

AuroraHighlands.org

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If you live in the Aurora Highlands area, you are invited and encouraged to come to our monthly meetings where we meet neighbors, discuss topics of interest and share information. All are welcome to attend. Come and meet your neighbors at the Aurora Hills Community Center at 735 18th Street South. Childcare will be provided.

OUR UPCOMING MONTHLY MEETING:

Wednesday, February 9, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.

AURORA HILLS COMMUNITY CENTER

Agenda

6:30 Social

7:00 AHCA Business Meeting

7:30 2011 Program Planning Discussion

8:00 Scott Donelson on Energy-Efficient Homes

Long Range Planning Commission Considers PenPlace

by Nick Giacobbe

As reported in the January newsletter and discussed at previous meetings, Vornado has presented a plan to Arlington County to develop a parcel in Pentagon City bounded by Army Navy Drive, Eads, Fern, and 12th Street extended, but not including the existing Marriott Residence Inn. The Long Range Planning Commission, chaired by Peter Fallon, held its first meeting on January 27 to begin consideration of the site and how the Vornado proposal fits into the County's vision. Under the terms of the 1976 Pentagon City Master Development

Plan and subsequent amendments, the owners of the site are allowed to build 582 hotel rooms and 930 residential units. There is no commercial office space remaining under the terms of the 1976 plan since the capacity has already been built.

As envisioned in 1976, Pentagon City is supposed to be a mixed-use development with an emphasis on residential development. This was in contrast to adjoining Crystal City, which has a more commercial focus. Vornado's proposal includes a total of

five buildings on the 12-acre site, four office buildings with approximately 1.8 million square feet of space (two would be stan-

dard commercial office buildings and the other two would be built to demanding DoD security specifications, including an 82-foot minimum setback and dedicated parking), and a hotel with 300 rooms. The setback is consistent with our neighborhood's desire for open space, but the County sees it as problematic because, as was pointed out at the meeting, it violates the goal of urbanizing Arlington by building out every square inch of space from sidewalk to sidewalk. We view our open space objectives and the DoD setbacks as a great example of complementary requirements.

The first session was largely devoted to a basic understanding of the history of the site and a cursory review of the Vornado proposal. The County staff says that the project will not

—Continued on Page 6—

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President's Corner

by Michael Dowell

Happy February! The community center will be busy this month and we hope the programming will be as much fun as January's Poe night — quoth the raven nevermore! The Odyssey of the Mind group will be running their mouse mobile on the test track and tuning up for their March competition. The Children's Science Program will start on February 13, teaching hands-on science to 6-7 year olds for four weeks. Family Fridays will start on February 18 for six weeks, with family film screenings as well as showcasing local films created by our own Gunston Middle School students. Thanks to Sid Thurston, Lou Ott, Bill Gillen, Cheryl Mendonza, Elizabeth Chofertikh and Miriam Gennari for organizing these great programs.

An update on the incident at the 7-11 last month, where the employees refused to allow one of our neighbors to call the police after an attempted mugging. Upon contacting the 7-11 corporate office in Dallas Texas, their public relations manager apologized and stated that their corporate policy is to assist citizens in contacting the police in such situations. The corporate office investigated the incident and determined that the employees had not been trained regarding this policy. The employees are now trained and we have been assured that this will not happen again.

Meanwhile development planning continues across Crystal City, from the ART bus barn design work to the Pen

Place Phased Development Site Plan amendment application and Long Bridge Park Phase 1. Nick Giacobbe is representing us at the Long Range Planning Commission review of the Pen Place application (see Nick's report in this issue). Our AHCA representatives to the Crystal City Citizen Review Council (C3RC) are Cory Giacobbe and Mike Dowell (me). Together with ARCA and Crystal City, there will be 7 community residents on the 19 person council. These are opportunities to engage with property owners, developers and county staff to create good solutions for our piece of Arlington County. Please contact us, should you need more information on the projects and their status.

