



Neighbor News

VOL 83, No 1

14 FEBRUARY 2009

DPCA Holiday Fund Drive Results

2008 EFFORT RAISES NEARLY \$3,000

The wonderful neighbors of Douglas Park once again showed their commitment to the community by generously contributing to the Holiday Fund Drive. At last count, we had received almost \$3,000 in donations.

The program benefits needy students at Randolph Elementary School. Each year DPCA works with the counselor and teachers at Randolph to identify families at the school who are in severe financial need. This year four families with a total of twelve children and seven adults were named. Each family was given a treasure trove of necessities and special treats that were purchased with the money collected.

As needed, each child received clothes, underwear, socks, coats, and shoes. In addition, they were given books, toys, games and other wish list items. Parents also received clothes and household goods such as towels, pots and pans and blankets. The families were very grateful for the gifts and sent thank you cards to express their appreciation.

The sentiments included:

'Thank you for the things that you sent us. All the things were perfect.'

«Muchisimas gracias por el soporte que dan a las familias necesitadas que Dios los bendiga y los llene de bendiciones». ('Many thanks for the support that you have given the families in need; may God bless you.')

'Thank you! ¡Muchisimas gracias! I will never forget this for the rest of my life.'

Thank you to everyone who so generously contributed despite the difficult economic times that many are experiencing. Thanks also to the counselor, Gina Capella, and staff at Randolph who identified the families to help and collected wish lists and sizes to assist the shoppers. Thanks to Traci Pietra, Kate Sinkins, Julie Wilson, Rita Wiggins and their families who found time to shop and wrap for others during the hectic holiday season. Thanks to all those who helped with preparation of fliers and envelopes, to the dedicated newsletter deliverers, and a final, special appreciation to DPCA president, John Snyder, and treasurer, Linda Dye who are an essential part of every success that DPCA realizes.

Douglas Park noticias febrero 2009

LAS DONACIONES PARA LA NAVIDAD AYUDARON A CUATRO FAMILIAS

Gracias a todos de Douglas Park por juntar acerca de \$3,000 para ayudar a cuatro familias con necesidades en el vecindario para la Navidad.

ELECCIONES PARA FUNCIONARIOS PARA LA ASOCIACIÓN CÍVICA

Vamos a tener elecciones para la asociación cívica para funcionarios nuevos el 17 de febrero a las 19.30 horas en las estación de bomberos numero 9 (Walter Reed y calle 19 sur) Se puede nominar a cualquier persona para los posiciones. John Snyder es candidato para presidente, David Meistrich es candidato para vice presidente, Linda Dye es candidata para tesorera. Annette Pigott es candidata para la posición de secretaria. Contactase con John Snyder 703.892.2887 o jvsnyder54@comcast.net para hacer una nominación para uno de los puestos.

DPCA Meeting Topics

ELECTION OF OFFICERS TUESDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 17, 2009

The annual election of Douglas Park Civic Association officers will be held at our next general membership meeting on Tuesday, February 17 at 7:30 pm at Walter Reed Fire Station 9 at the corner of South Walter Reed Drive and 19th Street South. Our current slate of officers, John Snyder (President), David Meistrich (Vice President), Linda Dye (Treasurer) and Annette Pigott (Secretary) have agreed to serve another year and are running for re-election. Nominations are open—if you would like to nominate someone (including yourself) please contact John Snyder (jvsnyder54@comcast.net or 703.892.2887) to make the nomination. Please come to participate in the election.

A representative from the County Neighborhood Conservation staff will join us at the February 17 meeting to discuss updating our Douglas Park Neighborhood Conservation plan. This plan lays out our common vision for the neighborhood in the years to come, including the sort of improvements to our streets and parks we would like to see. We have more details on the project in an article on page 3. Please come to help launch this effort.

The February 17 meeting agenda will also include a discussion of civic association activities and initiatives for the coming year, including fixing up the berm behind the post office on Monroe Street, neighborhood and parks cleanup, the county's Columbia Pike housing study, attracting membership from new and old apartment buildings, the Fourth of July Parade and Picnic, the Election Day Bake Sale, Holiday Fund Drive, caroling in Douglas Park, and anything else the membership decides to address in the coming year. A tentative list of our priorities is on page 4. We look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Randolph News

'BID FOR KIDS' AT RANDOLPH ELEMENTARY'S ONLINE AUCTION

For the first time, Randolph Elementary invites you to preview some of our exclusive and unique items online and place your bids from the comfort home.

