



# Arlington Ridge Civic Association

2604 South Grant Street, Arlington, Virginia 22202

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## Letter from the ARCA President

The ARCA Revitalization effort is well underway. A new slate of officers was voted into office on July 16, 2009, and the latest membership drive has resulted in about 275 dues paying members. These accomplishments are consequences of the rebuilding of the organization that has gone on over the last 10 months. I always felt that if we could get back to regular meetings and newsletters, we would grow back toward the 600 dues-paying members we had, I believe, in 1990.

I am extremely pleased that so many have stepped up to keep the basic administration of ARCA going. I am equally pleased that so many have taken time out of their busy lives to deal with the Crystal City Development issue and its potential impacts on us. This has brought together the old guard who fought these issues for three decades, and the newer residents who must exercise the same vigilance toward a County staff and developers who do not live here, so do not see the neighborhood as we do – as an after-work oasis, a family-rearing oasis, and a pedestrian oasis. I am similarly impressed by the number of you who have stepped up to other positions and issues, I suspect it reflects a reaction to seeing what an organized group of citizens can change – something that this neighborhood witnessed a lot during the 70s and 80s when the County Government was more closed than it is now. However, as I realized during my Federal career, agencies, including the Arlington County Government, can quickly become self-serving without our continued vigilance.

There is still work to do and many opportunities for additional participation in both neighborhood-specific as well as County-wide issues. Energized neighbors are ARCA's strength, so we invite you to help preserve and improve our neighborhood according to you particular interests.

Welcome to a revitalized ARCA.  
- Chick Walter, President

## Commercial Parking Clean-up on South 28th Street

By Jesse Alvarez

For several years, our community has had to confront a deteriorating environment around the Gunston Middle School grounds and the playgrounds connected to it. This area also includes a city block long section of S. 28th Street with the soccer fields/tennis court on one side, and the rear of the shopping center on the other side. Approximately two years ago, a group of commercial entrepreneurs began to monopolize the parking on both sides of the street. At various times for periods of time extending to weeks, months, and even years (no exaggeration) they parked semi-trailers, tractor-trailer trucks, extra large commercial vans, trailers, storage vans, trailers, and car towing trucks (frequently with wrecked cars still on the trailer bed). One user was of particular note. He apparently would buy a used school bus, park it on the street, fill it with goods over a period of time, attach a used vehicle to it, and go off to his destination. He followed this pattern several times over the past two years.

*Continued on page 4*

***“To accomplish great things, we must not only act but also dream, not only plan but also believe...”***  
- Anatole France

***Come share your dreams and ideas at the next ARCA meeting. Together we can act to make our neighborhood a great place to live, work and play.***

**Next ARCA Meeting: September 17, 2009**

at Aurora Hills Community Center, 735 S. 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Arlington VA 22202

## Crystal City Development Update

By Christopher Mailander

On 18 August 2009, ARCA and Aurora Highlands Civic Association (AHCA) submitted their joint *Comments & Recommendations on the Crystal City Vision Plan 2050* ('Comments & Recommendations') to the County Board and Long-Range Planning Committee (LRPC). Members of ARCA and AHCA dedicated hundreds of hours in the past three months to develop their analyses and recommendations. The 28-page document defines our vision in which a high-density urban area built around public transportation hubs can not only coexist, but seamlessly integrate, with the adjacent neighborhoods of single-family homes with its valuable community infrastructure such as schools, a library, community center, and numerous parks. This integrated community is achieved through:

- Effective management of vehicular volumes and driver behavior, with significant investments being made to ensure safe, aware, and cautious driving through residential neighborhoods.
- Encouraging the residents of the single-family neighborhoods to utilize bicycles, walking, and other non-vehicular forms of transportation through the purposeful development of pedestrian and bike-friendly thoroughfares that traverse the entire 22202 zip code.
- Carefully managing zoning and land use so as to ensure a seamless, aesthetically-pleasing transition between the single-family neighborhoods and the more urbanized developments in Crystal City, Pentagon City, and Potomac Yard.
- Continuously upgrading and investing in the community infrastructure of parks, open space, and recreational facilities in the 22202 zip code.
- Further strengthening the entire community's access to exceptional public education, health services, as well as police, fire and emergency services.

