



BCA MEETINGS AT A GLANCE

Bluemont's Great Outdoors

Bluemont's boundaries include a variety of parks and open spaces with a surprising number of significant natural resources, considering that they are in the heart of our urban village. The recently completed

Natural Resources Master Plan created a geographic information system (GIS) map of our parks marking champion trees, natural geologic features, and significant native plants that will be reviewed before the construction of any trail or park enhancement begins. Knowing what we have is the first step to preserving our treasures.

Lacey Woods Park now boasts two Champion Trees. The largest Virginia Pine on record nationally has been joined by the largest recorded Eastern Hemlock in the state. (A bittersweet designation as the 2004 champion hemlock was nearly twice the size before it died due to a non-native insect infestation.) Although the soccer field, basketball court, and playground are classified as "modified urban landscape," the remainder of Lacey Woods is an oak-hickory forest with a towering canopy. A natural wetlands seep near the playground is home to salamanders, and volunteers have discovered diverse flora and fauna during their work on second Saturdays.

Bon Air Park is the poster child for the diversity of Arlingtonians' views on what a public park should provide. From a natural resources point of view, the park is important for its educational exhibits of the volunteer Master Gardeners. The Quarry/Shade Garden is in a historic quarry, with examples of plants that do well in our area in semi-sun and shade; the Sunny Garden demonstrates how a flower garden can

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**YOU
HAVEN'T
RENEWED
YET?!**

We encourage BCA members to renew online via the recently integrated electronic payment system.

If you receive your newsletter via email and are uncertain whether you need to renew for 2012, contact BCA Treasurer Judy Collins at

jc.swings@verizon.net

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bluemontcivic.org/rates.pdf



◀ Mother Nature has shared some dazzling sunrises and sunsets with us lately!

**NEXT Meeting, 1/18, 7:30 pm,
Arlington Traditional School**

(The Executive Board meeting will be held at 7:00 pm and is open to all paid BCA members.) County staff members Lois Barb and Patrick Wegeng will be on hand to present plans for the rehabilitation, restoration, and overall management of the Bluemont Junction Trail from N. Fairfax Drive to Bluemont Park. Please check the Website for additional meeting details or weather-related cancellations as the meeting date approaches, or feel free to reach out to one of the BCA officers.

**LAST EXEC. COMMITTEE AND
GENERAL MEETING, 12/14**

BCA held its Executive Board and General Membership meetings a week earlier than usual, on December 14, 2011, to avoid the holidays. During the Executive Board Meeting, the November Executive Board meeting minutes were approved with the changes that were discussed.

Neighborhood Conservation (NC) Plan Update Committee Chairman David Van Wagner reported that there are eight chapters that he expects to be completed over the next year. Two will be ready in the next couple months and will be presented to the BCA membership as they become available. First, NC Advisory Committee Alternate Representative Mark Haynes reported on the recent NC Advisory Committee meeting, saying that six projects were

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Neighborhood Conservation Plan Production

The BCA Neighborhood Conservation Plan (NCP) Update Committee continues to meet both as a full committee and separate subcommittees. The subcommittees are organized around eight different subject-matter categories: (1) Land Use and Zoning, (2) Commercial/Business Areas, (3) Street Conditions, (4) Transportation/Traffic Management, (5) Housing, (6) Public Facilities and Services, (7) Historic Preservation, and (8) Urban Forestry.

In 2012, the NCP Update Committee will begin posting on the BCA Website drafts of chapters for the new Bluemont NCP so that Bluemont residents may read them and offer comments. The first chapter to be posted should be the urban forestry chapter. It's hoped that the chapter will be posted in mid-February to coincide with the publication of the February newsletter and the February 22 BCA General Membership meeting. All BCA residents are encouraged to submit their views and suggestions as each NCP chapter is rolled out for comment.

