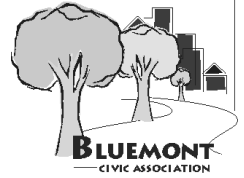


BCA News

March 2004 • Vol. 8, No. 2 • Post Office Box 5134 • Arlington, Virginia 22205

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Neighborhood Watch on Your Block?

Sgt. Heather Hurlock, Neighborhood Watch Program Coordinator of the Arlington County Police Department, will address the County's new Neighborhood Watch Program at the March 24 general membership meeting of the Bluemont Civic Association (BCA). The meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. at Arlington Traditional School.

Sgt. Hurlock will present opportunities for citizens to promote increased security of streets, sidewalks, and outdoor areas in and around BCA neighborhoods. In addition, she will provide pointers on how to make individual homes more secure, how to avoid being a victim of a crime, and how to guard against identity theft, as well as other pertinent topics. If there is sufficient neighborhood interest, Sgt. Hurlock will help to establish Neighborhood Watch programs in specific BCA areas. ■

Unveiling of Wilson Blvd. Design Proposals

Interested in safety and transportation on Bluemont's "Main Street"? Mark your calendar to review and comment on several new Wilson Boulevard conceptual design proposals at 7:00 p.m., on Tuesday, March 30, at Arlington Traditional School, 855 N. Edison Street.

The review workshop is the latest activity under Arlington's new Arterial Transportation Management (ATM) study — the study intended to develop measures for managing transportation and improving safety along arterial roads.

Wilson Boulevard (west of George Mason Drive) and Carlin Springs Road (south of Kensington Street) were selected as two of the three initial ATM case studies. (A concept design workshop for South Carlin Springs Road will be held at Campbell School, 737 South Carlin Springs Road, at 7:00 on Wednesday, March 31.)

The transportation firm of Kimley-Horne and Arlington County staff developed the Wilson Boulevard concept design proposals to be presented on March 30. The concepts incorporate comments from an October 7 community design workshop and a November 8 Wilson Boulevard walk-through attended by a number of neighborhood residents, including Arlington County Board Member Walter Tejada.

In March 2001, the Bluemont Civic Association voted to ask the County to consider reconfiguring Wilson Boulevard in an effort to improve pedestrian safety and reduce speeding, while maintaining traffic flow. The ATM study was initiated in part as a response to such requests from the BCA and other Arlington civic associations.

Questions? Contact Bob Waffle at rwaffle@comcast.net or (703) 358-9448, or Ed Fendley at fendleyej@yahoo.com or (703) 527-6118, or visit www.co.arlington.va.us/dpw/planning/tc/study/atm.htm. ■

Mark your calendar....

BCA General Membership meeting, March 24, 7 pm, Arlington Traditional School

Wilson Boulevard conceptual design proposals review workshop, March 30, 7 pm, Arlington Traditional School

Neighborhood Day May 8, Barbeque, 11 am, Bluemont Trail; Parade, 2 pm, Clarendon Metro

May 8th Is Neighborhood Day!

Arlington will observe its 8th Annual Neighborhood Day on Saturday, May 8th. This year's theme is: "We Are the Neighborhood," and we invite you to join us in celebrating our pride in the vitality and diversity of our neighborhood.

As part of Bluemont's Neighborhood Day, please join the association for lunch from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. near "The Rocks" along the Bluemont Trail. We will be serving hot dogs, burgers & other goodies. Contact jdalcais@comcast.net if anyone would like to bring a dish to share, volunteer with setup, working the grill, or with cleanup.

