

BCA

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

May 2008 A Public Service of Your Bluemont Civic Association

We Need YOU! BCA Elections Take Place June 25
As a group, we've been extremely lucky to have several hard-working volunteers (serving as officers, representatives, and committee chairs/members), some of whom have served for years. ➡4

Historic Bluemont Property To Be Sold



Kudos to neighbor Dan Redmond, who visited the Virginia Room at the Central Library to provide this research on the Veitch-Thomas (c. 1865) house and property (864 N. Jefferson Street) that is now for sale. The original Veitch-Birch-Shreve landholdings covered a large portion of present-day North Arlington, and the Veitch-Thomas family owned all of the land that is now Bluemont. Over the years, the land was parceled off, or sold to make way for Interstate Rt. 66 (I-66). All that seems to remain (intact) of their heritage, besides the cemeteries, is the house and gardens at 864 N. Jefferson.

Family History

The Birch and Shreve families were among Arlington's earliest land-owners. Samuel Shreve, a Revolutionary War officer (who is buried ➡3

JOIN US!

NEXT GENERAL MEETING 5/28/08

- ATS Principal Holly Hawthorne
- Your Input & Concerns

Left: The historic Southern/Shreve cemetery adjacent to St Ann's and the proposed Revolutionary War Connector to the Custis Trail.

www.bluemontcivic.org



Overflow crowd at the BCA BBQ.

Neighborhood Day Defies Weather!

Despite the wet conditions early on Saturday, May 10, Bluemonters forged ahead with their Neighborhood Day plans. Chris Healey was joined by four other volunteers (including former BCA presidents Ed Fendley and Carl Hallinan) to clear brush and other debris from the to the proposed site for a Harrison Street connector to the Custis Trail (dubbed the Revolutionary War Connector Trail in honor of Samuel Shreve who is buried nearby, (see related article at left).

The skies cleared enough to hold the barbecue as planned. We extend a special thanks to Captain Moore and the crew of Fire Station #2 for the use of their grill and their kind hospitality. And without the efforts of Mary Thorne, Carl Drummond, Bob Atkins, Suzanne Sundburg and Dave Van Wagner, who purchased the supplies and helped set up, cook and clean ➡3



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open — volunteer needed

When — and Where — Do We MEET?

Glad you asked! BCA holds general membership meetings on the fourth Wednesday of each month (September through June) at 7:30 pm, and the meetings are usually held at ATS, unless announced otherwise. Executive Committee meetings are usually held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm at ATS unless announced otherwise. Executive Committee meetings are open to all BCA members. Visit the bluemontcivic.org for updates on meeting times and locations.

BCA MEETINGS AT A GLANCE...

Last General Meeting 4/23/08

■ AHC/Peck-Staples

John Welsh and Curtis Adams from AHC Inc. presented the latest version of AHC's plans for the new affordable housing building at the Peck-Staples site. The current design uses cast stone, three colors of brick and an improved landscape design to better blend in with the neighborhood. Ventilation louvers for the garage now match the faux windows on the upper levels. The building's exhaust system will be located in the courtyard and will not be visible from Wilson Boulevard. The generator will be on N. 9th Street. There will be 79 parking spaces for the 90 units. This parking allocation (.88 spaces/unit) is still below the number normally required for site plan projects (.99 spaces/unit). Residents of the affordable units also must pay extra (in addition to their monthly rent of \$1,100-\$1,500) for on-site parking. The units are dedicated as "committed affordable" units for at least 30 years.

On April 1, AHC Inc. gave the residents of the 22 occupied units of Jordan Manor notice to vacate by July 31, 2008. (Jordan Manor will likely be demolished in the fall.) Four families have moved out, and two more families have given notice that they will be moving. A housing relocation coordinator is working with the remaining 16 households to locate alternate housing. AHC hopes to take its proposal to the Planning Commission on June 2 and the County Board on June 17 for approval. Welsh promised to keep President dal Cais informed of the Site Plan Review Committee (SPRC) meeting schedule.

■ Site Plan Amendment Update

As of Friday, May 8, the county was still reviewing AHC's proposed site plan amendment for its affordable housing building on the Peck-Staples site. (AHC submitted its third revision on May 8.) Once AHC has met all the filing requirements, county staff then will ask the County Manager to "accept" the site plan. After that step has been completed, County staff then will schedule an SPRC meeting.

■ Accessory Dwelling Units

Susan Retz, a subcommittee member of the Planning Commission that spearheaded this proposal, presented information and answered questions regarding the proposal to allow accessory dwelling (AD) rental units in Arlington County. This proposal has been marketed as a means of increasing affordable housing. It would provide a legal means of housing an au pair or caregiver for elderly residents. The current code bars an au pair or caregiver from living in a house with four family members. The subcommittee recommends a structure of less than 1,000 square feet, which could be an interior or exterior addition. Unused garages could be converted to living space, though the ➡4

NEXT GENERAL MEETING 5/28/08 – 7:30pm ATS

Help us welcome Arlington Traditional School (ATS) Principal Holly Hawthorne on Wednesday evening.

If you have not renewed your dues for, please bring \$23 (\$8 for 2008 plus \$15 for 2009, cash or check) to the meeting. **Remember, in order to cast your vote at the June 25 Annual Meeting (or to vote on any motions/positions to be considered by the membership), you must be a current BCA member in good standing.**

► Historic Property

FROM P.1

in the historic cemetery at St. Ann Church on N. Harrison Street), settled in Virginia in 1780. In 1791, Shreve secured the title for 260 acres from Colonel John Colville of Newcastle Upon Tyne, of the Kingdom of Britain. The property extended from Lubber Run to Four Mile Run (land now between Wilson and Washington Boulevards), and Jefferson Street is in the middle of the original tract.

