DOUGLAS PARK CIVIC ASSOCIATION



Neighbor News

Vol 84, No 4

Saturday 25 September 2010

DPCA Kicks Off Phase I of Project Neighbor—Block Captains

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

This October we will launch 'Project Neighbor'—a new initiative to improve the community services that Douglas Park provides to its own citizens and developing a more cohesive community. We have four main objectives— to increase DPCA awareness and membership; create community cooperatives to provide services to one another; develop general assistance programs for those in need; and foster greater collaboration with non-English-speaking members of the community.

Our first step is to create 'Block Captains'. These are DP residents who are interested in meeting their neighbors face to face, introducing them to the community and DPCA and learning about what matters to them about the community. Once a month, as fits their schedules, block captains will do a door-to-door tour of their block(s) conducting general outreach, education, and listening. The group of block captains will meet in person and on the phone to discuss their experiences and learnings. We expect the commitment to be no more than three hours per month.

We are looking for as many volunteers as are interested—you can represent your block, a couple of blocks, your building association, etc. It would be great to have some multi-lingual volunteers. If you are interested in any way, please contact Sean Epstein at *seanepstein@gmail.com* or 646.284.2468. Thanks in advance!

Some FAQs for interested parties...

Q. What is a block captain?

A. The team of volunteers will better define the role as it meets their interests and objectives for volunteering, but for now here's what we know: Block captains are individuals who are interested in meeting their neighbors face to face, introducing them to the community and DPCA, and learning what about our community matters to those neighbors—baby sitting co-ops, block improvement projects, aid for those that need help, etc. Once or twice a month, as fits their schedules, block captains will do a door-to-door tour of their block(s), conducting general outreach, education, and listening as possible. The group of block captains will meet in person roughly every other month and conduct as-needed conference calls to share experiences and learnings.

Q. How much time will this take?

A. Roughly 2-3 hours per month.

Q. What do I do if I want to help?

A. If you're interested, please email seanepstein@gmail.com and let me know roughly what section of the 'hood you want to represent (for example—Halsted Building, 18th to Walter Reed and Quincy and Quebec, etc—no patch is too big or too small) so I can include you on our communications and build our map of block captains. We will have a quick call and an in-person meeting in October to officially begin.

Arlington Public Schools News APS SCHOOLTALK

Find out what's going on in Arlington Public Schools by becoming a subscriber to *APS Schooltalk*. Visit the APS website at *http://www.apsva.us/* to learn how you can sign up to receive the latest school news on your home or mobile phone or computer.

APS VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Looking for a way to make a personal contribution to the world? You need look no further than your own community. Consider volunteering at your neighborhood school. You can make an important difference in the life of a child.

At Randolph Elementary, opportunities for involvement abound. Take a moment to visit the Randolph website at http://www.apsva.us/randolph and review our Buddy Programs and other volunteer opportunities. If you're interested in getting involved, contact Rita Wiggins, Community Services and Outreach Coordinator by phone at 703.228.2321 or via email at roserita_wiggins@apsva.us. The APS Volunteer Application Form is also available online at http://www.apsva.us/.

NEXT DPCA MEETING

The next meeting of the Douglas Park Civic Association will be Tuesday evening, 28 September 2010, at 7.30pm in the Randolph Elementary School Cafeteria, 1306 South Quincy Street. Please enter through the door marked 'No 10'.

Topics will include updates on 'Project Neighbor' and on the ongoing Washington Gas utility work in the neighborhood.

Douglas Park noticias septiembre 2010

REUNIÓN DE LA ASOCIACIÓN CÍVICA

a reunión de la asociación cívica sera el 28 de septiembre a las 19.30 en la cafetería de escuela Randolph, 1306 Calle Quincy Sur. Entre a través de la puerta número 10. Hablaremos en el 'Project Neighbor' (Proyecto Vecinor) y el trabajo en curso de la utilidad de Washington Gas en la vecindad. ¡Atienda por favor!

INSIDE

President's Cornerp 2	2-4
New Bike Shop in Serves Douglas Park	0 5
Green Festival™ 2010	6 (
Planetarium Group Organizes	6 (
4th of July Picnic and Parade Recap	D 7

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 in the cafeteria of Randolph Elementary School, 1306 South Quincy Street.