January 2011 AHCA Meeting Highlights

- The Joyce Street reconstruction is underway and by spring large portions will be complete.
- Work continues on the spray park design, and the next design meeting with County staffer Christine Simpson will be on February 3.
- On January 10, AHCA and ARCA members met with County Board Chairman Chris Zimmerman to talk about the future of the Aurora Hills Community Center. The County Manager, Deputy County Manager, Fire Chief, head of the Library, and other senior County staff members attended the very productive session. Perspectives given all fit together very nicely — short-, mid-, and long-term options were all discussed regarding the future of our Library and Community Center. Minor upgrades and the future were also discussed. The County is looking for suggestions on improvements, such as replacing the "bank teller" windows in the lobby with a homework center or café. The idea of bringing back the volunteer-staffed visitor center was brought up, as was the idea of inviting volunteer interior decorators.
- Neal Sigmon gave an update on the Four Mile Run Restoration Project. Since Arlington has no waterfront, Four

Mile Run is our waterfront. Through an EPA grant obtained by Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, they completed a master plan in 2006. Project partners include Alexandria, US Army Corps of Engineers, and NVRC. Neal and Arlington County staff Jason Papacosma displayed a map of the Tidal Corridor Restoration, where they are trying to perform environmental restoration while maintaining a flood control function. Trails and overlooks will make it a more interactive waterfront. They are at 60 percent design completion and in 2-3 more months Jason expects to be at 90 percent and ready to finalize the design. The restoration project has a \$7 million cost estimate, of which \$3 million has come from EPA grants. Plans call for a pedestrian and cyclist bridge to link South Eads Street and Commonwealth Avenue. Currently the task force is negotiating with a firm on the design, which attracted about 40 bidders from firms around the world.

- Aaron Wohler gave an update on landscaping around the Water Pollution Control Plant. The plan is in final review now and work to install the trees and plants will commence in spring or early summer with completion slated for late fall 2011. Thou-

sands of trees and shrubs will be planted to improve the landscaping and help obscure the mechanics of the Plant.

- PenPlace Long Range Planning Commission meetings begin January 27. Mike Dowell is our representative; Nick Giacobbe and Bruce Cameron are alternates. The Association passed a motion to write a letter to the county requesting that it honor the existing PDSP density zoning for PenPlace (transfer of the residential density was already approved). Comment was made that we need to think about tall buildings and signage on them as billboards promoting corporations to Washington, DC.
- The Association needs to submit nominees to be Crystal City Citizen Review Council representatives by January 14 and needs help with metric definition and benchmarking in the 2011-2012 period. We already have access to data about our quality of life. We have an air quality monitor in the community center and our air quality is the worst in all the monitoring stations in Virginia for particulate matter. Comment was made that in all of our dealings we need to remind the County of the burdens we are bearing which result in increased air pollution.

Schools' News

News about our neighborhood schools

Saturday, February 5 - The Saturday String Fling (formerly known as the Pyramid Orchestra Concert) will take place at 12:00 p.m. in the Wakefield High School auditorium. All schools—elementary through high school—in South Arlington will participate. The concert is free and open to the public.

Oakridge Tutors - Volunteers Needed Tutoring is a great opportunity for members of the community to support our fantastic neighborhood elementary school! Anyone who would like to join the Oakridge Tutors, please e-mail Casey Dolan, the school-based tutor coordinator (Casey.Dolan@apsva.us), or ARCA resident, Tom Martin, at tom_martin542@hotmail.com. For more information, see the article in the Arlington Connection (with photos of 2

ARCA tutors): <http://connectionarchives.com/PDF/2010/121510/Arlington.pdf>

Gunston Middle School - The spring play is just around the corner: *Midsummer Night's Dream* Gunston Middle School, Theatre 1 March 11 & 12 at 7:00pm Bring the whole family!

Celebrate Gunston in our annual community wide open house. Come learn about the school and all the wonderful learning going on: March 18 from 6-8 p.m.

Wakefield High School The Wakefield Booster and Alumni Association's (Wakefield Foundation) annual Golf Tournament fund-raiser

will be Saturday, May 7, at the beautiful Virginia Oaks Golf Club in Gainesville, VA (<http://www.virginiaoaksgc.com>). Paul Ferguson, class of 1983 and Wakefield High School Hall of Fame, will be the Honorary Chair this year. Come out and support this fund-raiser that provides scholarships to some Wakefield graduates from our neighborhood. For further information, contact Paul B. Greenfield, at: greenfieldpb@yahoo.com.

West Point Bound — Neighbor and Wakefield Senior Paul Stetekluh, son of Ann Marie and Jeff, has received an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Congratulations Paul!

