12 minutes, except during rush hour when the cars would be 6 minutes apart. The cost is estimated at \$120 million. Streetcars can carry twice as many passengers as a bus, which is critical because of expected increases in population density along the Pike and at Baileys Crossroads.

Perhaps most importantly, the streetcar system could be an important stimulus to the revitalization of the Pike. Other cities have seen great strides in development when streetcar systems are built. Portland, Oregon and Tampa, Florida have witnessed \$2.8 billion and \$600 million respectively in new redevelopment initiatives within a few blocks of new streetcar lines.

The Arlington County Board will vote on April 22 to decide whether to move forward and allow more planning to take place and funding sources to be identified. However, this vote will not commit the County to the project.

Alcova Heights residents will have a chance to discuss the proposal at our April 20 membership meeting, and a vote will be taken as to either support or oppose it. More information on the proposal and alternatives study can be found at [www.piketransit.com](http://www.piketransit.com)

**NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING SCHEDULE**

Meetings are scheduled for the second Thursday of every month, except when there are holiday conflicts or a special community event. Potluck dinners will be held when there are general meetings, unless otherwise noted. All general meetings will be held at the Baptist Church (located on the block between 7th Street and 8th Street on Monroe), and will feature a 6:30 pm potluck, with the meeting to start at 7:00 pm. Babysitting will be available during the meetings.

To advertise the meetings, the association will place signs in the traffic circles and the main entrances to Alcova Heights. E-mail announcements will go out the Sundays before the meetings.

**NEIGHBORHOOD CALENDAR OF EVENTS  
FOR 2006**

- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| April 20th:   | General meeting with Potluck Dinner; neighbor Lander Allin will speak on Columbia Pike Development. |
| May 2nd;      | Alcova Heights Toddler Playgroup Get-Together (see story on page 2)                                 |
| May 13th:     | Neighborhood Day Picnic, 4:30 - 7:30 (see page 3 for details)                                       |
| June 1st-2nd: | AHCA House and Garden Tour (date TBD — see notice on page 3).                                       |
| June 8th:     | General Meeting with Potluck Dinner.  |

**SCHOOL CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| April 28th: | Silent and Live Auction at Kenmore Middle School               |
| May 13th:   | Spring Fair/Silent Auction at Barcroft Elementary              |
| June 5th    | Rolling Rainforest arrives at Barcroft Elementary for one week |

For more information about events, locations and times, visit the APS website at <http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/>.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE



There has been a great deal of talk lately about development on the Pike — what it will look like, who will still be around to enjoy it, and whether we'll use streetcars or jetpacks to maneuver around all of the condos. The Form-Based Code (FBC), which is supposed to “guide” development along the Pike, has hit a snag. Giant Grocery is now angling to build a much larger store than the 35,000-50,000 square foot store envisioned by planners.

What a larger store would mean to our community is a matter for debate — and it should be. I am not making any assumptions about the intent of Giant, the validity of the Form Based Code, or the fact that there may or may not be a consensus amongst the residents. I just think it is a good idea to let our many voices be heard. I look forward to having more walkable options, and I hope that whatever happens in Adams Square is a reflection of the community's needs and desires. Ideally, interested residents would come together to assess the interests of the Pike residents, and convey our opinions to the developers. Community involvement has been an important part of developing the FBC, and it should continue at this critical juncture.

Rosa Cheney, of Monroe Street, posted an insightful opinion on the Alcova Heights listserve: “Urban planning decisions that we make now, for good or ill, will be around for 50+ years. Look at Columbia Pike now - those buildings have been there for 50 odd years — their uses may change (the Broiler was once a gas station/auto-repair shop) but the buildings stay. If we let them build a big box now, then we'll be living with it for our lifetime, and we may lose the Main Street idea that the Columbia Pike Revitalization Organization has been working toward.”

Rosa is willing to serve as a contact point for further discussion on this issue. If you are interested in working with her, or in helping to form a committee to address these concerns, please email Rosa at [ten\\_below@verizon.net](mailto:ten_below@verizon.net). You may also voice your concern directly with Giant at <http://www.giantfood.com/contact>.

On another note, civic activity is on the increase again in Alcova Heights! There is a thriving new pinochle group, and invitations to join a Backyard Wildlife Habitat Group, a Welcome New Neighbor group, and a Toddler Playgroup. See the newsletter for more details. Also, mark you calendars for the Neighborhood Day barbecue — May 13th, and the Home & Garden Tour in early June. There are many exciting things going on this spring — get out and enjoy them!