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

Tentatively scheduled for Tuesday 28 September 2010 at 7.30 pm in the cafeteria of Randolph Elementary School, 1306 South Quincy Street. Please see the agenda on page one of this issue of the *Douglas Park Neighbor News* for further details. All are welcome.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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NEXT DOUGLAS PARK NEIGHBOR NEWS DEADLINE

Articles and Ads Due Distribution

Issue 84.05: Fri 29 Oct 2010

Sat/Sun 13/14 Nov 2010

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President's Corner

THE NEW SOUTH OAKLAND STREET IS OPEN

The improvements to South Oakland Street, between 14th Street South and 16th Street South are now complete. The street now has curb and gutter for proper drainage on both sides and sidewalk along the west side. The roadway in the middle was rebuilt and re-paved. The project was designed and funded through the Neighborhood Conservation Program, through which neighborhoods can petition for projects such as this or other enhancements like park improvements or streetlights. Projects are selected from all over the county based in large part on how long a neighborhood has waited to get a project funded, so patience is a big part of the process.

Other recent projects in Douglas Park include sidewalk and streetlights on South Pollard Street, streetlights on 14th, 16th and South Quincy Streets, and curb and gutter and sidewalks on 17th Street between Glebe Road and South Monroe Street. Two years ago, Douglas Park and all the other neighborhoods in Arlington conducted an inventory of things we would like to have, like filling in gaps of sidewalks, streetlights and other such improvements. We identified 89 potential projects; with South Oakland Street done, we are now down to 88. Next up is a project to improve the path and install lights from George Mason Drive through Doctor's Run Park to the back of Randolph School to improve safety for students and families walking to Randolph, especially in the winter months.

Many thanks to Debbie Falco, our Neighborhood Conservation Representative, for her perseverance in seeing the South Oakland Street project through to completion.

THOMAS JEFFERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL REFURBISHMENT

Refurbishment is nearing completion on Thomas Jefferson Middle School, which serves our neighborhood. Jefferson was unfortunately built with only a few very narrow windows. The construction work has added windows where classrooms are along an outside wall, added skylights to other top floor classrooms and has changed the lighting fixtures in all classrooms to more effective low-glare indirect lighting. The lighting changes have made a huge difference. New paint and carpeting adds color and warmth. And the cafeteria has been redone to be more attractive and functional. The previous colors were shades of yellow and green so profoundly unattractive they needed to be seen to be believed—lots of inexplicable things happened in the 1970s when Jefferson was built.

In addition, a new artificial-turf field was installed by the county in the spring, and will be used for Jefferson and community sports teams for years to come. (The sports fields in Arlington are so heavily used that natural turf fields cannot hold up.)

The construction work will significantly improve the learning environment at Jefferson. Even before the renovations, it was an excellent school. The principal, Sharon Mondé, was named Principal of the Year for Arlington last year and the school has been part of the International Baccalaureate Middle Schools Program for several years. With these physical improvements, the school will be even better.

NEW WAKEFIELD HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING COMING

Designs are being completed for a new Wakefield High School building. Wakefield is the neighborhood high school for Douglas Park, made famous around the country when President Obama spoke to the students there on the first day of school last year. But Wakefield was a great school long before that and is currently rated along with Arlington's other high schools as one of the top schools in the country on the 'Challenge Index,' a measurement of how many students take Advanced Placement (college level) classes.

The new building will be at the corner of South Dinwiddie Street and George Mason Drive in the space now occupied by the baseball field and parking lot. The swimming pool will be replaced as part of the project. The existing high school building, built in the 1950s, will be demolished at the end of the project and replaced by sports fields. The football stadium and surrounding trees will not be changed by the project.

Funding for the Wakefield construction will come from the 2010 Schools Bond, coming up for a vote this November. With construction scheduled to start early in 2011, the new building will be ready for classes for fall 2013—but only if you support the construction by voting for the Schools Bond!

FREEDMAN'S VILLAGE BRIDGE

The Virginia Department of Transportation is planning to begin construction on a new Washington Boulevard bridge over Columbia Pike next year. Completion is scheduled for the end of 2014. It will be called Freedman's Village Bridge in honor of the village of emancipated people that stood there from 1862 (when emancipation came to the District of Columbia) to just after the turn of the 20th century.

The existing bridge is in poor condition, and has been a priority for replacement for many years. You can expect traffic to be troublesome through the construction area.