A call is out for marchers (residents and businesses, young and old) to participate in the Arlington Neighborhood Day Parade. It is a great way to celebrate life in Arlington and to represent Bluemont. The parade will begin at 2:00 p.m. and will travel down Wilson Boulevard from the Clarendon Metro Station to the Courthouse area, followed by a multicultural concert at the end of the route. Bluemont residents who wish to participate in the parade should meet at 1:30 p.m. at the corner of North Herndon Street and Wilson Boulevard, one block west of the Clarendon Metro station. ■

Waffle To Lead Wilson Blvd Working Group

When it comes to Wilson Boulevard, Bob Waffle is an expert. He spearheaded the drive to reduce the speed limit on Wilson Boulevard, and he was instrumental in the installation of the speed-activated light/pedestrian crossing by Bon Air Park.

So, it was only natural for Bob to be tapped to chair the Wilson Boulevard Working Group (WBWG, for short). This new working group will initially coordinate with the Arterial Transportation Management (ATM) committee and its plans for Wilson Boulevard which should be unveiled later this spring. Down the road, the working group may also evaluate redevelopment options for the commercial area between North George Mason Drive and North Jefferson Street.

Bob is understandably anxious to have help. The working group is open to all BCA members, and he'll

announce the meetings via the BCA e-list (and in the newsletter when lead time permits). If you have paid your 2004 dues but are not yet on the BCA e-list, please send an e-mail to Suzanne Sundburg (the list's administrator) at pro.wordsmith@verizon.net. ■




Park Trees Axed by Dominion Power

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. This picture brings to mind a lot of words, most of them bad ones.

As many residents noted with dismay, Dominion Virginia Power (DVP) began clearing vegetation from the right-of-way along Four Mile Run in November 2003. Many mature trees were downed in the process, scarring the landscape and leading the community to question the appropriateness of DVP's actions.

Past-President Carl Hallinan (together with members of the Arlington Coalition for Smarter Growth, Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment, and countless others) has worked hard to get answers from the County and DVP.

In short, after the widespread power outages due to hurricane Isabel, DVP began an aggressive Countywide operation to remove any trees in public right-of-ways that could conceivably interact with power lines. While the County owns the land in the



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right-of-way next to the bike path and Four Mile Run, DVP retains its right to prune or remove trees that threaten its equipment.

Because the trees and other vegetation had been allowed to grow unchecked for much longer than the usual pruning cycle of three to five years, the amount required to be removed was much greater and more visible. While there is still some question as to whether all the trees that were cut should have been cut, the general consensus seems to be that the pruning/removal is, by and large, necessary to insure uninterrupted power and public safety.

In response to the flood of letters and e-mails the County received, it has taken several steps to review its policies and now plans greater oversight of the pruning and removal activities of DVP and its sub-contractors. The Parks Department has drafted a white paper that recommends specific guidelines and solutions to minimize the problems associated with transmission line clearing. The paper has not yet received final approval from all concerned parties.

While DVP already has a one-for-one tree restoration plan in place, the white paper asks them to use herbicides to control the invasive species (kudzu, honeysuckle, etc.) that flourish when land clearing occurs and to hire a full-time arborist for the Northern Virginia area. It also asks the County to help identify work-area trees that should be saved, to provide signage for areas in which herbicides are applied, to consider allowing DVP to raise the height of transmission lines, and to communicate better with citizens.

Regrettably, Dominion Power has not changed their methods, and recently clear cut an area of the W & O.D. in Falls Church, removing Redbuds and Kousa Dogwoods that did not threaten power lines. For more information about this issue, please contact Carl Hallinan at carlhallinan@comcast.net. ■

Neighborhood Sidewalk Project Updates

Throughout Bluemont there are a number of sidewalk projects that were approved and funded several years ago, but construction has not begun. In January of this year, former BCA President Ed Fendley sent a letter to County Board Chairwoman Barbara Favola, asking her to direct the County Manager to immediately address the backlog of uncompleted projects in Bluemont, many of which are Neighborhood Conservation (NC) projects.

In February, another BCA past-President, Carl Hallinan, referenced the letter in his remarks during public comment at a County Board meeting. Favola responded by having staff investigate the status of each Bluemont project. The status of these projects, according to that report, is detailed below.