Susan DuBois

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## ALCOVA NEIGHBORHOOD INTEREST GROUPS

Several new groups have started up in Alcova Heights for folks to share common interests. The persons listed have agreed to be points of contact (POC) and would like to hear from others who might want to join them. Give them a call and have a good time.

**Walking Group:** Interested in getting fit while walking around the neighborhood? Contact Pam Roach at [pproach@attglobal.net](mailto:pproach@attglobal.net)

**New Restaurants:** Want to try out new, local restaurants with neighbors? Contact Rene Jones/Charlie Causey at 703-892-1317 or email [rjones@fics-llc.com](mailto:rjones@fics-llc.com)

**Book Club:** Do you like to read interesting books and share a good discussion? Contact Lynn Gant at [LYNN.GANT@Longandfoster.com](mailto:LYNN.GANT@Longandfoster.com)

**Gardening:** Are you into your garden, and do you like to share plants and information? Contact Laurie Miller at [yahtzqn@comcast.net](mailto:yahtzqn@comcast.net)

### **New Interest Group: Backyard Wildlife Habitats**

Anyone interested in backyard wildlife habitats — an informal group for sharing information and encouragement. People interested can call or email me — Susanna McIlwaine at 703-979-0759 [smcilwaine@starpower.net](mailto:smcilwaine@starpower.net)

### **Another New Group: Welcome New Neighbor Group**

Meet new neighbors and invite them into our community! Anyone interested in helping out, please contact the Welcome Group coordinator, Michelle Larsen (703-920-1050; [webmonkey@alcovaheights.com](mailto:webmonkey@alcovaheights.com)). It doesn't take too much time or effort to get involved. You just have to be willing to drop by and say hello to new residents, provide them with a recent Newsletter, invite them to the next Neighborhood Meeting, and let them know about upcoming events; and notify the coordinator when you see “For Sale” signs go up or “Sold” signs go down on your street so we can keep track of when new people move in. With enough people willing to track the moves on their street, this will be a pretty easy and fun activity. Please join us!

### **And Another New Group: Toddler Playgroup**

Come join Alcova Heights' newly forming playgroup for kids age 0 to 2-ish. Our next gathering will be 1:00 p.m. Tuesday, May 2nd. For parents home with their children during the day, this is a great way to get out for a little while and to connect with other parents in the neighborhood. If you are unable to join us during the week but would be interested in some weekend gatherings, please let us know. Contact Maura McMahon at [pawmer2@starpower.net](mailto:pawmer2@starpower.net) or 703-979-9321 for information.

### **Update on the Card Game group**

Susanna McIlwaine also reports that a group of Alcova Heights residents have settled into a regular pinochle game. The group is closed now, but Susanna is more than happy to help organize another group — email or call her if you are interested.

If someone wants to start a new group, identify a POC and contact Marie Van Ness at [mjvness@aol.com](mailto:mjvness@aol.com). We'll get the news out!

## NEIGHBORHOOD DAY PICNIC AND BARBECUE

Our 3rd Annual Alcova Heights Neighborhood Day Picnic will take place Saturday, May 13th from 4:30-7:30pm at the park — gazebo side.

Please come and meet your neighbors at our annual picnic potluck event! Eat, drink, win the 3-legged race, and then grill marshmallows on the bonfire! Prizes for kids & adults for the best hula-hooper, potato sack race and 3-legged race.

To make this a great event, as always, we are looking for volunteers. Please email or call Lynn Gant — 703.898.7205 or [lynn.gant@longandfoster.com](mailto:lynn.gant@longandfoster.com) if you are interested in helping. Neighbors with last names that begin with the letters A-M: please bring a side dish; and those with last names that start with L-Z: please bring a dessert. Please also bring a beverage with you for you and your family. Hot dogs, hamburgers, veggie burgers and marshmallows will be provided by the Alcova Heights Civic Association.

## ALCOVA HEIGHTS HOME AND GARDEN TOUR



Come and satisfy your curiosity at the 2nd Bi-Annual Alcova Heights Home and Garden Tour. Our neighborhood has many different types of homes, from original homes to new construction. With the boom in additions, many are a little of both. Our yards and gardens range from the manicured lawns to backyard wildlife habitats. This is your chance to get an up-close look at the houses you walk past all year long.