## 2009/2010 ARCA Leadership Goals and Objectives

The newly elected leadership team intends to leverage past accomplishments and move forward by: 1) reaching out to all the voices in the community 2) communicating in a timely and effective manner 3) increasing ARCA's visibility within the Arlington County government, and 4) increasing the number of active members. To achieve these goals, we have established a bi-monthly membership meeting schedule (3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday every other month) with executive committee meetings on the alternate months. We hope these regular membership sessions will allow for additional input from the entire community. We will circulate newsletters before meetings but also intend to use an interactive website

The community's objective in preparing these Comments & Recommendations was to: help shape the Crystal City Vision Plan (including forthcoming chapters pertaining specifically to the issue of community impact and benefit) and the implementation plan for the larger vision; to clearly articulate a set of issues and concerns from the residential communities adjacent to Crystal City; and to ensure that such long-term planning adequately and effectively balances increasing density in the area with extraordinary community benefits.

The Comments & Recommendations can be viewed at [www.plancrystalcity.com](http://www.plancrystalcity.com) (Arlington County's website for providing information and documentation related to the Crystal City redevelopment effort), as well as [www.arcaonline.com](http://www.arcaonline.com).

Four additional LRPC meetings on the Crystal City Vision Plan have recently been scheduled on September 21, October 21, October 22, and November 19, 2009. All meetings will be held at 7:00 pm in the first floor conference room at 2300 Wilson Boulevard (Navy League Building). The LRPC is a Committee of the Planning Commission. The meetings are generally discussions between the Commissioners and County staff. Representatives of other commissions, task forces, community groups, and developers may be invited to participate at the discretion of the Chair. The public is invited to attend.

Following the LRPC meetings, the Crystal City Vision Plan is expected to go through a public hearing process. For more information, contact Chris Mailander ([christopher.mailander@gmail.com](mailto:christopher.mailander@gmail.com)), Patty Joyce ([pattylynn@aol.com](mailto:pattylynn@aol.com)) and/or Chick Walter ([chickandsandy@msn.com](mailto:chickandsandy@msn.com)).

to ensure timely communication. The "Recent Accomplishments" section in the newsletter showcases the successes of our neighbors as they work for improvements in the community. We will ensure that ARCA has membership/attendance at Arlington Forums such as the Civic Federation, Long Range Planning Committee, and Neighborhood Conservation Committee. Our revitalization efforts are beginning to bear fruit as active membership has already increased to about 275. The executive committee is committed to these goals but we can't do it without your help and input. We hope to see you at the ARCA meeting on September 17, 2009.

## Traffic Control and Pedestrian Safety Update

By Andrea Walker

ARCA continues its 3-part approach to address traffic control pedestrian safety and in our neighborhood. Part 1, which is discussed here, follows up on past achievements on Ridge Rd. and S. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. Part 2, development of our Neighborhood Conservation Plan, and Part 3, ARCA's active voice in the planned Crystal City development, expands that work throughout our neighborhood.

Since our last newsletter, ARCA and AHCA jointly issued a formal request to the County's Director of Transportation to spend at least \$60.5K of the current \$175K in funds that were "set-aside" from the Potomac Yard development to address traffic problems on Ridge Rd. and S. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. In addition to the speed indicators and pedestrian crosswalks discussed in our last newsletter, we asked that the remaining funds be used for a traffic light at the intersection of Ridge Rd. and Lang St. and pedestrian space (particularly for school children) at the SW corner of Ridge Rd. and 23<sup>rd</sup> St. We hope to have a response for our September meeting.

## RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### ART Bus Building

The County's Transit Bureau Chief has assured us that the ART bus administration building on S. Eads St. will soon be repainted in more subdued colors. This was a result of complaints by several neighbors to ARCA and the County when the building was painted to look like an ART bus. Neighbor Sheila Cole provided photos and monitored the situation, while ARCA reminded the Board that the garish advertisement was inconsistent with the draft Crystal City Vision Plan, and probably violated the County's sign ordinance.

### New Pedestrian Crossing

The County's Head of Traffic Calming has assured us a laddered crosswalk will be added across Ft. Scott Drive at South Grant St., an unusual intersection that currently makes no allowance for pedestrians. Both ARCA and AHCA have highlighted problems at this intersection. Neighbor John Michos began a dialogue within the neighborhood and with the County that led to this near-term improvement. The crosswalk is to be added after the roads are slurry-sealed this summer.

ARCA also requested police enforcement of dump truck speed on Ridge Rd. The police devoted a good bit of time to our request and reported that while a lot of dump trucks use Ridge (20 in an hour and a half), none were speeding, nor were there any Metrobus violations during the observation period. Because the County has designated Ridge Rd. as an arterial, it is legal for dump truck use. ARCA will continue to push for a change in the arterial designation as the volume of large vehicles on a neighborhood street is intimidating and will get more so as development increases.

ARCA is preparing a formal request to our State Senator to arrange a walking meeting with VDOT to again address traffic controls for the confusing and dangerous I-395 exit ramp on to Ridge Rd.