To view and place a bid online please visit <http://www.randolphpta.info>. Online bidding began on February 2, and will close Thursday, February 19 at 7.00 pm. Online bidders are welcome to continue their bidding in person on Friday, February 20 at 7.00 pm at the Spaghetti Dinner and Silent Auction to be held at Randolph Elementary on South Quincy Street. At least twenty additional items not shown on the website will be up for bid/raffle at that time. For more information please send an email to randolphauction@verizon.net.

Items up for bid include dinner for ten from Marrakesh restaurant, helicopter rides for up to forty children, a laser tag party for twelve, ski or snowboard lessons, yoga classes and theater tickets.

See the fun at the Randolph Pre-Inaugural 'Sock Hop' on p. 5.

DOUGLAS PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION • ARLINGTON, VA

MEETING CALENDAR

The DPCA executive committee has scheduled regular meetings on the third Tuesday of the month at 7.30 pm at Arlington's Walter Reed Fire Station No 9, 1900 South Walter Reed Drive at the corner of 19th Street South.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, February 17, 2009 at 7.30 pm. The annual election of officers will occur at this meeting. See page one for other agenda items. All are welcome.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT

John Snyder, 703.892.2887, jvsnyder54@comcast.net

VICE PRESIDENT

David Meistrich, 703.920.4001, meistrichd@yahoo.com

TREASURER

Linda Dye, 703.979.6276, wwwcdyels@starpower.net

SECRETARY

Annette Pigott, Annette.Pigott@verizon.net

AT LARGE

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Lane Nemirow, 703.271.1111, lane@pop.net

RANDOLPH LIAISON

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PARKS COMMITTEE

Marty Nielsen, 703.979.8777, mrtynlsn@gmail.com

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Bob Cowan, chair, 703.979.3081, bcowan@rlcjr.com

PARKING LIAISON

Lane Nemirow, 703.271.1111, lane@pop.net

NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMISSION DELEGATES

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Debbie Falco, 703.919.5131, falcodl@verizon.net

CIVIC FEDERATION DELEGATES

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Reid Goldstein, 703.697.4941, rgoldstein@stratsight.com

Rebecca Krafft, 703.553.4140, rebecca_krafft@hotmail.com

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NEXT DOUGLAS PARK NEIGHBOR NEWS DEADLINE

Articles and Ads Due Distribution

Issue 83.02: Fri, Mar 27, 2009 Sat/Sun, Apr 18-19, 2009

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DPCA News

JOIN (OR REJOIN) THE DOUGLAS PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION

The Douglas Park Civic Association has been active in maintaining and improving the quality of life in our community for many years. We need your membership support to keep it up. Here is what we do:

- **Represent Douglas Park's interests to the county board and staff on matters affecting our neighborhood, like use permits for local businesses and development plans.** For example, we commented on the use permit application proposal for a huge Brown's Nissan sign towering over the Pike—the sign allowed is much more appropriate. The civic association was actively involved in the permitting process for the new Majestic Oaks development on South Glebe Road, the new housing built on South Taylor Street a few years ago and the renovation of the Quebec Gardens Apartments. DPCA advised the county on the new Arlington Mill Community Center design, was our voice regarding potential development of the Litman Law Building just across the Pike and other such projects. The county board and county staff always want to know what the residents think about new projects—the civic association is the primary means of communication.
- **Advocate for safety improvements on our major roads.** DPCA advocated for the four-way left turn lanes at South Glebe Road and Columbia Pike, reducing the amount of traffic cutting through our neighborhood and making that major Arlington intersection work better and more safely for everyone. DPCA also advocated for funding and was involved in the planning of the pedestrian improvements currently under construction along South Four Mile Run Drive. We were also the driving force behind the pedestrian crossing stop light on South Glebe Road at 12th Street South so we can safely cross South Glebe Road. And who can forget the efforts for the four-way stop at South Monroe Street and 14th Street South? That intersection is much safer now in part because of the efforts of the DPCA.
- **Plan and advocate for traffic calming and street, sidewalk, lighting and parks improvements.** The speed cushions on South Quincy Street—making it safer for the children attending Randolph Elementary (and everybody else)—speed cushions slowing down traffic on South Monroe Street and 18th Street South, sidewalk and lighting improvements on 16th, 14th, Quincy and Pollard Streets, (and coming to South Oakland Street), replacement play equipment in Douglas, Doctors Run and Monroe Parks all came about through the work of the DPCA.
- **Plan for the Columbia Pike revitalization.** DPCA representatives took the lead in planning for the Pike revitalization including the Form Based Code, which provides incentives for development, provided that the size and design meet the standards developed in advance by the Pike neighborhoods. DPCA representatives have been active in the Pike streetscape improvement planning efforts, encouraging county action on projects such as utility undergrounding, transportation initiatives and the sidewalk upgrades now underway from South Garfield Street to South Glebe Road. This work continues through DPCA representatives on the Form Based Code Review Committee (reviewing tweaks to the code), and in the upcoming county housing study on the Pike.
- **Promote our schools.** The DPCA helps to publicize the excellent schools serving Douglas Park (such as recognition of Ward Merritt as Teacher of the Year at Randolph Elementary and Wakefield High School's climb to the top of the *Washington Post* Challenge Index), provides information to parents about our schools, advocates for building improvements (such as current efforts to improve lighting for classrooms at Jefferson Middle School) supports the PTAs (such