The NCP Update Committee could always use more help. If you're interested in volunteering your services, please contact David Van Wagner at dpvanwagner@mindspring.com or Caroline Haynes at cmhaynes@comcast.net. ■

BLUEMONT BUSINESS BUZZ



Over the years, stores have come and gone along the Wilson Boulevard business district in Bluemont, but one has remained a constant member of the community. According to Robbie Guenther, a gas station has been located on Wilson Boulevard between N. Frederick and N. Greenbrier Streets since at least 1950. Robbie began working at the station in 1983 when he was a senior at Washington-Lee High School. He was promoted to station manager in 1989 and purchased the business with his wife in 2002. Robbie is not just the owner of the Liberty/D&V Auto Service Center, he is also a 15-year resident of Bluemont. Living in the neighborhood where he works and being so connected to the community gives him an added sense of purpose. Being the neighborhood guy and taking care of members of the community are the things he loves the most about what he does on a daily basis. Robbie is certainly someone who gives back and sees the value in being connected to those he serves. If he's not hiring someone from within the community, he's offering to pick up a customer at the Metro whose car he's servicing, or giving a percentage of his proceeds on a certain day to a worthy cause. As connected as he is to Bluemont, he has hopes for the growth of local small businesses. In this day of advancing technology and fast-paced living, he wants to be able to maintain his small business appeal and his ability to interact with customers and the community. He hopes that the community will value the contributions and perspectives that local small business owners offer as Bluemont continues to grow. ■

Tool Loaner Program Expands

Nearly five years ago, we began promoting the BCA Tool Loaner program. Our first purchase was a Mantis electric tiller which a number of members have found very helpful to prep and till their gardens in the spring, summer, and fall. This past year, several additional tools were donated to the BCA.

We would like to expand this program. If you have a tool (in working condition) to donate, we would gladly add it to our "tool shed."

Is there a tool you think the membership would find useful and that the BCA should consider purchasing? Contact Judah dal Cais with suggestions at president@bluemontcivic.org.

Current listing of tools available for loan to members in good standing

► Drywall Taping Knife

Electric Tools

► Craftsman dual motion 4.5 amp Sander

► Porter Cable 3"×21" variable-speed belt sander

Outdoor Tools

► Mantis Tiller and Edger

► B&D 16" single action hedge trimmer

► Weed Eater

► Bulb Hound bulb planter

* Should
INCLEMENT WEATHER
*
force Arlington Public
Schools to close on a day
that a BCA meeting also has
been scheduled, the BCA
meeting will be cancelled.
Check bluemontcivic.org for
schedule changes. *

Civ-Fed Highlights

The Arlington County Civic Federation works to empower citizens to improve their communities by mobilizing and coordinating the resources of government, business, nonprofits, the faith community, neighborhood leaders, and the citizens themselves. Here are some updates from the December 6, 2011, meeting:

The invited speakers were Richard Doud, president of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce, and Terry Holzheimer, who is in charge of the county's Office of Economic Development. Both men spoke about Arlington's unusually strong economic position during the downturn. According to Holzheimer, there is no reason to expect that Arlington won't continue to grow and develop at a much greater rate than almost any other jurisdiction in the nation. Doud echoed much of what Holzheimer said and added a few words about the chamber's position on local taxes (in favor of the hotel tax, not in favor of the special sewer/infrastructure-related tax on commercial properties).

Delegates Susan Sharp and Allen Munchnick brought up the Virginia Department of Transportation's effort to conduct a multimodal long-range planning effort to "identify a range of multimodal and corridor management solutions (operational, transit, bike, pedestrian, and highway) that can be implemented to reduce highway and transit congestion and improve overall mobility in the I-66 corridor, between I-495 and the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge." Sharp had just left VDOT's public forum on this matter, at which the public was not allowed to ask any questions.

Sharp was concerned because the tenor of the meeting suggested that VDOT was leaning heavily in favor of road widening and perhaps converting lanes on I-66 to high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes. In short, the options being pushed seemed to favor those living outside of Arlington and at the expense of Arlingtonians. VDOT accepted public comments until January 2 on this issue.

Links to additional I-66 documents may be found on BCA's Website, bluemontcivic.org. ■



Concerns have been raised about VDOT plans for road widening which could threaten our popular Custis Trail along I66.