Samuel Shreve's granddaughter, Julia, married William Randolph Birch, who at 18 years old enlisted to fight the Indians in the Southwest. William Birch's son-in-law, George Washington Veitch, was a Lieutenant of the 6th Calvary during the Civil War.

In addition to members of the Shreve-Birch-Veitch-Thomas families that now rest in the cemetery at St. Ann, another part of the family lies in a cemetery located between 829 and 939 N. Abingdon Street.

Land History

Many of the maps of this era were redrawn when Arlington County split from the City of Alexandria in the 1920's, at which time valuable historical information was lost. However, dozens of encampments, hospitals and forts appear on these maps, many of which can still be found in the berms (hills) in our local parks. Specifically, one bermed site located in Bon Air Park appears on a Civil War-era battle map from 1850. Several batteries and forts also were situated on the original Veitch land. Harrison Street was originally named Veitch Road, a dirt path that was renamed in the 1930's. And on one of the early railroad maps, there is a Veitch Station stop for the B&OD rail line linking the countryside to Washington, DC.

The Commonwealth of Virginia purchased (or applied eminent domain, whichever term you prefer) half of the Veitch land in the 1960's for the development of I-66. Originally, the land now occupied by I-66 seems to have been at the same grade level (height) as Jefferson Street. It appears as though a compromise was made to drop the highway about 50' below the surrounding grade to reduce sound and light pollution.



This unfinished connection to the Custis Trail, which runs alongside the Shreve family cemetery, is the focus of clean-up and efforts to connect it to its original destination.

History of the Veitch-Thomas Home

Documents seem to indicate that several houses were constructed on Veitch-Thomas family property: perhaps as many as two at 920 N. Jefferson and two at 864 N. Jefferson. However, the house currently standing at 864 N. Jefferson is the only family home left. According to the records, the gardens surrounding the Veitch-Thomas home were amazingly beautiful and were created as a refuge from the heat many years before the house was built. The original gardens were mentioned in early documents of the area as a destination site for visitors.

Two other nearby homes were built in the early 20th century. The farmhouse (still standing) opposite 920 N. Jefferson appears on site maps after 1935 and is named the Virginia K Guard Farmhouse on ➡4

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD FROM P.1



Revolutionary War (Connector Trail) hero, Chris Healey, with family, gets a well-deserved burger.

up, there would have been no barbecue.

The free tree whips originally thought to have been AWOL were simply late. Despite a troublesome technical glitch, County staff member Patrick Wegeng made sure that our trees were delivered to the pick-up site. We appreciate everyone's hard work and contributions to the neighborhood. ■

5th Street Light Project

At the April 23, the membership voted to add the 5th Street lighting component to BCA's Neighborhood Conservation (NC) funding queue. This component was dropped from the original NC project for 5th Street N. in order to qualify the project for initial funding. The lights are second in line behind BCA's first-priority curb and gutter project for N. Frederick.

Since the vote on April 23, our hard-working NC Representative Wendy Dean (in conjunction with neighbors Pete Dayton and Judah dal Cais) has been pushing the county to fund the streetlights without jeopardizing our first-priority NC project (N. Frederick Street). These efforts now appear to have paid off, and the streetlights should be installed on the north side of 5th Street and the east side of Frederick Street within approximately one month. ■

Missing Links Sidewalk

Program is Back

This program is intended for the quick installation of curb, gutter, and sidewalk in front of three or fewer properties that will connect existing sidewalks. To qualify, ➡4

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Next General Meeting-ATS 5/28

Ballston Art Market 6/14

Exec. Committee Mtng-ATS 6/10

BCA Annual Meeting-ATS 6/25

► In the Neighborhood

FROM P.3

the project must involve NO utility relocation, NO streetlight installation, and NO easement purchase. Applications are due in June, and BCA approval is required for each application. For more details, contact Carl Drummond at CarlD10@aol.com. ■

► Accessory Dwellings

FROM P.2

Planning Commission does not recommend this option. Before construction begins, the owner would be required to obtain a permit. With exceptions for military and Foreign Service personnel, the owner would be required to live on site.

Members raised three main concerns. First, given the already short supply of street parking, ADs would increase parking pressures in neighborhoods. Second, given that over 1,000 illegal units already exist, there seems little incentive for owners to go through the expensive renovation process to obtain a permit. Finally, given the ineffectiveness of code enforcement to date, it seems unlikely that it would be effective in monitoring new ADs. Retz urged residents wishing to express their opinion to send letters to the County Board at CountyBoard@arlingtonva.us. ■



Bluemont Civic Association

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Veitch-Thomas House FROM P.3

the original maps. The home at 861 N. Jefferson Street was built in 1925 on the property, apparently for one of the sons of the Veitch-Thomas family.

In 1975, the Veitch-Thomas home was part of a Historic Tour of Arlington, complete with teatime at the Arlington Historical Museum that same afternoon. The Balls-Sellers Home also was included on this tour.

In 1981, The Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission surveyed this property with drawings and text documenting the home. Only the original survey documents exist in the paper files at the Arlington County library, so it's unclear whether the Virginia Landmark designation was ultimately assigned to this home. With the anticipated sale of the property for development, the home's future also is unclear. ■

BCA Elections FROM P.1

The BCA Nominations Committee is asking members to step forward and run/serve as President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Neighborhood Conservation Action Committee (NCAC) Representative, and Civic Federation Representative (as well as delegates and alternates). No experience or special skills are needed—just a commitment to help your neighborhood.

Please consider volunteering. It's a great way to meet people and learn more about what's happening in your own neighborhood. If you think you might be willing to serve in one of these positions, please contact Nominations Committee member Bob Atkins at luddite2003@yahoo.com or call 703-527-8859. ■