as our support for the Randolph Fall Festival) and supports the Wakefield scholarship fund.

- **Provide a forum for information and communication.** DPCA provides this newsletter, an excellent website loaded with information about our neighborhood and the broader community, and provides the DPCA listserv for lively discussions of everything from yard sales to pending action on ordinances affecting Douglas Park. In the recent controversy about accessory dwelling units, DPCA provided a constant flow of accurate information about the proposals. DPCA also facilitated adoption of innovative residential permit parking restrictions to help reduce tensions in areas where parking is tight.
- **Coordinate with other neighborhoods.** DPCA leaders are in constant communication with the leaders of nearby neighborhoods to ensure we are all aware of new developments, develop consensus regarding issues that affect more than one neighborhood and work together with the county for common goals. An example is our recent efforts to give more enforcement tools for the police trying to control public drinking near the intersection of the Pike and the bike trails along Four Mile Run. Douglas Park residents and the DPCA lead the fight to deny a liquor license to Hi-Cue Billiards, an establishment already associated with more than enough trouble in years past.
- **Communicate with the police.** DPCA is in constant contact with our police department to provide residents with information about criminal activity and to keep the police informed of residents' observations and concerns.
- **Help neighbors.** Every year we raise thousands of dollars to help families in need at the holidays—just what communities are supposed to be about. You make the contributions, DPCA helps get them to the right places.
- **Have fun.** DPCA sponsors the Fourth of July Parade and Picnic, a gathering of the whole community with music, food, sno-cones and amusements for the kids. We also sponsor a Winter Dance (hoping to revive after a year off in 2009), caroling in Douglas Park at the holidays and the Election Day Bake Sale (where we have as much fun saying hello to each other as eating the goodies).

All of this is done through the efforts of volunteers, and your personal support. We need your membership—and your financial support—to keep making it happen. This is *your* community—and we need your help to maintain and improve it. Thank you in advance for joining, or rejoining DPCA.

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NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION PLAN UPDATE LAUNCHES

We're launching the effort to update our Neighborhood Conservation Plan at the DPCA meeting on February 17, 2009. The Neighborhood Conservation Plan is a plan for how we want to preserve and promote the quality of life in our neighborhood. It advises the county regarding development, transportation, housing and everything else that makes up the neighborhood. It is our plan, with our vision for what we want to do — and not do! You can read our current plan on the DPCA website at <http://www.arlingtondpc.homestead.com>.

Updating the Neighborhood Conservation Plan is a requirement to maintain eligibility for funding for Neighborhood Conservation projects like new sidewalks, streetlights and curb, gutter and parks improvements. The next project in our queue is upgrading the surface and lighting on the path to Randolph School through Doctor's Run Park, improving safety and visibility for families walking children to and from school and the extended day program and for anyone else walking from South Quincy Street through the park to South George Mason Drive.

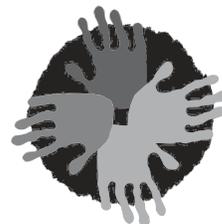
Debbie Falco is the Douglas Park Representative to Arlington's Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC). The NCAC facilitates the process by which each civic association gets funding from the Arlington County Board for improvement projects. To receive funding, each civic association must participate in a 'points system'. One mandatory requirement of the points system is an updated neighborhood plan every ten years. Our conservation plan serves not only to communicate the needs and desires of Douglas Park, but also to state our vision for other issues like development. When completed, the plan will be presented to the NCAC for approval.