Emergency Preparedness and Response Training Begins in March

Recent news and weather headlines illustrate the importance of being prepared for and able to respond to all kinds of emergencies. That's what Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training is all about. This eight-week, 24-hour course, sponsored by the Arlington County Citizen Corps Council, Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and Fire Department (ACFD), covers disaster preparedness, fire suppression and utility shut-off, disaster medical operations, light search and rescue, team organization, disaster psychology, and terrorism.

Nearly 500 people, many from our neighborhood, have completed CERT training in Arlington County. It is open to Arlington residents – and those who work in the County but reside elsewhere -- who are at least 18 years of age (16 if accompanied by at least one parent) and able

to participate in all aspects of the training, some of which requires lifting and carrying. The training is free, but participants are expected to acquire certain supplies themselves, many of which you probably already have on-hand. Classes are held at the Arlington County Fire Department Training Academy in Shirlington.

Spring CERT classes are scheduled to begin on March 16 and 22 and seats are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Advance registration is required. If you'd like additional information or would like to sign up, please contact the program's volunteer coordinator, Cynthia Kellams, at Arlington-CERT@aol.com.

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Forming a Local Moms Group

Calling all moms in the ARCA (Arlington Ridge) and AHCA (Aurora Hills) neighborhoods of south Arlington. After moving into the area, I've been unable to find a local moms group. I heard there were once some small ones based on the grade or age of kids or specific neighborhood streets and there were some babysitting co-ops as well. But I'm looking for a group to get to know more moms in the area beyond my school PTA meetings.

In searching for one, I was encouraged to start one. I finally decided..... why not? So, please join me. This will be a group for all moms in the area no matter the grade or age of your child(ren) or if you are a working or stay-at-home mom. The success of the group will depend on the activity level and expectations of each person.

If you are also interested in joining a group in the area, please join me at my home on Friday, February 11, at 6:30 PM. Bring a snack or beverage to share if you wish and we'll sit down and discuss how we'd like the group to work. Please email me for my address if you plan to come. Email if you have any questions or want to give input but just can't make this first meeting. My email is [regi-nameeks@gmail.com](mailto:reginameeks@gmail.com). I look forward to meeting you! - Regina :)

South Arlington Moms Club (SAMC)

SOUTH ARLINGTON MOMS CLUB (SAMC)

The Arlington-South chapter of the International MOMS club (Mothers Offering Mothers Support) is always looking for new members. We meet during the day when at-home mothers most need support. We believe being a mother shouldn't isolate you, so mothers can bring their children with them to all our activities. Any age children are welcome. You don't need to leave the group when your children enter school. We know you still need support as your children grow.

The next open-to-the-public event of SAMC, the Super Playgroup General Meeting, will be held on Friday, March 11, 2011 at Our Lady Queen of Peace, 2700 19th St. S., Arlington. Come one; come ALL! The SAMC Super Playgroup General Meetings are open to everyone, so get your stay-at-home mommy friends OUT of their homes to join the fun!

Our Super Playgroups offer volunteer-led children's activities for all ages and they are great opportunities to let the kids play and do crafts while we enjoy the company of other great moms. If it's nice weather, we can head over to the park located right beside the church after the meeting.

We hope to see lots of old friends and new faces! Please note our new room at Our Lady Queen of Peace. We now meet in Father Ray Hall, the one-story orange brick building behind the church. Park in the back parking lot. With the Ministry Center (our old location) behind you, walk between the two buildings ahead. Father Ray Hall is on the right.

For membership information please email samcmember@yahoo.com or visit our website, <http://www.meetup.com/MOMS-Club-of-Arlington-South/>

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Vote in the Arlington Vehicle Decal Competition

Three of the four finalists in the 2011-2012 Arlington Vehicle



Decal Design Competition are Wakefield High School students and one of the submissions is of our own Hume School, home of the Arlington Historical Society. Be sure to vote at: http://www.arlingtonva.us/Departments/treasurer/forms/DecalVote10_11_sav.asp or by clicking on the link on the Arlington County home page, <http://arlingtonva.us>, before February 13.

