

# The Arlington Forester



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January 2015

## AFCA Agenda: Energy Efficiency and Mail Delivery By John Naland

The first AFCA meeting of the New Year -- this Wednesday, January 21, at 7 PM in the Barrett Elementary School library -- will feature two topics of wide interest.

First, Scott Donelson from Home Energy Medics will present "Fixes That Really Work to Improve Home Comfort and Efficiency." Home Energy Medics is a locally owned, full service home performance company. They perform energy audits looking at the house as a whole system to find the real source of problems such as cold/hot rooms, high utility bills, and allergies or other health issues. They also fix the problems.

In his talk, Mr. Donelson will identify causes of common problems and the solutions to fix them and the positive impacts they can have. He will even have tips for the DIYer. If AFCA members bring a copy of their most recent electric and gas bills showing the 12 month usage history, he has offered to do free heating/cooling cost assessments on the spot.

In the second part of the meeting, a USPS representative will be on hand to hear resident concerns. Over the past year, numerous residents have vented their frustrations on the Arlington Forest Families listserv ([arlingtonforestfamilies@yahoo.com](mailto:arlingtonforestfamilies@yahoo.com))

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## Update on Lubber Run Community Center By Michael Thomas

County Board Chair Jay Fissette and county housing staff addressed the October AFCA meeting on the topics of Affordable Housing and the "Public Land for Public Good" (PLPG) initiative that proposed building housing at the Lubber Run Community Center (LRCC). They heard firsthand the depth of our community's opposition to the idea.

By the end of October, 577 county residents had submitted comments on PLPG to the county's Long Range Planning Committee. Three-fifths addressed the idea of using parks or community centers for affordable housing, with 94% opposing the idea. The proposal to build housing at Lubber Run was specifically addressed by 150 comments, with almost all opposed.

In November, 82% of voters in the Arlington Forest precinct who cast a Democratic ballot in the U.S. Senate election crossed-over to vote for Independent John Vihstadt in the County Board election. Political analyst Ben Tribbett attribut-

ed this to opposition to the county's proposal to build housing at Lubber Run.

At the County Board's December public hearing on PLPG, both the Long Range Planning Committee and the Planning Commission recommended that the county withdrawn and reassessed the criteria it had used to identify potential sites for affordable housing. Several Arlington Foresters testified, asking the Board for a commitment not to build housing at LRCC or on other parkland or open space. The County Board

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*AFCA Meeting 7 p.m. January 21 at Barrett School Library*

## THE ARLINGTON FORESTER

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## Editor's Note

The *Arlington Forester* welcomes articles, news notes, letters, and photos focusing on non-commercial events or issues specific to our neighborhood. We publish eight times per year (Sept to Nov and Jan to May). Deadline for submissions is the first of the month. E-mail submissions of up to 400 words to newsletter@arlingtonforestva.org. Space often fills up before the deadline.

## AFCA Agenda

...continued from page 1

regarding mail delivery service. There are complaints of mis-delivery, missing letters or packages, and days without any mail at all. Although a suspect was apprehended in a recent spate of package thefts over the holidays in a nearby area, there appear to be issues in general with mail delivery in recent months. Arlington Forest is split between the 22203 and 22204 zip codes.

Following a citizen's complaint to U.S. Congressman Jim Moran, the resident was visited by Patricia Wright, who is on a post office complaint task force based in Merrifield. Ms. Wright said that they have worked before with another Arlington neighborhood to resolve post office issues, and she suggested two courses of action: sending USPS representatives to an AFCA meeting for a town hall session and creating a special e-mail address where Arlington Forest residents can report problems with mail.

The first suggestion will be accomplished at this Wednesday's AFCA meeting. As for the second suggestion, Ms. Wright invites Arlington Foresters to directly lodge complaints with her at patricia.a.wright@usps.gov. AFCA understands that she has received a number of complaints, but it is unclear if action has been taken by USPS.

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# AFCA Holiday Party

More than 100 Arlington Forest kids of all ages turned out on December 5 to welcome Santa to the annual AFCA Holiday Party at the Lubber Run Community Center (see



photos). Santa arrived riding on a strobe-flashing, siren-screaming Arlington County fire truck. He then entered the rec hall where he was greeted by excited kids, camera-toting parents and other residents gathered for this neighborhood party which has taken place annually since 1946.

