

# ALCOVA HEIGHTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ALCOVA HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD

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AUGUST 2007

## NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT – Summary of Drainage Issue and Alleyways

By Association President Elly Merica

There was a great turnout for the June civic association meeting with Arlington County engineers regarding stormwater drainage and alleys. Apologies to those folks cut short to allow us to end the meeting at 9 PM.

The good news is that the County has already addressed the Dundree Knolls problem with sanitary sewer backups and also decided to reline most of the pipes in our neighborhood, which should prevent any such future sanitary sewer problems. They also agreed to assist groups of homeowners who need some engineering advice on storm water flooding, whether they are on a County-owned alley or not.

Mr. Luis Arraya, of the County's Department of Environmental Services brought a great aerial photo and some cool old maps and gave a brief history of the alleys. Our long and skinny lots were a result of early subdivisions that sought to replicate the row houses in Washington, DC. Many of the original lots were only 25' wide. When the owners realized they had more space across the river in Virginia, they started laying out the 50' wide lots. The alleys were also a replica of the alleys in DC, which provided access to carriage houses for horses, and trash pickup. Many have been ceded back to the adjacent property owners over the years, but there are still examples of each type of County-owned alleys: paved; gravel; unpaved but open; and overgrown natural. Generally, the County

tries to maintain the alley in an existing condition. They will clear the drains and put down more gravel on County-owned properties.

While they inspect the alleys on a regular basis, citizens are welcome to alert them to any issues at the main DES number: 703-228-6570. Water and sewer emergencies should be called in to 703-228-6555.

## Thursday, September 20 Civic Association Meeting

6:30 pm Potluck, 7:00 pm Meeting  
at Arlington Baptist Church on S. Monroe St.  
between 7th and 8th Sts.

If people have items for the agenda, please get them to Marie Van Ness by September 9. Do remember to bring a canned good or cereal for the church's food pantry.

## Babysitter Needed for Civic Association Meetings

The Alcov Heights Civic Association is looking for a babysitter to watch the children who come with their parents, from 7-8:30 pm on the nights of the meetings. The association will pay the person. The person needs to be at least 12 years old and have some experience babysitting and enjoy being with energetic happy little ones. We need to know the person and the person must be reliable. References are desirable.

There are 2 meetings left for the remainder of this calendar year: Thursday, Sept 20 and Thursday Nov. 15. Please contact Marie Van Ness if you are interested, at (703) 979-1589 or e-mail: [mjvness@aol.com](mailto:mjvness@aol.com).

The ownership of some of the alleys still seems to be unclear. If the outlot has an eight digit Real Property Code, it has been ceded back to an adjacent property owner. The un-divided routes are County-owned. The County should have street access from at least one side of all public alleyways. From the photo, there are several alleys split into two, but without lot numbers. Also from the photo, there appear to be several County parcels that have been encroached by fences, parked cars, and even garages. The biggest problem seems to be where the downstream end of an alley was built over with houses and now everyone floods.

Mr. Dave Hundelt, also a supervisor with DES, gave a run-down on the re-lining of the sanitary sewers in the neighborhood. While he listened to several resident's accounts of drainage problems, he was not particularly encouraging that the County could start any major projects even on County-owned property, since money is tight under current budgets. If a project involves private property, a single resident could nix a project if they did not want to cooperate. After some prodding by Bob Dawson, Mr. Hundelt agreed that the County could advise groups of residents who need an engineering analysis of their situation. What the County cannot do is the physical work on private

property.

To proceed, I would recommend that any residents with issues get together to first list the problem areas and identify them on the map that was provided. Then, representatives can meet with DES. They have some topographic maps, and should have records of the existing storm drain system to see if there are any easy hook-ups. If not, and all the land is privately owned, they may be able to suggest grading or a French drain solution to get the water around the houses. We have some residents with personal Bobcats who have offered to push dirt around for a weekend or two. A permeable landscape solution would be preferable to putting the water into the storm water system anyway.

Finally, we should get moving on the revised Neighborhood Conservation plan. We should include more history of the alleys, and elaborate on the unique character they provide to Alcov Heights. We have managed to keep our beautiful yards in an area under increasing pressure to put ever larger houses on ever smaller lots. Some of us garden, and others have created backyard wildlife habitats. If we value these lots and these alleys, we should put that on the record.



## AMAZING BARGAINS

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## SCHOOL NEWS

It's hard to believe, but it was just a little while ago that students celebrated the last day of school in our neighborhood. Now Barcroft is already back to school, and the other schools in our area will follow shortly. Let's take a moment to remember that end of school at the beginning of summer as we celebrate a new season of learning. Here are some photos from the bus stop on the last day of school!