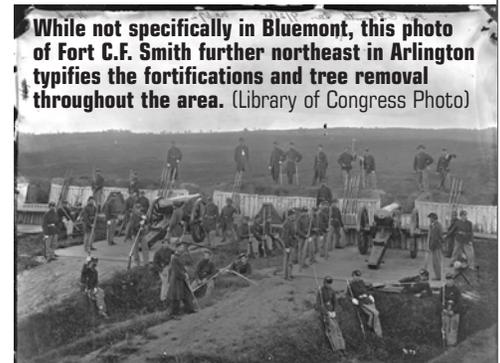
The night after Virginia voted to secede from the Union on May 23, 1861, Union army units crossed the Potomac River from Washing-

ton, DC, and occupied the shoreline of what is now Arlington County. Late on the afternoon of May 24, Company B of the Second United States Cavalry advanced along the Georgetown Wagon Road (present-day Wilson Boulevard) to the Alexandria, Loudoun, and Hampshire Railroad line, which in 1861 reached from Fairfax Street, Alexandria, to Leesburg. The cavalry unit stopped an Alexandria-bound passenger train in the area of present-day Bluemont Park and arrested everyone on board as secessionists, including two Confederate soldiers.

In August and September of 1861, after the Battle of First Manassas (First Bull Run), the Bluemont area became a no-man's-land between the front lines. Units of the two armies scouted and skirmished between the front lines, from Hall's Hill to Bailey's Crossroads. For the remainder of the war, the county was a staging area and occasional home for the Army of the Potomac.

By the Battle of Second Manassas (Second Bull Run) in August of 1862, medical conditions for soldiers was much improved, but there were so many casualties that the wounded had to be transported closer to Washington, DC, for treatment. Brought by train through Alexandria, the number of wounded was so high and the facilities so few that there was often a backlog. From the train cars, the soldiers were transported by wagons to makeshift hospitals. One such hospital existed in Bluemont at the intersection of N. Harrison and 5th Streets. The need for hospitals in this area was so great that following the second battle the Fairfax Military Hospital was built on the property where the Army-Navy Country Club is now located.

The area was transformed by the presence of thousands of soldiers, living and foraging on the land. Crops were trampled and destroyed. Fence rails were used for firewood. Livestock was confis-



While not specifically in Bluemont, this photo of Fort C.F. Smith further northeast in Arlington typifies the fortifications and tree removal throughout the area. (Library of Congress Photo)

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Upcoming Special Election In March

On December 19, Circuit Court Chief Judge William Newman, Jr., set March 27, 2012, as the date for the special election to replace County Board member Barbara Favola. (Favola was elected to the Virginia Senate in November 2011.) Favola's seat will remain unfilled from December 31, 2011, when she formally resigned, until her replacement is elected.

Originally anticipated by election officials to take place on April 17, Newman's election date change has forced the local parties to move up the dates for their party caucuses and canvasses.

The Arlington County Democratic Committee's (ACDC's) new caucus dates are Thursday, January 19, 2012, 7 pm–9 pm, at Washington-Lee High School and Saturday, January 21, 2012, 11 am–7 pm, at Kenmore Middle School. This caucus will select a candidate to run for the open board seat.

The Arlington County Republican Committee (ACRC) will hold its party canvass on Wednesday, January 25, 2012, 6 pm–8 pm, at ACRC headquarters. ACRC's party canvass will nominate a board candidate to run in the special election.

Arlington Green Party member and recent County Board candidate Audrey Clement has expressed her intent to run in the special election. Under law, she must collect petition signatures to get on the ballot and must run as an Independent.

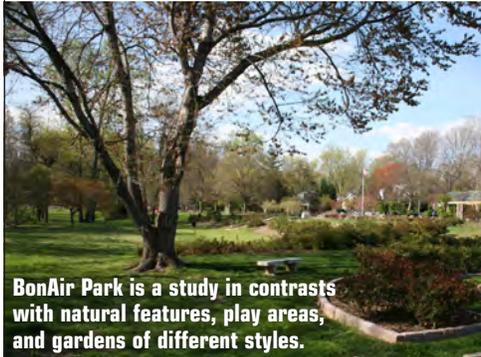
To vote in the special election, you must be registered to vote by Monday, March 12.