Santa sat on his throne hearing each child's holiday gift wishes. Kids and grownups alike swarmed over the community goodie tables laden with holiday treats. Forester David Mog made sure that Santa showed up on schedule. Festive holiday music was provided again this year by Foresters Ken Schellenberg (keyboard) and Chris Bosch (bass). Barrett Elementary School Daisy, Brownie and Girl Scout

members led singing of seasonal songs and helped Santa with the kids. As he has for more than two decades, Chris Scheer organized the party.

Special thanks go to LRCC director Marco Dillon and his staff who decorated the hall and assisted throughout the evening. Thanks go to Captain Randy Higgins at Fire Station 2 (at Wilson and George Mason) who arranged for Santa to be delivered to the party in a dramatic way. Thanks also go to all those who brought treats to share and to the residents who worked behind the holiday goodies tables. Fun was had by all. We hope to see you there next holiday season!

## What's the best time to sell a home?

Thinking about selling your home in the spring or early summer? Consider some statistical studies suggesting that *Winter can be a surprisingly advantageous time to list, shop, negotiate and buy.*

A recent study examining sales trends reviewed home listing, sales price and time-on-market data. It concluded that if you want to sell for more than your asking price, listing in January, February and March gives you a better chance, on average, than if you list any time after June through November. While the advantages of listing in winter compared with other seasons are not huge, winter produces competitive or better results by some measures and should encourage some potential sellers to get into the game sooner rather than later. Obviously houses "that are priced right and show well" can sell any time of the year. One thing to realize is that shoppers who are active during the

winter months are "serious buyers" and wouldn't be trudging through the bad weather if they didn't have a pressing need to purchase a house.

Some sellers also pull their unsold houses off the market during the winter, hoping for better results in the spring. By doing so, they leave a smaller inventory of active listings — lessening the competition for sellers who list in winter, ahead of the pack.

Successful Winter-season buyers may find some sellers who have been overpriced and on the market for a while more flexible about negotiations over price and terms than they would during the middle of the spring.

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# Around the Forest

**AFCA Dues Drive:** In our fall dues drive, 351 of the 851 households in Arlington Forest paid their \$10 dues to support AFCA's activities. That is up 10 percent from the previous year. Participation rates are Greenbrier Section-44%, Southside-40%, and Northside-39%.

**Snow Watch:** Thank you to the 90 percent of neighbors who shoveled their sidewalks after early-January's three inch snowfall! While that is a higher compliance rate than County Board members achieved (media reported that Jay Fissette neglected to shovel his sidewalk), the safety of your neighbors requires that all residents, businesses, and churches adhere to the County code which requires clearing snow and ice from sidewalks within 24 hours after snowfall ceases (within 36 hours if snowfall exceeds 36 inches). Despite the 24-hour rule, the County urges shoveling "as soon as possible" since snow and ice left for any length of time could cause a pedestrian to fall and be injured. See "Kids for Hire" on page 10 for energetic neighborhood students who are ready to assist.

**Scouting For Food:** Arlington Forest and the Boy Scouts of America joined together to support a few local food banks through the Scouting For Food event on Nov. 8. Scouts collected food donations from all over Arlington and McLean. The cooperative effort for the entire area resulted in 71,846 pounds of food overall. A total of 52,000 pounds of food were delivered to the Arlington Food Assistance Center with the remainder going to SHARE of McLean and Food For Others. We had 1,308 scouts assisting with the effort and 943 adult volunteers – the largest participation on record. A big 'Thank You' goes out to Arlington Forest from the Cub Scouts of Pack 548 and the Boy Scouts of Troop 648 for your continuing support of Scouting For Food. The accompanying photo shows Pack 548 Scouts loading donated groceries into a pick-up truck.



**Apseloff Sets Powerlifting Record:** Southside resident Roy Apseloff (see photo) set a new USA Powerlifting federation American record in the dead lift at their national championship meet in Washington, DC, on Dec. 12. Lifting in the 55-59 year old

198-pound class, Apseloff, 57, dead lifted 231.5 kilos (510.25 pounds), eclipsing the old record of 457.5 pounds for his age and weight. USA Powerlifting is a leading powerlifting federation. It is affiliated with the International Powerlifting Federation, which is affiliated with the International Olympic Committee. As a national organization, USA Powerlifting records are American records, not world records. Apseloff's 510.25 pound dead lift exceeds his world record of 500.25 pounds set Nov. 1 in the 100% Raw Powerlifting federation, a global powerlifting organization.