Déjà vu all over again: Flyer found in Civic Association archives from 1984

Cartoon by Rudy Wendelin, 1910—2000, political cartoonist, Arlington resident and Forest Service artist responsible for Smokey the Bear illustrations

PENTAGON CITY DEVELOPERS PROPOSE INCREASED DENSITY AND TAXPAYER OUTLAYS

COME TO AURORA HILLS CENTER AT 7:30 P.M., WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20TH TO HEAR THE DEVELOPERS PROPOSE:

- * EXPANSION OF THE FLOOR AREA DENSITY FROM 800,000 SQUARE FEET APPROVED BY THE COUNTY BOARD IN 1976 TO 1,044,000 SQUARE FEET - THIS MEANS MORE TRAFFIC AND AIR POLLUTION WHICH ALREADY EXCEEDS STANDARDS SET FOR THIS AREA.
- * TAXPAYER RESPONSIBILITY FOR A \$32,000,000 "INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BOND" AND OPERATING DEFICITS FOR A 6-STORY PARKING GARAGE FOR 4000+ CARS.
- * A PERFORMING ARTS CENTER FOR WHICH THE COUNTY WILL PAY \$300,000 PER YEAR WITH 5% INCREASES SCHEDULED.
- * A 22-STORY HOTEL OVERLOOKING THE VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS PARK AND THE AREA OF SINGLE FAMILY HOMES.
- * PUTTING ASIDE THE SET OF NEARLY 60 CONDITIONS IMPOSED BY THE COUNTY BOARD IN 1976 IN FAVOR OF A SET OF CONDITIONS DRAWN UP BY THE DEVELOPERS.

COME !!

JOHN MARR.....
DICK HERBST.....
BRENT SPENCE.....
HERMAN JENSEN.....
KATHERINE HUGHES..
MARGARET SAVARD...
NANCY SWAIN.....
ROY SIMPSON.....



SHOW THAT
YOU CARE

Planning Commission Considers PenPlace

—Continued from Page 1—

require changes to either the General Land Use Plan or the zoning of the site; all the developer needs is density.

There were more questions than answers and the County staff was charged with a long list of questions to research, beginning with the size of the site, the history of the 1976 Pentagon City Master Development Plan and its amendments, the conversion rate for changing hotels to office space, an urban design analysis and a review of the expert opinions about the optimal mix of residential, office and retail uses. The County staff had some preliminary figures about the mix and the potential use of a rubber ruler has already begun to emerge. Rather than look at just the boundaries of the 1976 Master Plan and the usage mix as proposed and as built/ approved for construction, the County staff has prepared numbers to support whatever mix is desired. Want more residential? Throw in all of the apartments at the River House (so what if it was not a part of the original

116-acre Master Plan). Want even more residential? Then throw in all of the condominiums between Pentagon City and Shirley Highway. Want more office? Throw in the Kimco/Costco site.

There will be two or three sessions over the next few months as the Commission grapples with whether or not to recommend the transfer of phantom density from the North Tip (now known fondly as Long Bridge Park) and what the appropriate mix of uses should be for the site. Of course the reality of any density on the books at the North Tip is questionable; the buildings could not go up because of air space restrictions and could not go down because of ground contamination. However those limitations did not stop an earlier swap of that same density when Arlington Country transferred it to the Arlington portion of Potomac Yard.

County staff also has its eye on the property for yet another use -- a car barn for the streetcar system. Every

streetcar system needs a place to do light maintenance and wash the fleet and what better place to do it than when the streetcars pass along the 12th Street side of the property. It is clearly an idea that is not a part of Vornado's proposal and it will be interesting to see how far it goes. In reality, the streetcar barn should be located in or near Long Bridge Park. We don't need it inside the boundaries of our neighborhood and by placing the car barn in or near Long Bridge Park, we will improve the public transit infrastructure that is currently lacking. Building the spur for the car barn solves two problems with one solution.

Our Association has gone on record, as has the Arlington Ridge Civic Association, that the County should honor the commitments of the 1976 Pentagon City Master Development Plan. It has served us well over the past three plus decades and we should follow it through to its conclusion.

Aurora Hills Senior Program Hosts ALRI Geopolitics Class

The Aurora Hills Senior Program at the Aurora Hills Community Center is providing the venue for a class being offered by the Arlington Learning in Retirement Institute (ALRI) beginning on April 6. ALRI offers its members non-credit, college level courses during weekdays in the spring and fall. The course being held at AHSC is "Geopolitics of the Ancient Middle East" and is on Wednesdays from 1:30

to 3:00 p.m. It runs for six weeks; the course fee is \$45.00; the instructor is Dave Rudgers, a former CIA editor and analyst.