10th Street North Sidewalk — This project is in line awaiting the utilities on the street to be moved, by VA Power and others, prior to construction. Staff expects the utilities to be moved within 90 days, approximately by the end of May. Construction is scheduled for spring/summer 2004.

North Harrison Street — The next draft of the plan has been completed. NC Rep and Harrison Block Captain Kate Mesches is currently working with staff to revise the plan to include many missing elements. As soon as this process is complete, she will schedule a meeting with residents to review it, hopefully by the end of March.

North 7th Street and North Buchanan Drive — Thanks to the hard work and patience of Block Captain Carol Spicer, this project received funding in the most recent round of NC projects in December 2003. The project will include installing sidewalks, curb and gutter, and utility strips as well as the landscaping restoration of fences, grass, and tree/shrub replacements.

North Kensington Street Sidewalk — The 90 percent design review with residents occurred February 4, 2004. Following this meeting, the plans will be finalized, and construction of the sidewalk is expected

(Continued on page 4)

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(Continued from page 3)
to begin in late spring.

Washington Boulevard Sidewalk West of North Frederick Street — Staff currently is working with Dominion Virginia Power on relocation of a utility pole and is obtaining needed easements and agreements from the property owners. Staff anticipates construction of the project to begin this summer.

Washington Boulevard-Patrick Henry Drive Nubs — Washington Boulevard is a Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) road, and a permit from VDOT is required before construction can begin on the project. Construction of the project could begin as early as April, but will likely be scheduled to begin in late June so that construction will not interfere with students walking to and from Swanson Middle School.

Carlin Springs Road-North Abington Street Pedestrian Safety Improvements — This project was funded in 2002, and its design is now underway. A survey of the intersection has been completed, and a preliminary design should be completed this spring — at which time a meeting with residents will be scheduled.

North Jefferson Street Sidewalk — This project was included in the FY 2001-2006 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) as a potential project for FY 2003. However, the project was not included in the FY 2003-2008 CIP that was approved in 2002. Staff is currently working on the FY 2005-2011 CIP and will consider including this project.

Now BCA is forming a committee to identify new projects in Bluemont. Any sidewalk, curb and gutter, and lighting improvements must be listed in the NC Plan in order to be considered in the future.

Please consider serving on the NC Plan Update Working Group and help us select the next improvement projects in our neighborhood. To join, e-mail or call NC Representative Kate Mesches at mesches@aol.com or (703) 525-8262, or BCA President Judah Dal Cais at jdalcais@comcast.net. Please also contact us if you wish to suggest a project. ■

Developers Stretch Height Ordinance

If you've driven down the 800 block of North Kensington Street, you've likely seen the new construction in progress. The three houses that already have been built are a lot taller than the existing homes in the surrounding neighborhood.

The height limit for residential properties, according to County code, is supposed to be 35 feet. However, the calculation governing the way in which height of residential structures is measured has changed recently. The new calculation uses what's called the lot's "existing grade." Unfortunately, that grade doesn't have to exist for very long in order to be counted as "existing."

By digging out the lots, the developer has, in effect, lowered the existing grade in order to build structures that exceed the 35-foot limit. While this endeavor may not strictly violate the height ordinance, it does violate the spirit of the ordinance. The rules for preventing runoff have also been relaxed. The developer was not required to install the orange erosion-control fences around excavated areas (they used gravel instead), and the result was a significant amount of erosion.

BCA member Eric Davis (who's also an architect) brought the problem to the attention of BCA's executive board and has drafted a letter to the County Board asking its members to reconsider the "existing grade" calculation. At the February 25 meeting, BCA members voted to support Eric Davis's letter. The membership also voted to ask the Zoning Board to review the new structures to confirm (or refute) that they meet existing code.

BCA's support of the 35-foot residential height limit goes hand-in-hand with its support of the reduction in lot coverage (from 56 to 50 percent). These measures are designed to preserve the existing character and flavor of residential neighborhoods.