Since our plan was last updated in late 1998, this is the year to get it done—but it's a large task for one person and any help would be greatly appreciated. No meetings are required. Any assistance with writing and/or submission of your reports can be via e-mail. Steps to update the plan include a survey of residents, updating sections on Douglas Park history, our parks and other amenities, summarizing the survey results and preparing recommendations for inclusion of the plan.

Topics to be covered include:

- History of Douglas Park
- Roads and transportation
- Schools, the fire station and neighborhood businesses
- Parks and nearby community centers
- Maps and pictures for PowerPoint presentations

If you are able to lend a hand with any of these topics, please join us at the February 17 meeting as we get started, or let Debbie know at falcodl@verizon.net.



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presbyterian church

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DPCA News, ctd

CIVIC ASSOCIATION PLANS FOR 2009

Our 'to-do' list so far:

- **We need to do something to improve the appearance of the berm on Monroe Street behind the post office.** Although the Postal Service is responsible for the upkeep of its property, getting it done will likely take direct action by the civic association. Even though the Postal Service has shown little interest in taking care of this area, they are not likely to object if we do it ourselves. This would be a great Neighborhood Day work project.
- **We need a clean up day (or two).** Some 'people' (this is a family newsletter, so the description will stop there) have been dropping trash all over the place—in the parks and on the streets. It needs to be picked up. Shall we pick a weekend morning for the effort? Let's not wait until Neighborhood Day in May.
- **Update the Neighborhood Conservation Plan (see page 3).**
- **The Fourth of July festivities, Election Day bake sale, holiday fund drive (and shopping for gifts to the families), and caroling in Douglas Park are all planned and carried through by volunteers.** Should we do another home tour? Will we revive the Winter Dance next year? We start planning well in advance. While we have leaders for most of these efforts, we need an infusion of volunteer help for all of them.
- **Build membership from apartment buildings.** We need a concerted effort to attract members from the new West Village condominiums at Four Mile Run Drive and Walter Reed, the new Halstead building at Walter Reed and the Pike, and from all the other apartment buildings in the neighborhood.

- **Pike Housing Study.** The county is planning to launch a study of housing along the Pike, the last step in the Pike revitalization planning effort. It will be very influential on the shape of things to come if the apartment complexes in our neighborhood are to be renovated or redeveloped. One study goal is to preserve affordable housing on the Pike. A very large amount of such housing, about 2,300 units, is in Douglas Park. Typically, property owners are offered incentives to maintain or increase affordable housing units. The incentive is typically authorization to build more densely on a site. Additional density on a site can be a good thing if done properly, or not, if not done properly. Our vigilance will be critical.

What else belongs on the list? Our civic association is very active in the number and quality of events we hold each year, and in the projects we undertake. We can do more, or we can do less. It depends 100% on the personal involvement of our residents.

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Around the Neighborhood and the County

OUTREACH TO OUR TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN

Randolph Elementary is collecting cards, letters and care package items to send to our 'adopted' US Army troops stationed in Afghanistan. Donations can be dropped off in the main office of Randolph Elementary during regular school hours. Here are some wish list items from the troops:

- Support letters and snacks, including protein bars, granola bars, trail mix, hot cocoa mix, instant soup mix, individual drink mixes, chips and chocolate candy until May 1.
- Baby wipes, hand sanitizer wipes, toiletries, non-aerosol air fresheners, current magazines and newspapers, word puzzle books, AA and AAA batteries.
- Games such as board games, chess sets, checkers and dominoes; recorded TV shows (with commercials!), a variety of music CDs, note pads, pens, calendars, all-occasion cards to mail home, travel mugs and DVDs.

Anything that could help our soldiers occupy their downtime would be greatly appreciated. In spring and summer they would also appreciate insect repellents with DEET and NERF toys.

PARENT-INFANT EDUCATION PROGRAM SESSION

A resource and information session on child development for Arlington parents and caregivers of young children (infants and preschoolers) will be held Saturday, February 28 from 9.00 am to noon at Walter Reed Community Center, 2909 16th Street South in Arlington. Information will be available from a variety of community agencies and organizations and workshops will be held on child development milestones and language and sensory processing.