ALRI is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization for people 50 years or older, regardless of residence location. ALRI is governed, supported and financed by its members; the annual membership is \$55.00 per person. In addition to the

course offerings, it hosts special events and has several clubs such as Ethnic Lunch, Travel, Bridge, Cinema, Current Events Discussion, etc. For more information about ALRI, please visit their website: www.ArlingtonLRI.org or call 703-228-2144. A copy of the Spring 2011 Course Catalogue is available online or at the Aurora Hills Community Center.

Long-Time Neighbor and Author Offers Problem-Solving Skills

Al Burt, a 36-year resident of our neighborhood, would like to volunteer some of his time helping his neighbors solve their specific, nagging problems using the creativity that has served him so well over the years. Author of "Cut the Strings" (available in our local library), Al has been employing his creative mind to solve his personal problems and improve his quality of life while adhering to his bare bones

budget for some 40 years. His supply of problems is now running low so he wants to divert some of this creative energy toward helping his neighbors cope with their problems or ambitions in an informal way. Some examples might be: reorganizing stuff to make life easier and provide more usable space, repairing those old comfortable shoes, using materials from a discarded item to create a useful item, or

inventing something to solve that pesky problem or just make life a little better. Some of Al's solutions may seem a bit "out of the box" but what the heck, why not give it a try. Al will neither charge, nor accept, any payment for his time and offers no guarantee of the results. He asks that you call him—he doesn't "do" internet much—at 703-521-9629.

Activities and Events

Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, February 5, 8:00 – 10:00 a.m. at Calvary UMC, corner of 23rd & Grant Streets (2315 S Grant St.). The men at [Calvary UMC](#) invite you to join us for the best breakfast deal in town: pancakes, sausage, coffee, and orange juice - all for only \$5-adults, \$4-seniors, and \$2 for kids. For more information, contact Todd at the Church office, admin@calmeth.org.

Improving Your Home's Comfort, Health, and Energy Efficiency, February AHCA Meeting, February 9, 2011, 7:00 p.m. — 9:00 p.m. at the Aurora Hills Community Center. Presentation by Scott Donelson, local resident, BPI certified energy auditor, president of Home Energy Medics, www.MyEnergyMedics.com, a NoVA home performance with energy star program participating company.

Community Pruning Workshop, February 12 and 13

Learn about basic tree and shrub pruning! This is a community education program, free of charge. You'll have an opportunity to see pruning in action and real live Tree Stewards will be available to answer questions. Your shrubs and trees will thank you! Registration is requested. Please call the Master Gardener Hotline to leave your information. 703-228-6414

Saturday, February 12

Time: 10:00 a.m. – noon
Location: Ben Brenman Park, 5000 Duke St., Alexandria
Meet at the east end of the park near the restrooms. Extra parking across Duke St. at Beatley Library

Sunday, February 13

Time: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Location: Thomas Jefferson Community Center, 3501 2nd St. S, Arlington.
Meet in parking lot on S. 2nd St. near the tennis courts.

Friday Night Movies, February 18 through March 25 (6 Fridays) from 5:30—7:30 p.m. at the Aurora Hills Community Center. The Civic Association will be offering snacks, bring your sleeping bags or comfy pil-

lows to enjoy a family feature presentation. Movies start at 6:00 p.m.

Okee Dokey Brothers Perform at Calvary UMC, Saturday, February 19 at 1:15 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. - Don't miss the Okee Dokey Brothers, winner of the 2010 Parents Choice Award for the CD "Take It Outside." The Okee Dokey Brothers' mission is to remind children (and adults) of our intrinsic ability to discover, imagine and create through music. All proceeds benefit the Calvary Children's School. Visit the webpage at www.okeedokey.org For ticket information, please contact Dana Dougherty (danaldougherty@aol.com) or Beth Posey (bposey@comcast.net) or call the Calvary Preschool, 703.892.4112.

Courthouse Farmers' Market Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. – noon

Located adjacent to the Arlington County Courthouse Parking Lot, at the intersection of North Courthouse Road and North 14th Street. Arlington's largest market, it continues year round and averages about 30 vendors, all of whom are required to produce their items within 125 miles of Arlington. Winter Market hours (8:00 a.m. to noon) begin on January 1. During Winter Market, the location of the market will shift onto 14th Street, leaving the two parking lots available for parking. Free parking is available in the parking garage under the County Administra-

tive Offices. No dogs are allowed at the market.