The County Board needs to know that Arlington residents are serious about making developers respect the spirit of the height ordinance. If you would like to help BCA preserve our neighborhoods, please contact BCA President Judah Dal Cais at jdalcais@comcast.net. ■

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McKinley Hosting March 27 Fun Fair

One of Bluemont's two neighborhood schools, McKinley Elementary, is hosting an "All American Fun Fair" on Saturday, March 27, from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Come out with your Bluemont neighbors and support the school while enjoying a fun family day with games, prizes, pony rides, moon bounces, a 24-foot-high climbing wall, face painting, silent auction, cafe and much, much more! Show your patriotic spirit and come dressed in red, white, and blue! All games, activities, and food require tickets that will be available in advance at McKinley (three for \$1.00) or on the day of the event (two for \$1.00). McKinley is located just off Wilson Boulevard at 1030 North McKinley Road. If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Harkins at (703) 241-2353 or wldharkins@aol.com. ■

Community Emergency Response Training

Did you know there's something new in our neighborhood and in Arlington County that makes us better prepared for major emergencies? It's the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program and, in just a year, almost 200 residents and business people in Arlington County have volunteered for and completed this special training. CERT members are trained to help out in the event of a major disaster when our first responders — fire department, police and other emergency service workers — are unable to provide immediate assistance or require additional assistance themselves.

Sponsored by the Arlington Citizen Corps Council and conducted by the Arlington County Fire Department (ACFD) and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), the training uses materials developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The initial hands-on and classroom training includes six evening and two weekend sessions (one of which is the final exam). Topics include disaster preparedness, first aid, fire suppression, light search and rescue, disaster psychology, and a terrorism module. In addition to learning how to help others, participants learn how to prepare their own homes and families for emergencies. Ongoing and refresher

training in CPR, radio operation, and mock disasters will help to expand and maintain team skills.

During 2004, a number of CERT training courses will take place within Arlington County (the spring session has already started). If you're interested in participating, you can complete and submit an application form online at <http://www.co.arlington.va.us/cccl/classes.htm>. Slots for the summer/fall session are on a first-come, first-serve basis, so sign up now. All or most classes will be conducted at the Fire Training Academy in Shirlington.

If you have questions you'd like answered before signing up, call Carl Lindgren at (703) 228-3567. CERT members must attend all classes and successfully complete the practical exam, which includes triage and search and rescue operations. If you have limitations restricting your ability to participate fully, please discuss them in advance so that other opportunities to assist (e.g., via the Red Cross) may be identified

Block captains and Neighborhood Watch patrols in many Arlington neighborhoods also play an important role in emergency prevention and preparedness. Block captains/co-captains gather and maintain contact information from residents on their block. In the event of an emergency, they check to make sure everyone is okay and, if necessary, contact emergency services for assistance. And members of the Neighborhood Watch, with guidance from the Arlington County Police Department, patrol our neighborhoods — on foot and in vehicles — keeping an eye out for suspicious activity. Like CERT, these are neighbors who volunteer their time to keep our neighborhoods and each of us a bit safer.

To prepare for an emergency:

- Learn how to turn off the gas, electricity, and water at your own home.
- Make sure you have working fire extinguishers in your residence and business.
- Install fire alarms/smoke detectors and make sure they work (change batteries twice a year).

(Continued on page 6)



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(Continued from page 5)

- Establish and practice an evacuation plan.
- Gather emergency supplies that may be needed in the event of a disaster, including a three-day supply of food and water for every member of your household (a comprehensive list of supplies can be obtained on the FEMA Website (see below) or from the Arlington Red Cross (4333 Arlington Boulevard).
- Sign up to receive free emergency alerts from Arlington County — via text messaging on your computer, cell phone, pager, or PDA — at www.arlingtonalert.com.