ARLINGTON MILL COMMUNITY CENTER

Groundbreaking on the new Arlington Mill Community Center (at Columbia Pike and South Dinwiddie Street, just across Four Mile Run from Douglas Park) is planned for January 2011. The community center building will be five stories, with a plaza along the Pike, a gym, offices for the Department of Human Services and other county programs, and a senior center. The building will also house a fitness center and a learning resource area with computers for public internet access, classrooms and other educational opportunities.

THANK YOU, MITCH!

for our newsletter after many years of service. Mitch also recently served as vice president of the civic association. Mitch's efforts have expanded the Neighbor News advertising—and associated revenues—dramatically. The newsletter now turns a profit for the civic association while spreading the news about our neighborhood. Thanks very much, Mitch, for your years of hard work. The quality of the newsletter is a testament to your commitment to our community.

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President's Corner, ctd

HOT LANES AND DOUGLAS PARK

You may have heard that the Arlington County Board is suing the federal government and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) about VDOT's plan to add High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes to I-395 from the Capital Beltway to South Eads Street in Arlington. The plan is to add a third lane to the two High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes down the center of Interstates 395 and 95 south to Prince William County. Those lanes now carry car pools, vans and buses. The plan is to also charge tolls for single-occupant cars on those lanes. In other words, the plan is for lots more cars coming into Arlington.

Why should we in Douglas Park care, since the cars will just be in the middle of I-395, passing by Douglas Park? Because they won't just be passing by Douglas Park—cars will not just be in the middle of the highway. They will be able to exit the toll lanes to get back onto the main highway (making traffic worse there) and also take new HOT lane exits to be built along the way, such as at Shirlington circle. How will they get from Shirlington to the Pentagon, Washington or other parts of Arlington? Through and next to Douglas Park on Four Mile Run Drive, Columbia Pike, Glebe Road, Walter Reed Drive and George Mason Drive. Each of these roads is already very busy.

Anybody who has observed I-395 knows that it backs up all the time, including the HOV lanes. The new plan is to put MORE cars on the highway (coming from the outer suburbs) trying to get across the same bridges to into Washington or staying in Arlington. Putting more cars onto a road that can't handle the traffic it now carries means the traffic is going to be worse. It will back up more often. Drivers are going to bail out—onto our Arlington streets.

The potential impacts of this project are not limited to Douglas Park and Nauck. The HOT lanes will end at South Eads Street, potentially jamming up traffic in the commercial areas of Crystal City and Pentagon City. Do we really want more cars in South Arlington? Where are they going to go? Where are they going to park? The HOT lanes project can also make it harder for buses and other high-occupancy vehicles to take commuters from the outer suburbs to Washington and back. Instead of encouraging 40 people to ride a bus, or 3 people to ride in a carpool, this project encourages them to each drive their own cars.

Has anybody at VDOT thought about this impact on our neighborhoods? Not really, and that is why Arlington County is suing them. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the government to do an environmental impact statement before it builds roads or other projects. An environmental impact statement requires a study that must answer questions about how many vehicles will be added, the impact on traffic, on air pollution, on noise and on the quality of life in the affected neighborhoods. Environmental impact has not been studied for this project because the federal

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government (under the previous administration) gave the project a 'categorical exemption'—essentially a free pass—from the environmental impact statement requirements.

Lawsuits are not a particularly good way to design highways. But they are a very good way of making people pay attention. Hopefully Arlington's concerns can be addressed. We do not want highway traffic coming through Douglas Park or any of our other Arlington neighborhoods. Another good way to get people to pay attention to our concerns is for each of us to contact our elected officials at every level—local, state and federal—and let them know what we think about the I-395 HOT lanes project.



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New Community Bike Shop Opens

PHOENIX BIKES COMES TO FOUR MILE RUN

Phoenix Bikes is a youth and community bike shop serving folks in and around South Arlington. Located in Barcroft Park at 4200 South Four Mile Run Drive, along the Four Mile Run and W&OD bike trails, Phoenix Bikes works with young people in the community by building bikes and building leaders through the Earn-a-Bike Program, two advanced curricula and other Phoenix Team activities, partnering with staff and volunteers to serve Arlington's biking community. Phoenix Bikes sells quality used bikes fit for the whole family and performs low-cost tune-ups and repairs for area cyclists.

