

Arlington County Civic Federation

The civic voice of Arlington for 82 years

Newsletter

February, 1998

Volume 82, No. 6

February Meeting:

Arlington's Water

**7:30 pm, Tuesday, February 3rd
John T. Hazel Conference Center
Columbia Arlington Hospital
1701 N. George Mason Drive**

ACCF Public Services Committee Co-Chair Stan Schachne has arranged a meeting for us with a fascinating group of speakers on the subject of water. We will begin tracing Arlington's water issues from the quality of the Potomac River water we use and move on to the treatment facilities and their future, including financial and administrative issues. From there we will hear about plans and policies for our distribution system, and how our current water treatment facilities are affected by changing environmental regulations. This meeting will prepare you to understand a whole series of newspaper

articles and County Board decisions for years to come. Congressman Moran will participate, and County Board Member Paul Ferguson announced at our January meeting that he has a keen interest in this subject and will attend as well.

The meeting will open with the two bylaws changes Jean Mostrum introduced in January. They are date changes for Nomination Committee and Awards Committee reports. Please see Jean's story inside explaining the issues. After the Water program we will hear some observations on the Schools Budget process from Roy Lowry, Schools Committee Chair.

Water, Water: Where We Get It, What We Do With It

By Stan Schachne

Arlington County gets its water from the Potomac River and the MacMillan and Dalecarlia treatment plants. These 2 facilities are operated by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. The system, including the pipes and pumps, is called the Washington Aqueduct.

This system supplies all of the Arlington and Falls Church water and a part of the D. C. water.

We have a 2-fold problem. (a) the plants need a substantial upgrade and there is a problem with tax-free bonds. (b) The Corps of Engineers does not want to continue operation of the Washington Aqueduct.

The financing problem has several aspects. It seems that Corps of Engineers cannot sell tax-free bonds. They could sell regular (taxable) bonds but that means higher cost. The other alternative, pay-as-you-go, means very high water rates during the construction period.

There are estimates of \$200 million to \$500 million as the cost of the upgrade. This means that there is a great deal of uncertainty as to what is needed. One driver is the quality of water in the river. More polluted water means a bigger treatment plant and more chlorine.

The organizational part of the problem is the selection of an agency to replace Corps of Engineers. Possible responses are (a) a municipal agency for Arlington, Falls Church

and the District: As Napoleon said, he lo... to fight coalitions. There is a steering committee studying this option. (b) privatization: American Water Works, a NYSE-listed company, supplies Alexandria with water. They have offered to take over the Aqueduct and supply our water but we would need an agency to regulate their prices. (c) Fairfax County Water Authority has offered to come in but we would be their hostage at low water times.

Our speakers will be Tom Jacobus (Washington Aqueduct), Sam Kem (Arlington Bureau of Public Works), Greg Clayton (Virginia Dept. of Environmental Quality), Gail Price (WLR Foods, a major poultry company in the Shenandoah Valley) and Congressman Moran. County Board member Paul Ferguson intends to be there, and the meeting will be covered by Eric Lipton of the Post and Amy Morris of the Northern Virginia Sun.

More About Our Water and Environmental Issues

by Henry Harper, Chair
Environmental Affairs Committee

Recently there has been some good news but also some bad news on how well Virginia is doing in handling environmental issues.

The bad news is that Virginia's budget for natural resources is very small compared to other States. Virginia is the second to highest importer of trash. Hog farms in Virginia are increasing because there is no authority to outlaw them; and there is the Pfiesteria issue.

Some citizens feel that Virginia is not taking the Pfiesteria problem seriously, but at least 5 million dollars has been set aside by the Governor for research, and a request has been made for federal funds to be given for research.

The good news is that the Water Quality Improvement Act of 1997 was passed and 15 million dollars is provided to control nutrients being placed in our water supply.



Proposed Bylaws Changes

by Jean Mostrum

Notice was given at our January 6, 1998 meeting of two proposed bylaw amendments, to be voted on at the February meeting

Amend Article IV Officers, Section 2 Nominating Committee by striking "May" and inserting "April" to read: "At the regular meeting in April a Nominating Committee of five (5) members shall be elected by ballot by the membership of the Federation from nominations from the floor.... " The rationale is to provide time for the committee to meet and "to submit its report in writing to all the delegates through the newsletter, or by other appropriate means" (a bylaw requirement). Electing in May and voting in June does not allow enough time for the committee to do its work effectively, or to publish the proposed slate of officers in the Newsletter.

2. Amend Article VII Committees, Section 7 (vi) Certificates of Appreciation, by striking "prior to the banquet" and inserting "in March", to read: "...The Awards Committee shall report the nominees for Certificates of Appreciation" at the Executive Committee meeting in March, at which time the Executive Committee shall make the final selection.... " The rationale is to give the Executive Committee time to consider the report of the Awards Committee and to prepare the certificates. Under the right conditions, the Executive Committee meeting "prior to the banquet" and the banquet could occur in the same week. The proposed amendment was requested by the Executive Committee.

County Has New Telephone Numbers: 228

On January 16 the County converted its 358 numbers to 228. The new 228 numbers can be remembered by the corresponding letters ACV, for Arlington County Virginia. Information is now reached on 228-3000. The non-emergency Police number did not change and remains 558-2222.



Coming Up

March Meeting: Arlington County Budget. To join the ACCF Revenues and Expenditures Committee and participate in drafting the committee report call Chairman Bob Atkins at 527-8859.

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Unpaid Dues!

As of January 15, the following Federation members had not yet paid their dues:

- Arlington Housing Corporation
- Arlington View
- Aurora Highlands
- Cherrydale
- Claremont
- Donaldson Run
- Nauck

Please have your treasurer send a check for \$40 to Ed McWethy at 3215 3rd Street South, Arlington 22204.

Newsletter Editorial Committee

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