Del Ray Farmers' Market, Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. – noon, corner of East Oxford & Mount Vernon Avenues. Our closest neighborhood farmers' markets have closed for the season, but the nearby Del Ray market is open year round. It is producer grown, with fresh vegetables and fruits in season. All year round, this market offers meats, eggs, fresh pasta and sauces, Amish cheese, yogurt, bakery goods, eggs, jams and jellies, fancy nuts, and bakery goods.

*Stay involved.
Keep
Informed on
what's going on
in our
community.*

1 K Wine Walk, February 26, 2011 2:00-6:00 p.m.

a tasting tour through the interior walkways of Crystal City featuring 30-40 different wines, light fare and photographs from finalists and youth category winners of FotoWeek DC. Presented by the [Crystal City Business Improvement District](#) in partnership with the Washington Wine Academy. For more details, and to order tickets, visit <http://crystalcity.org/item/on-your-mark-get-set-sip>

AHCA Needs a Volunteer Webmaster

The Civic Association is searching for a neighbor to serve as the webmaster for the neighborhood site, www.AuroraHighlands.org. The Executive Committee has lots of good ideas for the web site, but are all technically incompetent. If you know how to manage a web site and are interested in volunteering, please contact Cory at AHCA.news@yahoo.com.



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Improving Your Home's Comfort, Health and Energy Efficiency: Part 3, Tips for Reducing Home Energy Use

By Scott Donelson

So the weather in our neighborhood is still cold, and you may have received a high gas or electric bill and/or are feeling the effects in some cold spots in your home. You don't have to live with either! In the November article I spoke of the various sources of these problems and identifying them through an energy audit as well as the resulting comfort efficiency benefits associated with making the fixes without a huge investment. It can be viewed at http://aurorahighlands.org/Media/news2010_11.pdf. Last month's article focused on heating/cooling systems and duct leakage and also is available on line. This month's focus is on tips you can do to reduce your energy bills.

HOME ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Per the EPA, 46% of typical home energy consumption is due to heating and cooling and that half of this is being wasted due to air leaks in the home. The next largest is water heating at 14%, followed by appliances at 13%. Obviously, tackling the air leakage offers the biggest "bang for the buck" and the proper means to really assess the sources of leakage is through a home energy audit as discussed in the November 2010 article. However, there are smaller things that can be done by the homeowner beyond just replacing light bulbs!

12 TIPS FOR REDUCING HOME ENERGY USE

Ensure your fireplace damper is closed. If open, this is the equivalent of having a hole in your house letting heat out in the winter and in during the summer.

Clean your refrigerator coils- They can be accessed by sliding the refrigerator out if on the back or by removing a clipped-on panel at the bottom front of the unit. Remove dirt and debris using a simple appliance brush available at Home Depot/Lowes. Dirty coils are equivalent to a dirty furnace filter and make the refrigerator work harder, shortening its life.

Make sure windows are locked/latched - They may be closed, but you may be surprised what you find. If not latched properly, windows can leak air excessively.

Turn your water heater temperature down, insulate the pipes, and consider adding an insulation blanket - Water heater temperature needs to only be 120 deg F, but it is often set higher. This can be checked with an instant cooking thermometer in a glass of water. Both cold and hot water pipes should be insulated 3-6 feet from the heater and the tank can benefit from an insulation blanket in many cases.

Turn water heater off or to lowest setting if gone more than 3 days - No reason to keep that water at peak heated temperature if no one is using it!

Replace your furnace, heat pump, or air conditioning system filter regularly - Filters should be changed monthly. A

dirty filter can make the system work harder, but it can contribute to clogging of the cooling coil which will permanently reduce the efficiency unless the coil is professionally cleaned.

Caulk around window frames- applying caulk around the inside and outside of the interior window frame can reduce air leakage.

Seal around electrical outlets and install gaskets- Although not solving the root cause of the air leakage, it is helpful to remove outlet covers, foam seal or caulk around the outside of the box, and install a die cut foam gasket available at home stores.

Install a programmable thermostat- Through proper use of pre-programmed settings, you can save up to \$180 per year.