In March 2007, Phoenix Bikes opened its doors as a nonprofit organization. With the dedication of a group of citizens and cyclists, the shop grew from the ashes of Community Spokes, a community bike shop sponsored by the Arlington County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs. The operation is based in a 625-square-foot building in Barcroft Park. Future plans include an increased selection of bikes for local families and employment centers, creation of a mobile bike shop and enriching its leadership curriculum with mentoring and other training opportunities.

To learn more, visit http://www.phoenixbikes.org, call 703.575.7762 or stop by the shop to chat with Executive Director Jesse Fox and get connected to the Arlington bike community.



Planetarium Not-for-Profit Organizes

REQUESTS COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Arlington's David M Brown Planetarium has provided inspiration and learning to students and the general public for more than 40 years. Last spring, budgetary constraints lead Arlington's Superintendent of Schools to recommend the closing the planetarium. The large public outcry resulted in the School Board drastically reducing planetarium services and staff, but postponing until next year a decision whether to permanently close the planetarium while the newly-formed Friends of Arlington's David M Brown Planetarium raises funds for upgrades the superintendent says are needed. These improvements include a new projector system, interior dome and new seating at a total cost of approximately \$400,000.

The Friends of the Planetarium was incorporated in May 2010 and recently received its 501(c)(3) status as a tax-exempt non-profit organization. Its goal is to support the renovation and continued use of the planetarium, which is the only freestanding school planetarium also open to the public in the DC Metro area. In 2008 the Arlington School Board voted unanimously to dedicate the planetarium to astronaut David M Brown, a native of Arlington and graduate of Yorktown High School, who perished in the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster in 2003. Two years later it is in jeopardy of being closed.

Arlington is fortunate to have a planetarium. It is one of several indicators of the high-quality educational experience available to Arlington students. This valuable educational asset motivates students to become excited about science and learn about our universe. In past years the planetarium was visited by more than 25,000 students and other visitors annually from Arlington and neighboring jurisdictions.

To keep the planetarium from closing, large numbers of donations are needed to show that the planetarium has broad community support. And large donations are needed to achieve the large financial goal. As of September 1, the Friends of the Planetarium collected \$17,167 toward its goal. Citizen support and corporate sponsors are needed. Residents or organizations that wish to help in this effort can send a tax-deductible contribution to:

Save the Planetarium PO Box 7029 Arlington, VA 22207

Visit the group's website at http://www.saveplanetarium.org for more information or to contribute on-line through PayPal. To find out about other ways to help, email the group at save.the. planetarium@gmail.com.



Green Festival™ 2010

Sustainability Event Returns to Washington Convention Center

Green Festival™, the nation's largest sustainability event, returns to the Washington Convention Center October 23-24, 2010. This year's theme is 'Engagement,' with exciting new ways to shop green, be inspired, get engaged and give back. Community members enjoy informative, insightful speakers, incomparable green shopping, cutting edge eco-innovations, great live music, fun and educational family activities, hands-on workshops, organic wine and beer and delicious local vegetarian cuisine. Ten stages and pavilions give attendees the opportunity to engage with 125 local experts and nationally-renowned authors, actors, leaders, educators, farmers and visionaries. Exciting keynote speakers include Ralph Nader, Amy Goodman, Gilberto Gil, Patti Moreno, Reverend Lennox Yearwood Jr, Dean Baker, Bernardine Dorhn, Bill Ayers, Ibrahim Abdul-Matin, Daniel Pinchbeck, Goumbri, Tracy McQuirter and many more. New admission options are geared to encourage everyone to get involved in their community with immediate dividends from Green Festival.

For more information, please visit http://www.greenfestivals.org/wdc/, or on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/GreenFestival or Twitter at @GreenFestival.

Scenes from Douglas Park's 28th Annual Fourth of July Parade and Picnic



Photographs courtesy Linda Vandergriff and Evalyn Carter



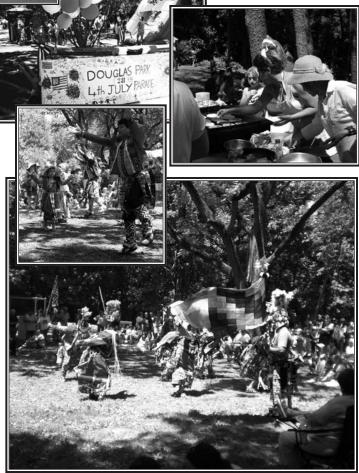
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Thank you!



The Douglas Park Civic Association thanks the Mike Webb Team for their generous gift to defray the cost of printing *Neighbor News*.

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