Tickets can be purchased only by Alcova Heights Neighbors and their guests for a homeowner-guided tour that would go from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm on one day the first weekend in June (TBD). Tickets are \$5.00 per person, and all proceeds will go to the Civic Association.

Sara Uzel will serve as the chair for this event, but she will need at least two additional people to help organize the event. If you are interested in helping her, or would like to have your home and/or garden placed on the tour, please contact her at 703-979-2517 or [Suzel@tectrendsgrp.com](mailto:Suzel@tectrendsgrp.com)

## MILESTONES: A NEW COLUMN COMING SOON

Look for a new feature in the newsletter soon. MILESTONES will feature news of neighborhood residents — folks moving, getting married, having babies, dodging paparazzi, losing teeth, losing hair, graduating, receiving awards, dining with Brangelina, changing jobs, walking on the moon, whatever, big or small.

Inquiring minds want to know and, I'm warning you, whether you tell me or not, I WILL find out. I have my ways. Rest assured, sources will not be revealed, so get it in your words before I put it in mine!

Call or email Lisa Cherkasky at (703)731-6575, or [spudnut59@comcast.net](mailto:spudnut59@comcast.net).

## DOORWAYS DINNER

A group of Alcova neighbors are getting together again to make and serve dinner at the DOORWAYS shelter on Thursday, April 13th.



If you are interested in helping out, please contact Beth Connors at [beth@connorsofcourse.com](mailto:beth@connorsofcourse.com). Donations for the food, or a side dish and some helping hands are very welcome!

## FOOD DONATIONS

Arlington Baptist Church, where we hold our association meetings, operates a Food Pantry for members of the community. The church has been very generous to the Alcova Heights Civic Association by allowing us the use of their facilities for our general meetings at no cost. Let's show our appreciation by bringing a non-perishable item to the next meeting to donate to the pantry. Donations can also be dropped off at the church (S.Monroe St side ,ring bell for administrator) on Mon., Wed., Fri. from 9:30AM to 2:30PM. Right now the pantry needs cereal...we can do this!

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## BARCROFT ELEMENTARY AND KENMORE MIDDLE SCHOOL FUNDRAISER AUCTIONS



There are two great ways to support our local schools this spring, and both involve lots of great products and services from local businesses.

Kenmore's Silent and Live Auction is Friday, April 28th, from 6:45 to 9:30 PM. There are over 200 business donations, including: Air Tran tickets; certificates for over 40 restaurants, 15 hotels and 11 greater Washington area theatre tickets. Kenmore is located at 200 S. Carlin Springs Road, just south of Route 50. Any questions? please call Renee Gorsky at 703 516 7007 or e-mail Scott Sklar, PTA Vice President at solarsklar@aol.com.

Barcroft Elementary's Spring Fair and Silent Auction is Saturday, May 13th, from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. This fun family event features games, moon bounces, food and a silent auction. There will also be live plants and planters for sale for Mother's Day!

## SPRING FINANCIAL SEMINAR SERIES

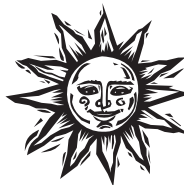


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April 11	Last-minute tax tips
April 19	Online investing: making sense of the options
April 26	Socially Responsible Investing
May 2	Preventing identity theft
May 10	Understanding credit card offers and credit scoring
May 17	Investing in real estate

## APRIL IN THE GARDEN BY ALICE NICOLSON



Spring is here, one week into April! Last month we saw the early smaller crocuses, and the soft lavender Chrysanthemum tommasinianus, which is sweetly scented. The larger "dutch" crocuses are showing themselves now, along with the daffodils. I really prefer the little guys since they come

when little else is showing, AND they will spread in the garden, as well. Speaking of daffodils, they are one of the few bulbs that our "tree rats" won't eat. If you fertilize them with bulb booster as the foliage emerges, they will settle in and multiply for next year — as long as you also leave the foliage to sop up the sunlight for the next 6-8 weeks until they begin to die off (no tying the leaves into neat knots!). All bulbs profit from a little fertilizer in the spring.

You've probably noticed that most of the tulips will not rebloom, despite your fertilizing efforts — try planting them 8-12" deep and see if that helps.