Clean lint from dryer ducts- Ensure outside vent hood closes tightly and is not clogged with lint which could be letting in cold air. Replace flexible duct with smooth metal duct as much as possible and/or thoroughly clean the duct. This will improve dryer efficiency.

Skip the dishwasher drying cycle- let them air dry.

Install low flow shower heads and faucet aerators- can result in water savings of 25-60%. Low flow shower heads became mandatory after 1992 and went from 5.5 to 2.5 GPM

The following web sites contain more information on the topics discussed:

<http://www.MyEnergyMedics.com>

(links to many sites and answers to frequently asked questions)

http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=products.pr_where_money

(the details on the home energy consumption breakdown)

http://www.energysavers.gov/your_home/water_heating/index.cfm/mytopic=13030 (low flow faucet aerators and shower heads, water heating blankets, pipe insulation, and water temperature)

http://www.energysavers.gov/your_home/ (Broad range of home energy saving suggestions)

About the author: Scott Donelson is a local resident, a BPI certified energy auditor, and president of Home Energy Medics, www.MyEnergyMedics.com, a NoVA home performance with energy star program participating company.



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Antique Fountains Pens: A Great Collectable for Urban-Dwellers

by Claire B. Rubin

When I read the recent community newsletter and saw the name PenPlace, I thought for sure we were going to have a nice, new pen store coming to our



neighborhood. Alas, what a disappointment for a Pentagon City dweller who dotes on pens, especially fountain pens. I have been collecting fountain pens – and related things like pencils, blotters, inkwells, and ink – for several decades, and I think it is a great hobby. I especially recommend it to folks in urban settings without much storage space.

I have a truly eclectic collection of dip pens, fountain pens dating to the early 1900s, and a bunch of pens that are very colorful and were used in the 1930s and 1940s. I have newer ones too, but I have a strong liking for the pens of the 30s and 40s. In those days, a nice Parker or Schaeffer, or Ever-sharp pen was considered a nice possession. Often fountain pens were given to high school and college graduates, often with their monogram. The good quality pens

were very durable and would be serviceable for decades, if maintained well. People were careful not to lose them, also.

In the old days, many pen companies existed and various experiments with colored plastics and mechanism designs were tried out. As you might expect, lots of companies folded and merged and not all of the innovations with filling mechanisms and avant guard designs worked out. Some of the designs and colors used in those days were so engaging that present day companies make reproductions, with appropriate improve materials, to capture them. (See pictures attached.)



Visit www.pencreations.com

You probably will be surprised at how many other people share this hobby. In the DC area, there is a pen club, every August a major national pen show takes place in the metro area, and there are some magazines for the de-

voted collector. The first is D.C. Metro Pen Club, contact: hshubin@mwzb.com. The 2011 pen show is scheduled for August 11-14. Among the magazines available are **Pen World** (www.penworld.com) and **Pennant**, the magazine of the Pen Collectors of America (www.pencollectorsofamerica.com). And in downtown DC is Fahrney's Pen Store, which has knowledgeable staff and a great catalog; there also is a pen store in the Pentagon Fashion Center.

In recent years, I have twice provided a display of old writing instruments at the AH Library, in the lobby display space. One passerby asked me to loan her an appropriate pen as a prop for a play she was producing. I did so and was fortunate to get two tickets to the show!

Finally, if you have some old pens wasting away in the back of your desk drawer and would like to sell or swap them, please let me know.

cbrubin@yahoo.com

Parking Rates to be Lowered at 35 Neighborhood Parking Spaces

by Brent Spence

According to the ARLnow website, Arlington is lowering rates on some long-term meters that are used by Metro riders. This will start in February and include 23 spaces in Pentagon City and 12 spaces in Arlington Ridge. The exact locations were not specified.

BACKGROUND:

AHCA has long fought to reduce commuter parking in our area as we are well-served by public transit. Since the opening of nearby Metro stops in 1977, County Board policy has supported our needs by setting long-term parking

rates around Metro stops, including the lots at Pentagon Centre and Costco, to discourage commuter use. By decreasing meter rates, the county is violating that long-standing position. Although this is a "test", it is not to be taken lightly. Any actions that increase traffic into our overburdened neighborhood will add to the congestion and pollution. With all of the current and planned development in our area do we really need to TRY to attract more cars?