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# Lubber Run Community Center ...continued from page 1

did not issue this sort of definite statement. However, at the Board's January 1 Organizational Meeting, incoming Chair Mary Hynes acknowledged the stress on Arlington's parks, community facilities and open space caused by the county's rapidly rising population.

Planning for the rebuilding of LRCC is slated to begin soon. Major issues that will be addressed in the planning process are form, location, and function.

How big will the new community center be? A flat-roofed three-story building would provide more space than the current building and probably could be built within the height limits of the surrounding residential zoning. But a four-story building could host even more community services. Should the new building's footprint be the same or larger than the current building? If larger, how much

larger? Many new county buildings have modern facades. Would this be appropriate for Lubber Run, or should the new building try to blend in with the style of the Arlington Forest Historic District?

LRCC currently houses daycare, pre-kindergarten and after-school programs that are heavily used by low-income families in nearby apartment complexes. If LRCC is rebuilt on the same site, these programs would have to be relocated during construction. Another option would be building the new LRCC on the current parking lot. When it is finished, the current building would be demolished and returned to green space. Still another possibility would be using trailers to house the children's programs while the community center is demolished and rebuilt on its existing location.

Most critically, will the county still try to include housing as part of the project? In an October 28 letter to AFCA's President, Mr. Fissette suggested Arlington Mill as a model for the new LRCC. At Arlington Mill, the county built a 122-unit apartment complex adjacent to the community center. However, with two County Board seats up for election in November 2015, the county may be more willing to pay head to community opinion than was the case in the recent past.

Over the last year, about a dozen Arlington Foresters have been very active on this issue. Many more have lent support by writing, emailing, and calling the county. As the planning process gets underway for the new community center, it is critical that Arlington Foresters continue active engagement with the county, both individually and through the AFCA. One particularly good opportunity will be the appearance of County Board member John Vihstadt at AFCA's March meeting. For updates, join the Future-of-LRCC listserv by e-mailing future-of-lrcc-subscribe@yahoo.com.



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# Nature News

By  
Cliff Fairweather  
Park Naturalist,  
Long Branch  
Nature Center

**Under the Ice:** In summer, the ponds at Long Branch and Gulf Branch Nature Centers are lively places. Green and bull frogs sit along the edge or float in the

the water. Turtles bask on logs and rocks. Northern water-snakes lie in the sun or patrol the water for frogs to eat. Dragonflies and damselflies zip about in aerial duels or in pursuit of prey. Green herons silently stalk fish and frogs.

As fall advances and the weather turns colder, this activity slows and finally ceases, at least above the surface. Beneath the surface, though, the pond is full of life, even when covered by ice. Like most substances, water becomes denser and heavier as it gets colder. Water, however, does something odd – it starts to get less dense and lighter after it falls below 39°F (4°C). As a result, water colder than

39°F rises above the warmer water. At 32°F (0°C) water turns to ice, which floats on top of the slightly warmer water underneath. If it didn't, our pond would freeze from the bottom up. Little, if any life could survive in that environment.

Bull frogs and green frogs hibernate at the bottom of the pond, breathing through their skin. Frogs usually lie on the bottom rather than dig into the oxygen-poor mud because they maintain a relatively high (though still pretty slow) metabolism during hibernation. If they burrowed into the mud, they couldn't get enough oxygen to survive. Painted, snapping, and other native aquatic turtles also breathe through their skin during hibernation, but maintain a much lower metabolism than frogs. Consequently, they need less oxygen and can afford to bury themselves in the mud. In more northern latitudes, where ice can cover ponds and lakes for months and oxygen can be depleted,

turtles can switch to anaerobic respiration, meaning respiration without oxygen. Turtles can survive for months this way with little or no oxygen! Both frogs and turtles sometimes become active under the ice and can be seen moving slowly about. You might also get a glimpse of other winter-active pond life, including fish or aquatic insects such as water boatmen and predacious diving beetles. As cold as it is, the water under the ice is still warmer than the often subfreezing temperatures above.

Learn more at Under the Ice (ages 8-12) on Friday, Jan. 30, 4-5 pm at the Gulf Branch Nature Center. Call 703-228-3403 or see The Snag for details.