In addition to the County Board special election, a presidential primary (for Republican candidates) will be held on Tuesday, March 6, 2012. To vote in the presidential primary, you must be registered by Monday, February 13. For more information, visit www.arlingtonva.us/departments/voterregistration/ or call 703-228-3456. ■

Great Outdoors from p. 1

be both beautiful and sustainable. Not all of the plants in the gardens are native, but many abound with butterflies, birds, and other creatures pleased with the food source. These gardens' emphasis on water-wise and sustainable, low-maintenance plants provides a contrast to the formal Rose Garden, which requires a great deal more pesticides and labor to maintain which some residents feel is worth that extra cost. The recent acquisition of the lot adjacent to the Sunny Garden also shows a wide diversity of public opinion with preferences ranging from mini-forest to prairie or meditation garden — to even a volleyball court or a community vegetable garden! For now, the land remains fallow. Any future plans will be presented to the BCA for comments.

Bluemont Park on the other side of Wilson Boulevard is primarily modified urban landscape with fields, playgrounds, tennis courts, and a paved trail running along Four Mile Run. However, tucked into pockets along the edge are significant natural resources: a piedmont mountain swamp forest, oak-hickory forests on the edges, a tulip poplar spicebush forest, and an oak heath forest. The County Champion Swamp white oak and a notable Blackhaw viburnum are located next to the picnic pavilion near the stream and a significant American hornbeam tree is near the playground currently being upgraded.

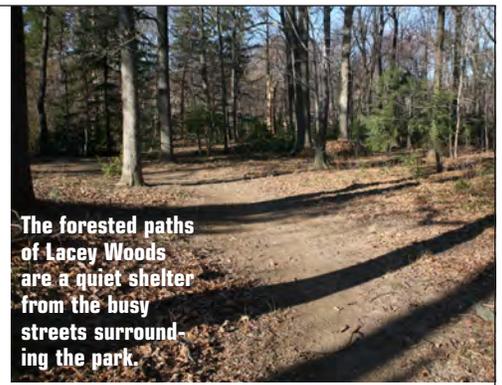


BonAir Park is a study in contrasts with natural features, play areas, and gardens of different styles.

Now that we know what we have of value in our parks, the next step is protecting what we value. All of the parks face threats—from invasive vines, from rushing storm water that overwhelms Four Mile Run, from those who don't stay on trails, and from climate change. The current reality is that we who love our parks and open spaces must put time and effort into protecting them through volunteering. There are many organized groups that provide training and promote volunteer work days (see contact list at bluemontcivic.org). Lacey Woods Park has a monthly work day, led by Nora Palmatier; Bon Air and Bluemont Parks deserve the same. Nora would be happy to help others start a similar program. Contact Nora at norapalm@verizon.net or call 703-527-2349.

Please consider joining one of the volunteer groups that cares for our parks. They offer training, programs, and certification which not only teach about our natural resources, but also give attendees the background to assist in improving and teaching about our local natural wonders. Classes are forming now:

- ▶TreeStewards: www.TreeStewards.org, 703-527-2349
- ▶Master Naturalist www.armn.org
- ▶Master Gardeners www.mgnv.org
- ▶Remove Invasive Plants (RiP), 703-228-1862, mpierce@arlingtonva.us ■



The forested paths of Lacey Woods are a quiet shelter from the busy streets surrounding the park.



Bluemont's forests are a delight year-round.

funded from other neighborhoods. However, BCA is not far away from having a project funded in the next funding round, depending on the county's financial situation. BCA's highest priority project is a sidewalk project in the 1000 block of N. Edison Street. President Judah dal Cais discussed the design that was selected by the county for the Carlin Springs Road overpass, which was presented at the November BCA meeting. The county is proceeding with "option 2"—10.5-foot and 11.5-foot lanes for cars, a 5-foot lane for bicycles, and 8 feet available for pedestrians. More information is available on the county's Website. Dal Cais also reported that the county would be holding a long-range planning meeting regarding the site plan for the Harris Teeter–American Service Center sites on January 4, 2012, at the Navy League Building, 2300 Wilson Blvd. in the large conference room. No motions were made during the Executive Board meeting.

The General Membership meeting began with a presentation by Democratic primary candidate Terron Sims, who hopes to run for the Arlington County Board. Sims is an Iraq war veteran who retired from the Army to pursue his passion for local government. Sims has experience rebuilding communities and providing municipal services in Iraq. In Arlington, he has been engaged with mentoring and tutoring youth and has served as chair of Arlington's Fiscal Affairs Advisory Commission.