Arlington has been proceeding with elimination of parking on one side of residential streets. This is ostensibly because the streets are too narrow for trash trucks and fire engines. Why is this being done now? Have there been problems? So far the affected neighborhoods appear to be Lyon Park and Lyon Village.



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Yes! I want to join the Aurora Highlands Civic Association!

Please complete the following information and enclose the form with your check payable to **Aurora Highlands Civic Association**. Annual dues are **\$20.00** per household. Bring it to the next Civic Association meeting or mail to:

Membership Chair
Aurora Highlands Civic Association
P.O. Box 25201
Arlington, VA 22202

Member information:

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Check here to receive Civic Association announcements by email.

I'm ready to get involved!

I am interested in:

Library Schools Parks and Rec. Streets & Lights

Zoning/Planning Other _____

Serving on an AHCA committee

Note: Your address, phone number and e-mail address will not be released outside the civic association. The dues year runs November 1 to October 31.

Tree Talk: Restoring Our Community's Native Tree Canopy

by Cory Giacobbe

Protecting Your Trees During Construction

Large shade trees increase the beauty of your landscape and the dollar value of the property, they help reduce cooling bills in the summer and they offer significant reduction to storm water problems. Unfortunately, the processes involved with construction can be deadly to nearby trees – even if they do not die immediately, they often decline over several years from the building disturbance. If you are thinking about remodeling your house, your trees want you to know the following:



Roots are vital to a tree's survival and the majority of a tree's root system extends three times wider than the canopy! If your tree is 10 inches in diameter, then its critical root zone extends 10 feet. A large 30-inch diameter tree's critical root zone extends 45 feet from its trunk.

You'll save time and money if you develop a landscape protection plan early. Use the link below to learn more about how construction can affect a tree and ways to protect them.

Hire a professional arborist along with the architect and developer so you know which trees can be saved and will protect future planting sites. If you don't hire an arborist, ask proposed contractors about the qualifications of anyone who will be doing any pruning needed for your job. If you are not satisfied, include a clause in the contract requiring the contractor to hire a professional satisfactory to you, or hire someone yourself before the job begins.

Professional arborists can prepare the trees for construction by pruning limbs and roots and determine the

needed distance of barriers to prevent other damage.

Develop written plans with contractors with posted bonds to guarantee tree preservation or put financial penalties in the contract.

Ensure strong barriers protect the vital tree root zone that can't be easily moved to park equipment or pile dirt.

Stay involved during construction to show you are serious about tree preservation. Insist on replacing any removed barriers, take photos of tree damage and bring it to the contractor's attention. If you love your trees, don't leave them alone during construction.

After construction, bring back the arborist and follow recommendations to maintain the trees. Trees may require more water and nutrients or need additional pruning after construction

Where to find detailed information on protecting your trees during construction: www.treesaregood.com/treecare/avoiding_construction.aspx

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/housingandclothing/DK6135.html>

To find certified arborists contact International Society of Arborists and search by zip code www.treesaregood.com

For more information, contact the Arlington Extension Help Desk at ex013mg@vt.edu or horticultural hotline 703-228-7636

The information in this article is from a brochure prepared by The Tree Stewards of Arlington and Alexandria entitled "What Your Tree Wants You to Know Before Construction." For more information on the Tree Stewards, visit TreeStewards.org.

Aurora Highlands Civic Association

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703-842-5441

2nd Vice President – Cory Giacobbe
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Secretary – Jenny Lawhorn
Web Master – Jason Roberts

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AHCA Rep. to Crystal City Business Improvement District (CCBID) – Cheryl Mendonsa

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Items for the Newsletter: Send items in e-mail messages (not attachments) to the newsletter editor, Cory Giacobbe: AHCA.news@yahoo.com

For past issues of the newsletter, bylaws, and neighborhood boundaries and more, visit

AuroraHighlands.org

P.O. Box 25201 - Arlington, VA 22202

AuroraHighlands.org

"The Association is a non-partisan organization of community residents formed to work in the overall community interest in promoting civic pride, enhancing the quality of life in the community, preserving the character of the community and planning for the orderly, safe, and humane development of the community" (AHCA Bylaws, Article II). The AHCA meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month (unless specifically noted) in the Aurora Hills Community Center (735 S. 18th St.) at 7:00 p.m.