**Rare Eagle Sighting:** From a message posted on the Arlington Forest Families listserv on November 3: "There was a bald eagle in our backyard (2nd St. N and Wakefield) this afternoon snacking on what looked like the remains of a grey-striped tabby cat. Hope it's not yours. The eagles are obviously migrating so you might want to keep small pets inside."

*Next AFCA Meeting:  
Jan 21st, 7 p.m.*



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## Forest Exchange

**Our Savior Lutheran School:** The Annual Open House at Our Savior Lutheran School is Saturday, January 24, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Our Savior has been in the heart of Arlington providing education and service for 61 years. The school offers Pre-K through 8th grade with very small class sizes (always under 20 students per class). The school also has one of the lowest tuition rates in Northern Virginia, fabulous teachers, extracurricular activities and an active community of families and educators. If you are looking for a private elementary school, please come by on January 24 or call to schedule a tour any other day.

**Best of Arlington:** The annual poll of readers of Arlington Magazine ranked the Mathnasium in the Arlington Forest Shopping Center as offering the best enrichment programs in the County. The Arlington Forest Club was one of the top vote getters in the best swim club category and Washington-Lee High School's Dr. Gregg Robertson was one of the top vote getters for best high school principal.

**AFCA Listserv:** The AFCA listserv (arlington-forest-citizens-association@googlegroups.com) is a great way to stay informed on news directly impacting our Arlington Forest neighborhood! If you are not signed up, just e-mail arlingtonforestva@gmail.com requesting to be added.

## Community Calendar

**Next AFCA Meeting:** Wednesday, January 21. See page 1 for details.

**E-CARE:** Mid-April. Semi-annual recycling event at Thomas Jefferson Middle School.

**Neighborhood-wide Spring Cleanup:** Saturday, April 25.

**Annual Yard Sale:** Saturday, May 16. Turn unwanted items into cash.

**Lubber Run Amphitheater:** Live entertainment under the stars resumes in June.

**Arlington County Fair:** August 5-9. Rides, food, displays, and racing pigs.

### Future AFCA Meetings:

February 18: Wildlife in Arlington Forest  
& Ballston Mall Redesign

March 18: County Board member John Vihstadt  
& Neighborhood Real Estate Trends

April 15: Protecting Public Parkland

May 13: Picnic and Membership Meeting



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# Barcroft School News

Autumn has been a busy and happy time for Barcroft Elementary. Just prior to the Thanksgiving Break, Mr. Joe Howell, the Loyalty Marketing Manager for the Silver Diner, attended the November 21 School Wide Morning meeting. He awarded the school a \$5000 check to be used to build a fence for the school garden. The students, dressed in patriotic clothing to celebrate School Spirit day, gave Mr. Howell a warm welcome. The Barcroft Girls on the Run team successfully completed a 5K race in Rosslyn on Sunday, November 23. Also in November, the PTA sponsored an Usborne Book Fair.

On December 1, many Barcroft Elementary families and neighbors braved the rain and attended Silver Diner Night at the Clarendon Silver Diner. Over \$400 was raised for the PTA that evening. Thank you to everyone for your support! On December 4, the 4th Grade attended an all-day field trip to Jamestown VA, where they learned about colonial settlers and natives living 400 years ago. On December 11, Barcroft families enjoyed a Winter Concert featuring performances by our 4th and 5th Grade Band, Orchestra and Chorus.

On December 15 and 16 the holidays started early as staff and families dropped off gifts and gift cards to the Office in celebration of the school's Secret Snowman

program. Second quarter student learning was showcased during the December 17 Leonardo da Vinci Learning Night. Students guided their families and community members through their classrooms providing examples of lessons learned during the second quarter. Congratulations to the School Chorus who performed at the December 18 APS School Board meeting. Their performance was broadcast both on-line and on the local school cable access channels.

Winter Break began on December 24. Barcroft students also had off on Monday, January 5 as the teachers had a Grade Preparation Day to conclude the second quarter. Students returned to school on January 6, and started the third quarter.

From January 12 to 24 families can register for Winter after School Enrichment classes, featuring programs in art, science, chess, hip hop dance, sports, and Spanish Chorus. The monthly PTA meeting was on January 13. Kindergarten Information Night will be held Monday, January 26 at Washington-Lee High School at 7 pm for those joining the APS school system for the first time.

Happy 2015 to all of our neighbors from Barcroft Elementary!