Saleha Hoffman, Teddy Telzrow, Alexander Al-Hujazi, Laurel and Forest Veit



Luke Miller, Forest Veit, Claire Miller, Teddy Telzrow, Alexander Al-Hujaze, Saleha Hoffman, Laurel Veit



Susan DuBois, Zuraidah Hoffman, Laurie Miller, Karl Veit and Champ, Lisa Cherkasky, Vince Miller

## And Looking Forward to the New School Year ... Play Date for Rising Barrett Kindergarteners

If you have a rising kindergartener that will be attending Barrett this fall and would like to meet others, please come to the playdate at Barrett. Every Tuesday (this summer) at 2:30, other rising kindergarteners will be at the playground at Barrett.

## School Reporters Out There?

If you are connected with the schools and would like to submit school news throughout the year, please email Margaret Rogers at [editor@alcovaheightsva.com](mailto:editor@alcovaheightsva.com). Our newsletter comes out in October, December, February, April, June, and August. Thanks!

## NEIGHBORHOOD CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**September 20:** Civic Association Meeting (All meetings are held at the Arlington Baptist Church, 6:30 pm potluck, 7 pm meeting.)

**October 27:** Halloween Parade

**November 15:** Civic Association Meeting – Elections of Civic Association Officers (please note this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, not the 3<sup>rd</sup>, due to the Thanksgiving holiday)

**December (TBD):** Caroling in the Park

## RECIPE CORNER

### Peach Cobbler

6 medium peaches, sliced  
 1/3 cup, plus 1 T. sugar  
 1 Tablespoon cornstarch  
 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice  
 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
 1 cup all-purpose flour  
 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder  
 1/2 teaspoon table salt  
 3 Tablespoons butter  
 1/2 cup nonfat milk

Preheat oven to 375°F. In a large saucepan, combine peaches, 1/3 cup of the sugar, cornstarch, lemon juice, and cinnamon; toss to coat peaches. Set pan over medium heat and bring to a boil. Cook until mixture thickens, about 1 minute. Remove from heat and transfer mixture to an 8-inch square baking pan.

To make the topping, in a large bowl, combine flour, remaining tablespoon of sugar, baking powder and salt. Work in butter with a fork until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add milk and stir until flour mixture is evenly moistened. Drop 8 spoons of topping mixture onto peach mixture. Bake until topping is golden brown and filling is bubbly, about 20 to 25 minutes. Cut into 8 pieces and serve.

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## A NEW DESIGN AND LOCATION FOR ALCOVA HEIGHTS WEBSITE

Our new website is up and running at a new URL: [www.alcovaheightsva.com](http://www.alcovaheightsva.com). Michelle Larsen has done a beautiful job renovating our website and adding quick links to Arlington County information on the front page. My personal favorite parts of the new website are: the maps under the "About Us" section, the artistic photos on the sidebar for each of the pages, and of course, the link to past and current newsletters. Also of note – the email addresses for current officers are located by clicking on "Community Involvement" from the "About Us" section. So, if you are looking for information about our community, want to know what's on our community calendar, needing to look something up in a past newsletter, or are selling your home and want to give potential buyers information about our neighborhood, please check out the new website!



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## GREEN CORNER

### Kill-A-Watt Meters at Branch Libraries!

All branch libraries now have Kill-A-Watt electricity usage meters available for check-out. Check your appliances and other electrical equipment at home to see how much energy they use! Patrons may reserve one of the meters through the normal online catalog. The meters are listed under "kill-a-watt" and "electricity usage meters." The devices measure the amount of electricity being used by home appliances. You simply plug the meter into the electrical outlet, plug the appliance into the meter, and take a reading after one hour.



## FALL SEMESTER OF THE ARLINGTON LEARNING IN RETIREMENT (ALRI) IS COMING SOON!

### Think About It

Doctors have long warned us that if we don't use our muscles we lose their strength. Boomers know this and have turned the fitness industry into big business. Research also confirms that if we don't use our brain "muscles" we lose those too. Arlington Learning in Retirement (ALRI) is the "Gold's Gym" for the minds. Offering folks in the Washington area, age 50 and over, the chance to share their interests, learn something new and socialize, ALRI develops non-credit courses and lecture series that keep our synapses snapping. Interest groups also attend films, gather at ethnic restaurants, hold book discussions, play bridge, go abroad, and exchange ideas on engaging topics. Offering classroom and other sessions at nominal cost on some 30 subjects each fall and spring at convenient Arlington locations such as the GMU

Virginia Square campus, ALRI is an economic way to stay mentally fit and interact with others of like mind. ALRI welcomes volunteer instructors who need only know and love their subjects and be willing to share their interests with others. And no such opportunity can exist without those of us who just want to sit back and "think about it."

ALRI's Fall 2007 courses start at the end of September and October. For more information, contact ALRI by telephone at 703-228-2144; by email at: [ALRI@ArlingtonLRI.org](mailto:ALRI@ArlingtonLRI.org) or go online to [www.ArlingtonLRI.org](http://www.ArlingtonLRI.org).

Meet the instructors and enjoy light refreshments while finding out more about ALRI at an **Open House on Friday, September 7**, 9 AM to noon at George Mason University, Virginia Square Campus, Room 329 at 3401 N. Fairfax Dr., Arlington VA. The Open House is open to adults 50 years and older, members or nonmembers who have an interest in joining.