Pre-registration is requested—either by email to eparal@arlington.k12.va.us or by phone to 703.228.7239. This event is sponsored by the Arlington County Early Intervention Interagency Coordinating Council for the Infant and Toddler Connection of Arlington's Parent-Infant Education Program (PIE).

KENMORE PTA SILENT AUCTION

The Kenmore Middle School PTA is sponsoring a silent auction and raffle on Friday, March 20 from 6.30 pm to 9.45 pm to support Kenmore's Arts and Communications Technology Focus Program. The auction is open to the community and will feature donations from restaurants, theaters, fitness studios and much more. Dinner will be available for purchase at the event and student musicians and dancers will perform.

At Kenmore, students are taught the middle school curriculum through arts and communications technologies and are engaged in a variety of activities that provide a rich learning experience.

For more information please contact the event co-chairs, Sharon Beermann-Curtin at sbeermas@hotmail.com or Karen Landini at landkam@yahoo.com, 703.528.6549.

SEARCHING FOR SCIENCE-BASED GARDENING INFORMATION ON THE WEB

Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners will offer guidance on how to access reliable, science-based gardening and environmental information on the Internet at a free workshop Friday, February 20 from 10 am to noon at Arlington Central Library's Computer Lab at 1015 North Quincy Street. For more information, registration details and directions call 703.228.6414.

Randolph News, part 2

RANDOLPH'S INAUGURAL 'SOCK HOP' HELD JANUARY 16

Before the real inauguration took place on January 20, Randolph Elementary was the scene of an inaugural 'Sock Hop' Ball on Friday, January 16.



Amid festive and patriotic decorations and in an atmosphere of joy and anticipation, students, staff and their families danced to tunes spun by DPCA's favorite DJ, Sabra, made Valentines for soldiers as part of the Adopt-A-Platoon program, enjoyed pizza and dessert provided by the PTA,

and participated in an opening ceremony honoring our nation's flag, President-elect Barack Obama, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Revelers received American flags and had a chance to win inauguration-themed door prizes including Barack Obama pins, fans, tote bags and posters.

There was even a surprise visit from our own 'Barack Obama' and 'Joe Biden' accompanied, of course, by their Secret Service detail. It was a wonderful party marking an historic occasion and enjoyed by all. The ball was the brainchild of Randolph principal Renée Bostick, and was supported by many Randolph staff members.



ABOVE: Students enjoy the pre-inaugural 'Sock Hop' at Randolph Elementary.
AT RIGHT: Barack Obama (John Devlin) and Joe Biden (Joseph Sachs) pay a surprise visit to the Randolph 'Sock Hop'. They are accompanied by 'Secret Service' agent Pam Clark, who moonlights as Randolph's Specialist for Gifted and Talented Education. Both gentlemen are fifth graders at Randolph.

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Mortgage Money is plentiful and rates attractively low, although buyers seeking record-low interest rates for loan amounts over \$625,500 may be surprised to find rates between 6.5% and 6.75% with no points in the last few weeks. Jumbo rates have been higher since frightened investors stopped buying those loans. As the mortgage crisis deepened last year, investors turned to smaller loans that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac buy from lenders and then sell. Fannie and Freddie bought loans that did not exceed \$417,000 for several years. Both companies were federally chartered, and investors treated their loans as if they were guaranteed by the federal government, making them a safer bet. Last year, the government seized control of Fannie and Freddie and made that guarantee official. As part of an economic stimulus package, the government raised the limit for loans Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac can buy from \$417,000 to \$729,750. On 1/1/09 the \$729,750 cap was lowered to \$625,500 and anything above \$625,500 now falls into the jumbo loan category.

Assessment Values versus Market Values. Arlington County preliminary data reveals that the average assessment for single family property would drop 2%, from \$530,100 in 2008 to \$520,100 in 2009. Market statistics from the realtor's mls data base, MRIS, reveal the following sales price declines from November 2007 to November 2008: 13% average decline for condos, 22% average decline for townhouses, and a 19% decline for single family houses (\$483,600 average sold price for all three residential categories). The County does acknowledge that their mass appraisal formula for computing assessed values has a diluted effect compared to more recent sale values and lags behind the last 6 month market trends.

The median price of homes sold in Northern Virginia in 11/08 was \$335,000, which is a decline of 21.18% compared with 11/07's median price of \$425,000.

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Thank you!



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