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## *Your Neighbor in Arlington Forest*

If you are considering putting your home on the market, I would suggest that you begin getting your home ready as soon as possible. By having your home ready and in great shape for the new owners, the price that you get will be higher than if you don't prepare the home for sale. I have a list of things that owners should do in preparation to market their home. If

you would like to meet with me to see your home and give you some ideas on how to prepare it, please call me for a free, no obligation consultation. With the inventory low, it is an ideal time to sell your home. I look forward to meeting with you.

*Jim*





# Kids for Hire

These Arlington Forest youths are available for babysitting, pet sitting, and other services. To be added or deleted, e-mail [newsletter@arlingtonforestva.org](mailto:newsletter@arlingtonforestva.org).

## Southside:

- Daniel O'Mara, dog walking, pet sitting, leaf raking, [t.omara@LTwell.com](mailto:t.omara@LTwell.com), 703-769-3767
- Ethan O'Mara, dog walking, pet sitting, leaf raking, [t.omara@LTwell.com](mailto:t.omara@LTwell.com), 703-769-3767
- Sophia Polisar, babysitting (RC certified), pet sitting, [sophiapolisar@gmail.com](mailto:sophiapolisar@gmail.com), 571-429-2289
- Caroline Rogers, babysitting, pet sitting, dog walking, [carolinearogers@verizon.net](mailto:carolinearogers@verizon.net), 703-892-0226
- Julia Rogers, babysitting (RC certified), yard work, [juliaerogers23@gmail.com](mailto:juliaerogers23@gmail.com), 703-892-0226

## Greenbrier Section:

- Zephren Collinson, babysitting (references), pet sitting, dog walking, leaf raking, snow shoveling, tutoring, 703-528-3595
- Donna Corina, babysitting (RC certified), dog walking, pet sitting, leaf raking, snow shoveling, tutoring, 703-248-8885
- Mary Corina, babysitting (RC certified), dog walking, pet sitting, leaf raking, snow shoveling, tutoring, 703-248-8885

- Allison Ferrell, babysitting (RC certified), pet sitting, [Allisonrocket@aol.com](mailto:Allisonrocket@aol.com), 703-276-2840
- Ethan Hall, babysitting (RC certified), snow shoveling, leaf raking, pet sitting, dog walking, [k.hall.b@verizon.net](mailto:k.hall.b@verizon.net), 302-650-4428.
- Sarah Keyser, babysitting (RC certified), pet sitting, dog walking, [Stealers12@gmail.com](mailto:Stealers12@gmail.com), 703-243-8777

## Northside:

- Laura Brancati, babysitting, dog walking, pet sitting, [laura@barms.org](mailto:laura@barms.org), 703-243-1916.
- Daniel Brancati, yard work, leaf raking, snow shoveling, car washing (in your driveway), [daniel@barms.org](mailto:daniel@barms.org), 703-243-1916
- Riittisha Choudhary: tutoring, babysitting age 4-12, yard work, [riittishachoudhary@gmail.com](mailto:riittishachoudhary@gmail.com)
- Ely Constantine, pet sitting, leaf raking, snow shoveling, [cpconstantine@comcast.net](mailto:cpconstantine@comcast.net), 703-841-9229
- Sophia Constantine, pet sitting, dog walking, [srconstantine@comcast.net](mailto:srconstantine@comcast.net), 703-841-9229
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- Sophie Hickey, babysitting, 703-351-7013
- Olivia Kennett, babysitting (RC certified), 571-277-4441
- Tenley Kennett, plant watering, dog walking (20 lbs max), 571-277-4441
- Alyssa Luz-Ricca, babysitting (RC cert), dog walking, pet sitting, [alyssa.luz.ricca@gmail.com](mailto:alyssa.luz.ricca@gmail.com), 703-740-6972
- Marika Mortimer-Lotke, babysitting (RC certified), house sitting/chores, 703-276-9046
- Allison Vernon, babysitting (references), pet sitting, [catharinevernon@aol.com](mailto:catharinevernon@aol.com), 703-522-9147
- Gabby Young, babysitting, mother's helper, pet sitting, dog walking, [merrywesing@yahoo.com](mailto:merrywesing@yahoo.com), 703-622-4229

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- Girl Scout Troop 5837 (a group of responsible Arlington Forest 8th graders), babysitting, mother's helper, pet sitting, dog walking, plant watering, leaf raking, snow shoveling, [gst5837@gmail.com](mailto:gst5837@gmail.com)



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