In addition, excellent emergency preparedness information is available at the Arlington County (<http://www.co.arlington.va.us/emergency>) and FEMA (<http://www.fema.gov/areyouready>) Websites and through the Arlington Chapter of the American Red Cross at (703) 527-3010. ■

Making Your Home and Family Safer in 2004

Did you know Arlington County is one of the first in the nation to make a direct emergency alert system available — free of charge — to its residents and those who work in the county? During 2003, about 7,000 of the County's almost 194,000 residents registered to receive emergency alerts via text messages sent to their computers, cellular phones, pagers, and/or PDA devices (Palm, Blackberry, etc.).

This automatic emergency notification system was first called into action during Hurricane Isabel to provide weather warnings, instructions for personal safety (e.g., the need to stay indoors and the need for some residents to boil drinking water), and information regarding ice distribution within the County. More recently, it was used to let people know when the security threat level was raised from yellow to orange.

How does this alert system work? In the event of an emergency, members of the Arlington County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) will use the Roam Secure Alert Network to send text messages to those who have registered to receive them. The system will be used for weather-related emergen-

cies, accidents involving utilities or roadways, life safety alerts, and disaster notification for such things as terrorist attacks. You may elect to receive notification in either English or Spanish.

To learn more about this free emergency alert system provided by the County — or to sign up now to receive future alerts — go to <http://www.arlingtonalert.com>. ■

Other Arlington E-Mail Update Services

Metrorail eAlerts is an e-mail subscription service for notifying customers of Metrorail service disruptions: http://www.wmata.com/riding/alerts/metrorail_alerts.cfm.

Bluemont Civic Association sends notices to members alerting them of timely or urgent issues. To subscribe, apply at <http://www.topica.com/lists/bcaelist> and you will receive an invitation. You must reply to the invitation once it has been sent in order to be added to the list.

Arlington Public Schools sends subscribers up-to-the-minute e-mail notification of school delays, closing, etc. Go to <http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/> and click on "School Talk." ■

Tell the Story of Arlington

WETA is producing a program that will take a nostalgic and historical look at Arlington County. As the metropolitan area has expanded and developed, suburban areas such as Arlington have undergone tremendous transformations, and yet some icons of yesteryear remain vivid in the memories of those who live in Arlington's neighborhoods. WETA seeks personal stories, memories, photographs, and films of places, people, and events that resonate in the community.

The program is slated to air later this year, and your memories, pictures, and home movies of the distant past or recent history could help them tell the story. To share a memory with them, please call (703) 998-2020 and leave a brief message with your contact information or send an e-mail to arlington-memories@weta.com. Someone will respond to your message and may use your information or materials in their film. ■



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Safe Waste Disposal at Environmental Fair

Bring household hazardous waste for collection, recycle your old bike, or buy a backyard compost bin for \$10 (made from a recycled refuse cart) at the April 17 Environmental Extravaganza at 9:00 a.m. at Thomas Jefferson Middle School. Get rid of your unwanted paint products (25-can limit); flammable solvents; automotive fluids; garden chemicals; household cleaners; and many other flammable, poisonous, or corrosive household products. Department of Environmental Services staff will provide environmentally safe disposal for your hazardous waste materials. This collection is open to Arlington residents only. Commercial or business wastes will not be accepted. For further information, call the County Household Hazardous Waste Program at (703) 228-6832. ■

Services for Arlington Seniors

At the February 25th BCA meeting, speakers from the Department of Human Services (DHS), Arlington Agency on Aging (AAA) reviewed the wide range of services that Arlington provides to County seniors. (Arlington residents with elderly relatives elsewhere may also obtain referrals for agencies and resources in other counties and states from the Agency on Aging.)

Through the Agency, seniors may be able to obtain transportation assistance, access to prepared meals, financial help/counseling, and more. A complete list of services and links to other resources is provided on the Agency's Web page at <http://www.co.arlington.va.us/dhs/services/aging/aaa/index.htm>. For those without a computer or Inter-

net access, simply call (703) 228-1700 for more information.