For more information or to join this effort, contact Andrea Walker, ARCA's traffic control coordinator. Email: [tasteless@verizon.net](mailto:tasteless@verizon.net) or Ph: 703-838-6244.

### Arlington Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC)

As part of the urban canopy initiative of the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee (NCAC), ARCA has been awarded \$1,296 for planting 9 trees in our neighborhood. This was one of 17 requests approved this year. The tree planting is estimated to start in October with the possibility of continuation through January or February. Many thanks to Michael Reamy for spearheading this effort.

The Neighborhood Survey is another vital part of the conservation plan. A small team of neighbors is busily working to get that survey organized and we hope to get it out to the community in early fall. The website will be used to solicit input, along with a door-to-door canvassing effort. So be on the alert for news on the survey. We really need your input.

For more info on NCAC efforts refer to: <http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/CPHD/ons/CPHDonsConservation.aspx>

### ARCA WEBSITE: <http://www.arcaonline.org>

ARCA now has our very own website that will grow and evolve with the organization. The website features current issues being addressed by ARCA, including the Crystal City Redevelopment Plan, and Traffic Control. It tracks the progress of ARCA's revitalization. It serves as yet another way to communicate with members and provides timely information, such as meeting minutes, current and past newsletters, and point of contacts for various committees. Please provide content for upload as well as comments and suggestions to Chris King ([crk@mindspring.com](mailto:crk@mindspring.com)) or Kit Whitely ([kitwhitely@comcast.net](mailto:kitwhitely@comcast.net)).

## Commercial Parking Clean-up on South 28th Street *Continued from page 1*

Another person parked a van and car, stuffed both with all sorts of material, and simply left it permanently parked. Most recently, an individual parked two huge tractor trailer trucks, without license plates or tax stickers, for almost a year.

It had become clear that a few individuals were treating this block as their personal parking space. On many occasions, a walker would encounter them changing oil and fluids, doing major repairs, using permanently parked trailers and vans for storage of parts and other materials, and performing all sorts of other maintenance on their vehicles. Walking along S. 28th Street now, one can see the residue of oil, solvents, acids, glass, bits of metal, plastics, and glass strewn all about. Where the heaviest vehicles were parked, the asphalt is completely crumpled. All along the side walks there is complete erosion of grass with debris strewn about.

County officials were notified several times about the parking situation but chose to accommodate the vehicle-owners rather than take the residents' concerns into account. Residents were told that the area was specifically zoned for commercial parking, or that an area between a shopping center and playgrounds did not specifically prohibit commercial parking, even by heavy-duty trucks. Although the County understood that many of these vehicles were not simply parked for hours, but for days and months, it took no action against any of these violators.

Recently, AHCA's Bruce Cameron brought this situation to the County's attention very forcefully. As a result, the County finally took affirmative action by creating a four-hour parking restriction. In addition, a three hour commercial time-limit was imposed on a stretch of S. 28th Street behind the Giant store. This action caused many of the worst violators to finally move their vehicles. The owners of two unlicensed tractor trailer trucks, two trailers, and two commercial

## Growing Paid Membership

*By Chuck McFadden*

Neighbors' response to the "Dues Envelopes" in the last newsletter was outstanding and made ARCA's Treasurer a more relaxed man. As of the end of August, we had received 275 checks – up from 88 last year. The additional funds allowed us to cover our budget for the year to include a bi-monthly newsletter, website setup/maintenance, grass cutting effort, and neighborhood conservation plan development. Several neighbors sent more than the requested \$20 and appreciate that extra support. The Arlington Diner (next to Giant) sent in a generous

vans continued to park regardless of the restrictions. The signs were put in place at the end of June.

On July 14, after seeing that nothing was being done to enforce the parking restrictions, I sent a vehement email to the County demanding action to enforce the parking limits. After several communications, action was finally taken on July 26. Several vehicles were removed not because of residents' complaints, but for an ethnic festival. Warning notices had been posted for several days in advance. On the morning of the festival, the police finally removed the tractor trailer trucks and the trailer.

Residents and ARCA would have preferred that the County's actions resulted from their efforts to control parking in this area. Nonetheless, S. 28th Street is currently clear of commercial vehicles (there is still a taxi cab and a food vendor who are permanently parked). Residents have yet to see any kind of patrol of the area by County parking enforcement or Arlington Police. The complaint is frequently made that the County is quite assiduous in enforcing parking laws in all parts of the County. Apparently, this part of S. 28th Street is outside the norm.