<p><i>Your Alcova Heights Neighbor</i></p>  <p><b>Pat Shannon</b> Accredited Buyer Representative, ABR® NVAR Top Producer</p> <p><b>Top Listing Agent</b> <b>Long &amp; Foster, Arlington</b> <b>South 2006</b></p> <p>Phone: 571.237.4767 <a href="mailto:pat.shannon@longandfoster.com">pat.shannon@longandfoster.com</a> <a href="http://www.patshannon.com">www.patshannon.com</a></p>	<p><i>For Sale</i> <b>BOLLINGBROOK</b> Alexandria, VA</p>  <p><b>\$199,900</b></p> <p>SPACIOUS and SUNNY 1 BR WASHER and DRYER! New appliances. Very conveniently located just off King St and 395. Easy commute with only MINUTES to DC, Pentagon and more! Assigned parking spot close to front door! Extra storage. On-site management!</p> <hr/> <p><i>Coming Soon!</i> <b>2 Master Bedrooms, 2 1/2 Baths, 2 Level</b> <b>Town home!</b></p> <p><b>Courtbridge</b> Arlington, VA 22204</p> 	<p><i>Just Sold</i> <i>Under Contract in 23 days!</i> <i>3 Level Town home in</i> <i>Dundree Knoll</i></p> <hr/> <p><i>For Sale</i> <b>LANDMARK MEWS</b> Alexandria, VA</p>  <p><b>\$595,000</b></p> <p>Gorgeous 3,600+ square feet 3 master bedroom, 3 full and 2 1/2 baths. This GARAGE town home has all you'll want and more than you'll need at a price you can afford!</p>
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## LOOKING FOR A LAYOUT EDITOR

We are still looking for a layout editor for the newsletter. Michele Chaves, our former layout editor, has moved away, leaving the layout position open. We are looking for someone with a little bit of time to volunteer and page layout software! There are six newsletters per year. If this sounds like you, please contact me (Margaret) at [editor@alcovaheightsva.com](mailto:editor@alcovaheightsva.com). I am muddling through until we find someone, so any help would be greatly appreciated. Thank you!

## NEW BUSES, SCHEDULE CHANGES AND SMARTRIP COME TO ART

Information provided by Steve Yaffe of the Transportation Division of DES

The schedule for ART - Arlington Transit - 41 Columbia Pike-Ballston- Court House will change effective Monday, August 20, 2007. Weekday service will be provided every 15 minutes. See Arlington County's commuter page website for details.

The new ART 41 service will be provided with new, climate-controlled heavy-duty transit buses powered by compressed natural gas (CNG). These 35' buses are energy efficient, environmentally friendly and seat 30 passengers + standees. The new buses are easy for riders to board. These buses have low floors, a "kneeling" capability bringing the first step to 4 inches from the curb, and a ramp for wheelchair users and baby strollers.

New fareboxes that will accept payment with SmarTrip cards are being installed on ART buses. The SmarTrip payment option will be functional in September.

## MILESTONES AND MORE

Welcome to **Benji, Rich and Shawn**, new residents of Dundree Knolls! They are trying out the suburban life after having lived in DC.

Welcome to **Amy and Larry Meehan**, their children **Brenna** and **Aiden**, and dog **Moses**. The Meehans recently moved to 6<sup>th</sup> St. from Florida.



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## REGISTRATION FOR ARLINGTON COUNTY RECREATION & LEISURE CLASSES IS OPEN

Arlington County Parks and Recreation offers a marvelous array of classes for Arlingtonians (and others) from infants to seniors! There are sports and fitness classes, visual arts classes, music and dance classes, even dog obedience classes for the four-legged set. Online registration started August 20, and in person registration begins August 27. Classes begin in September. The course catalog is available at Arlington County Recreation and Community Centers as well as libraries, and is also online at:

[www.arlingtonva.us/prcr](http://www.arlingtonva.us/prcr).



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### **Seller Subsidies: Financial Incentives Help To Sell Homes Faster**

In the sellers' market during the past, seller subsidies totaled about 2% of the sales. As the Northern Virginia housing market has returned to a more balanced market, seller concessions have been used in an increasing share of transactions. In the last nine months, seller-subsidized sales have made up 60% of the sales.

Seller subsidies can include help with closing costs, decorator allowances, and other up front cash offered from the seller to the buyer upon settlement. In most situations it is assumed that a buyer may include subsidy in their offer. Sometimes sellers offer subsidies to attract buyers and reduce the time their property sits on the market without reducing the list price. **A \$10,000 subsidy might mean more to a buyer than a \$20,000 price reduction.**

Sellers should realize that seller contributions have typically accompanied about a third of home sales regionally throughout all phases of the market. Second, the location, condition and

the asking price range of the home all influence whether a home sells with or without a seller subsidy.

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