Seniors may also receive help with insurance matters (Medicare parts A and B, Medigap insurance, long-term care insurance, assistance in filing forms and appeals, etc.) through the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (VICAP) by calling Joyce Hutchins at (703) 228-1732.

An Agency-sponsored Ask-the-Expert program provides information on a variety of topics. For example, a program on reverse mortgages is planned for the near future and will air on cable Channel 71. There will also be a conference on May 24 and 25 at which contractors will provide information on low-cost ways to allow seniors to stay in their own homes safely (e.g., ramps and grab bars for the shower).

Sunrise of Bluemont has an apartment that is set up with adaptive equipment. This apartment is open to the public by appointment and can be used as a visual aid to help seniors learn what equipment is available and how to use it. On Tuesday, March 23, at 2:00 pm, Sunrise of Bluemont also is sponsoring a Fall and Fire Prevention workshop with the Arlington County Fire Department. To register for the workshop or to set up an appointment to see the adaptive equipment apartment, please call Mary Blanich at (703) 531-2128.

Additional helpful links include the nationwide Eldercare Locator at <http://www.eldercare.gov> or (800) 677-1116. For information on senior services in Virginia, visit <http://www.SeniorNavigator.com>. ■

BCA Officers

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Newsletter Editor	Carl Hallinan
Newsletter Distribution	Judy Collins
Wilson Boulevard Safety	Bob Waffle
Wilson Boulevard Revitalization	Judah Dal Cais
Ballston Partnership	Talmadge Williams
Metro Liaison	Henry McFarland
Emergency Preparedness	Scott Tate

Civic Federation Representatives

Delegates	Alternates
Bob Atkins	Adrienne Pilot
Ed Fendley	Ellen Armbruster
Talmadge Williams	Judah Dal Cais

BCA Calendar

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. at Arlington Traditional School, 855 N. Edison Street

- **County Board Budget Hearing, 3/23, 7 pm, Thomas Jefferson School Auditorium**
- **General Membership meeting, 3/24, 7 pm, ATS**
- **County Board Tax Rates Hearing, 3/25, 7 pm, #1 Courthouse Plaza, Room 307**
- **ATM Wilson review workshop, 3/30, 7 pm, ATS**
- **ATM Carlin Springs design workshop, 3/31, 7 pm, Campbell School**
- **Executive Board meeting, 4/13, 7 pm, ATS**
- **General Membership meeting, 4/28, 7 pm, ATS**
- **Neighborhood Day, 5/8**



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Won't You Please Join Us?

The Bluemont Civic Association is the only organization working exclusively on behalf of you and all Bluemont residents. We are your friends and neighbors, striving to make our streets safe for our children and other pedestrians, enhance our parks and preserve our environment, protect property values and build a stronger sense of community. Among our activities and recent accomplishments are:

- Dedicated turn lanes on Wilson Boulevard at George Mason Drive;
- Traffic calming projects on Vermont and Harrison Streets (completed); and Kensington and Abingdon Streets (funded);
- Funded sidewalk projects on Washington Boulevard and Kensington, 5th, Frederick, Harrison and 10th Streets;
- An active campaign to make the Wilson Boulevard commercial area more attractive and community-oriented;
- Organization of events such as the annual Halloween Parade and Arlington Candidates Night;
- Coordination with County officials on police, school, development, park and code enforcement issues.

By becoming a member, you will receive a newsletter each month that will keep you informed about issues that affect you and your family and provide the funding needed to continue our important work on your behalf. Membership is only one dollar per month. Please take a moment now to become a member by to completing the form below and returning it with a check for \$9.00 (for a membership through the end of 2004), payable to Bluemont Civic Association, P.O. Box 5134, Arlington, VA 22205.

BCA Membership Form

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City, state, zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail address (for news on urgent issues) _____