It isn't simply parking that is a problem in this area. The soccer fields and grounds around Gunston Middle School are in a deplorable condition. The grass soccer field has been a mud-field since shortly after its construction. Soil erosion from overuse is overwhelming. Debris is scattered throughout the area constantly. The permanent field is clearly damaged from overuse. ARCA must use its influence to require the County to not simply enforce appropriate parking uses for this residential area, but also to take action to cleanup and rehabilitate the play areas around Gunston Middle School. This area demands the County's urgent attention. Contact Jesse Alvarez at [alvarez1945@gmail.com](mailto:alvarez1945@gmail.com) or 703-684-3931 with questions or to help support this issue.

donation. I have been a fan of their breakfast menu and hamburgers for many years.

Our goal is to continue to build our dues-paying membership. The additional funds would go towards beautification projects around the neighborhood, help support ARCA's response to Crystal City, and ARCA's traffic planning efforts. To start or renew your membership, please mail a check for \$20 made out to ARCA, with your phone no. and email address for our records, to Chuck McFadden, 2322 S. Arlington Ridge Rd. 22202.

September 2009

## Aurora Hills Library Update

By Bonnie Flynn

We won an initial battle this spring to keep our library open 6 days a week rather than the 3 days proposed in the County budget. Unfortunately, the Library Director recently reassigned 3 of the 5 people in staff positions at Aurora Hills to other County Libraries, and they are being replaced with less senior staff. She reduced staff from 3 to 2 full-time employees. She is replacing our full-time Children's librarian (40 hrs/week) with a part-time employee (20 hrs/week). Our community deserves better!!

We need your help: (1) Use the library's services — if we don't use it, we WILL lose it!! (2) Keep pressure on the County Manager and County Board to properly fund and staff the library. (3) Volunteer at the library.

## Water Treatment Plant Expansion Update: An Emphasis on the Long-Term

By Matt Konrad

In late June, I had the opportunity to sit down with Arlington County Board Chairman Barbara Favola regarding the ongoing upgrade and expansion of the water treatment facility and the consequent issues impacting the surrounding residential area. It is critical that our elected officials are aware of near-term and long-term impact on the residential neighborhood surrounding the facility.

The focus is not to try to affect the construction plans, but to ensure that the long term impacts of expansion are minimal. One way is through proper fencing or a green screen at the site and high-impact landscaping post-construction with necessary ongoing maintenance.

Our meeting focused on:

- (1) quality of life being permanently impacted by the facility expansion since many of our neighbors now look directly into treatment infrastructure;
- (2) The economic impact of the construction through damage to homes and proximity to the construction site. The County's avoidance of common sense that vibrations will at least accelerate the cracking of walls remains frustrating. The construction firms' insurance companies determining fault creates a fox-guarding-the-henhouse scenario. Additionally, the proximity to the massive construction site has made adjacent for-sale properties unpleasant to tour, potentially causing a drop in prices;
- (3) The inadequacy of the new fences in some areas as some residents can look directly into infrastructure over the fences due to grade-change (S. Hayes) and directly through the fences due to design.

(4) Donate new and used books, magazines and DVDs to the library – and consider making the Aurora Hills library a part of your annual charitable donations. Donations can be ear-marked for Aurora Hills and for specific purchases (for example, children's books, DVDs, crafts, etc.)

ARCA thanks Ms. Noorani Karim for her dedicated service to the Aurora Hills Library. Ms. Karim has been instrumental in keeping our library operating at peak performance, and attracting and utilizing volunteers from our neighborhood to augment the small staff at Aurora Hills. She was recently transferred to Columbia Pike – she will be missed by all of us.

Specific issues discussed were:

- Landscaping will be a priority with \$1M allocated during the final phase of construction, and ongoing maintenance is assured. The County is looking into a green screen for some areas of the fence line (see [www.greenscreen.com](http://www.greenscreen.com) – note that greenscreen is a brand name and that several similar brands are available) in order to create both a higher and more dense visual barrier.
- The parking lot to the north of 31<sup>st</sup> Street will be turned back into a meadow post-construction. However, it will not be designated a park. I believe it is critical that local residents demand the County designate this area a permanent park so it cannot be reclaimed in the future.
- It is unlikely that the situation regarding damage to homes during construction will improve. I believe this is because if the County helps a homeowner with simple cracks in walls, it sets the precedent for unknown liabilities (foundations, etc.) I explained to Chairman Favola that 'doing the right thing' was of greatest importance regardless of liability, but unfortunately, I am not confident that the County will change direction.
- The rental car lots being used for ART buses that don't serve our area (some Falls Church buses are also parked there) and the possibility of converting rental lots to greenspace. Chairman Favola was sympathetic, but there is no action planned.