BCA members Ed Fendley and Chris Healey gave a presentation about work previously done to improve sidewalks and pedestrian safety on Wilson Boulevard in Bluemont through the county's arterial transportation management (ATM) program. They highlighted several areas where sidewalks are not up to standards based on width guidance from the

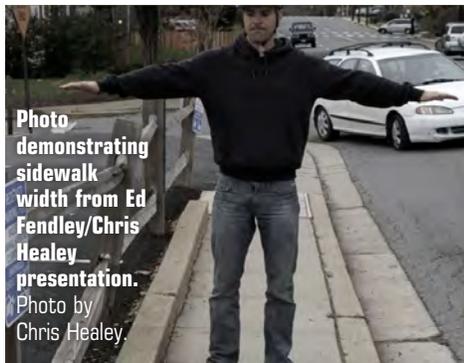


Photo demonstrating sidewalk width from Ed Fendley/Chris Healey presentation. Photo by Chris Healey.

county and Americans with Disabilities Act. BCA members unanimously agreed that sidewalks were a concern to the community and voted to authorize the formation of a task force that would continue working on the problem and exploring options to address the issue. Anyone interested in joining the BCA Task Force on Arterial Road Sidewalks and Pedestrian Safety should email Task Force Co-Chairs, Ed Fendley, edfendley@gmail.com, and Chris Healey, cphealey@me.com. The first meeting will be held at Two Chefs Restaurant (5019 Wilson Boulevard) at 8:00 a.m. on January 21.

After one outstanding item was confirmed, the membership voted to approve the November General Membership meeting minutes as drafted. The General Membership meeting included a motion to spend up to \$100 for purchasing tines for the tiller in the existing neighborhood Tool Loaner Program, which was approved. Tools are made available to BCA members during the spring and fall, as announced in the BCA newsletter. Discussion of adding tools to the program will continue at a future meeting.

[Note: Full BCA meeting minutes will be posted to the BCA Website once they have been approved by the membership (for General Membership meetings), or by the Executive Board (for Executive Board meetings.)]

cated by the military or sold for a fraction of its value and driven away on hoof to feed the troops. Most of the standing timber was cut to facilitate the firing of artillery, allow for an unobstructed view during battles, or supply building materials. Rifle trenches and ammunition bunkers were dug along the ridges and high ground. Barns, outbuildings, and private homes were occupied, damaged, or destroyed to accommodate the almost 100,000 Union troops who were stationed in Arlington. By the end of the war, the supply of wood and timber had dwindled so much that the army imported them from Loudoun. Many residents of Bluemont left the area, and so the area was resettled by army veterans, camp followers, and former slaves.

Discussion is under way among Civil War historians and enthusiasts in Arlington County to mark the significance of the Civil War in the Bluemont area. This could lead to a one-day educational event in a nearby park, and possibly to a historical marker. Many events are planned to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Civil War. Check out those being held in Virginia: <http://www.virginiacivilwar.org/committeeevents.php>. ■

Thanks to John Moroz, Arlington resident and member of the Arlington County Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee, for contributing to this article.

▶ Got a story to share?

If you have historical tales — or photos — of life and goings on in Bluemont that you would like to share with your neighbors, please contact Newsletter Editor Carla dal Cais at cecathey@gmail.com or 703-967-8458. Your story might make its way into this new "Bygone Bluemont" section of the newsletter.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

BCA Meetings-ATS 1/18
(Exec Board: 7pm; General 7:30)
Check bluemontcivic.org for weather-related cancellations.

Arlington Democratic Caucus (see p.4)	1/19
Arlington Republican Canvass (see p.4)	1/21
February Meetings	TBD
Master Naturalist Training Begins (see p.4)	2/23
Tree Steward Training Begins (see p.4)	2/8
Special Election for County Board (see p.4)	3/27

BCA Neighborhood News

is a service of YOUR community civic association.

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Bluemont Civic Association

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► Bring it and cash or check for \$20 to the January 18 General Meeting, or

► Mail the form with your check to the Bluemont Civic Association at BCA Treasurer
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Arlington VA 22205

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