I'm digging a new bed for taller perennials now, but I should have done it last fall and allowed the soil to settle. I'm cutting out the sod, shaking as much of the soil off the roots as I can, and making a sod compost heap with the chunks so as not to waste any of the nice topsoil (I'll use it next year after the sod has completely decomposed). Then I'll add as much of the Arlington County leaf mulch as I can haul and dig it into the bare earth along with a dose of lime (I know the pH of that part of the yard is around 6.1 and I want to raise it to over 6.5). I'll also throw in a mixture of various organic and mineral fertilizers, which are slow releasers of nutrients — blood meal for nitrogen, rock phosphate and bone meal for phosphorus, and greensand, kelp meal and maybe some wood ashes for potassium (that will also help with the pH). I'll dig these in well with my tiller and spading fork and shape the bed with a slight mound in the center. Then I'll wait for a couple of weeks before planting some Helianthus, Echinacea, Helenium and a couple of Rudbeckias that are just too tall for where they are. I know I'll crowd in a bunch of other things as well, but I'm going to try and contain myself!

Happy gardening all!

## DUES ARE DUE

The Alcovia Heights Civic Association Dues season has started. Dues are \$10.00 per home and pays for great events like the Halloween Parade, Caroling, and Neighborhood Picnic. You can drop them in the mail to:

Sara Uzel  
3709 S 6th Street  
or pay them at the next Meeting





## ARLINGTON POLICE OFFICERS IN UNITY RIDE



From May 9-12, 2006, a team of four Arlington County Police Department officers will be participating in the Police Unity Tour, a 300 mile bike ride from Ground Zero in New York to Washington, D.C. The tour's purpose is to help raise funds for the Police Officer's Memorial Fund which honors those officers that have given their lives in the line of duty and assists those left behind.

In order to participate in the Unity Tour the team must raise \$1,500 per person. The officers need help in their fundraising effort. Last year, when the team participated in the 2005 ride, corporate and personal sponsors donated in excess of \$11,000. They hope to meet or beat the goal this year.

Officer Marc Mazzella is available to discuss the effort and answer any questions members might have. You can contact him by telephone at 703-228-3600 extension 9748, or by email to [mmazze@arlingtonva.us](mailto:mmazze@arlingtonva.us).

## RECIPE CORNER BY LISA CHERKASKY



It's spring and spring means rhubarb (to me anyway)! Walt Gilbert, who lived next door to us on 6th Street for many years, always laughed at my scrawny rhubarb patch. The patch at his Vermont home is prolific. My patch in Arlington is primarily symbolic, reminding me of my Midwestern roots.

It's just too hot here for this plant that harks originally from Siberia. Ruby-colored rhubarb is in the stores though this time of year, and delicious.

### Crackle-Topped Rhubarb Coffee Cake

Chunks of rhubarb accent this moist, tender cake. Sprinkle cinnamon and sugar over the batter before baking to create a crisp top.

#### CAKE

2 cups all-purpose white flour

1 cup sugar

4 tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. ground cinnamon

1/2 tsp. salt

1 large egg

1 cup buttermilk

1/4 cup vegetable oil, preferably canola oil

2 tsp. pure vanilla extract

1/2 lb. rhubarb, trimmed and cut into 1/2-inch pieces (2 cups)

#### TOPPING

1/4 cup sugar

1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

To make cake: Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly oil an

8-inch-square baking pan or coat with nonstick cooking spray. Sift flour, sugar, baking powder, cinnamon and salt into a medium-sized bowl. In a large bowl, whisk together egg, buttermilk, oil and vanilla. Add the flour mixture and stir with a rubber spatula or wooden spoon just to blend. Stir in rhubarb. Turn the batter into the prepared pan, spreading evenly.

To prepare topping: In a small bowl, stir together sugar and cinnamon. Sprinkle evenly over the top of the cake. Bake for 45 to 50 minutes, or until the top is brown and crackled and a cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean. Let the cake cool in the pan on a wire rack for 15 minutes. Cut into squares and serve warm. Serves 9.

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Check out the Alcovia Heights Citizens Association website at [www.geocities.com/Heartland/Ranch/7326/](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Ranch/7326/). You'll find past issues of the newsletter, a calendar of events, interesting information about our neighborhood, and some great photos. Please send your comments, suggestions, photos and hellos to our web mistress, Michelle Larsen, at [reg3504@att.net](mailto:reg3504@att.net).

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**ALL SYSTEMS GO:** Get your mechanical systems serviced by qualified contractors. Service your furnace & AC, repair plumbing leaks, correct any electrical switches or outlets that aren't working, etc. Fix minor problems before they become major ones.

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