On August 27<sup>th</sup>, Phil Loar and his team hosted neighbors again for a construction update. The meeting was attended by Chairman Favola. It was great to see her there. We are glad that she is focusing on our issues. Contact Matt Konrad at [matthewkonrad@yahoo.com](mailto:matthewkonrad@yahoo.com)

### Schools' News

The 2009-2010 school year will begin on Tue, 8 September 2009 for Arlington Public Schools.

Peter Ross, a neighborhood resident and the leader of the Oakridge Tutoring Program for ten years, passed away on 9 July 2009. A memorial service will be held on Wed, 9 September, 3 p.m. at the Army Navy Country Club. Peter was instrumental in recruiting, training, supporting and organizing the volunteer tutoring program. He worked thousands of hours toward ensuring academic and emotional strength for Oakridge students. He will be greatly missed.

Oakridge Tutors - Oakridge will begin the community-volunteer tutoring program again in October. The program is now in its 12th year, and continues to grow, with approximately 50 tutors. Tutors work with a 3rd, 4th or 5th grader in reading or math twice a week for an hour after school on Tue and Thurs. Volunteers will receive training, be provided with appropriate materials, and enjoy support and access to information for success. Tutors often make great new friends with other tutors. This is a special opportunity to make a difference for a child who needs a friend and some help. Contact Ms. Kelle Singleton, tutor coordinator, at Oakridge at 703.228.5840.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- ◆ 26 September, 9-12am - Neighborhood Volunteer Day at Hume School. Join us to beautify our neighborhood.
- ◆ 21 September, 21 October, 22 October, and 19 November, 7pm – Long Range Planning Committee meetings on Crystal City at 2300 Wilson Blvd.
- ◆ 30 September, 6:30pm - "The True Cost of Food" film at Fairlington Community Center. More films on similar topics on 7 and 14 October.
- ◆ 3 October, 8am-3pm - Hazardous household items dropoff at Environmental Collection and Recycling Event (E-CARE) at Thomas Jefferson Middle School for a \$20 fee. Guidelines at [www.arlingtonva.us/des](http://www.arlingtonva.us/des).
- ◆ 12 September, 9:30-11:30am - Tag Day, the Wakefield High School Music Department's biggest fund raiser. Music students knock on doors for donations. Some students will perform on request.
- ◆ 26 September, 9:30-12:30am - Community Forum for Arlington FY2011-2015 Five Year Consolidated Plan at Walter Reed Community Center. Plan guides policies and the use of community resources for various issues.

**Check [www.arcaonline.org](http://www.arcaonline.org) for updated event details.**

### ARCA MEETING SCHEDULE

- ◆ September 17 – ARCA bimonthly meeting at Aurora Hills Community Center, 735 S. 18<sup>th</sup> Street, Arlington VA 22202
  - 7:00-7:05 Welcome
  - 7:05-7:20 Recognition Ceremony
  - 7:20-8:00 Review of Recent Accomplishments
    - Crystal City
    - Traffic Control
  - 8:00-8:35 Discussion Topics
    - Website and NC Survey online
    - County Manager Selection Process
  - 8:35-8:45 Upcoming Events
  - 8:45-8:50 Closing Comments
- ◆ October 14, 2009 – Joint AHCA-ARCA "Meet the Candidates" meeting at the Aurora Hills Community Center
- ◆ November 19 – ARCA bimonthly meeting
- ◆ January 21, 2010 – ARCA bimonthly meeting

**Please email [ARCAneighbor@gmail.com](mailto:ARCAneighbor@gmail.com) with your phone no. and email address for ARCA's membership records. Your contact information will be used for official ARCA notifications only.**

For bulletins of neighborhood interest, request to join: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/4D-A/>. The group is administered by Alice Andors of AHCA.

### ARCA Officers and Points of Contacts

President	Chick Walter	703-519-9487
Vice-President	Jeff Orner	703-836-6647
Vice-President	Andrew Smith	703-486-4224
Secretary	Kit Whitely	703-739-9515
Treasurer	Chuck McFadden	703-553-8332
Asst treasurer	Renee Messalle	703-931-4842
Traffic Control	Andrea Walker	703-838-6244
Crystal City Dev.	Chris Mailander	703-929-6643
	Joan Quinn	703-892-5050
NC Plan	Sonali Soneji	703-867-6042
NCAC Rep	Michael Reamy	703-683-7499
History	Dick Herbst	703-892-5290
Membership	Patty Joyce	703-283-2522
Beautification	Bonnie Flynn	703-920-1157
	Chick Walter	703-519-9487
Schools	Kathie Laird	703-685-4371
Webmaster	Chris King	703-931-4842

### We would love to hear from you!

Please send comments and questions on the contents of this newsletter to the editor:

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