

Arlington County Civic Federation

The civic voice of Arlington for 82 years

Newsletter

October, 1998

Volume 83, No. 2

October Meeting:

Ballot Items + Year 2000

**7:30 pm, Tuesday, October 6th
John T. Hazel Conference Center
Arlington Hospital
1701 N. George Mason Drive**

We will begin our meeting with brief descriptions of the bond issues and the Constitutional questions on the November ballot. Short listings were included in the September issue, and Nancy Graham provided some explanatory comments in a handout at the September meeting. Bond advocates will be on hand to answer your detailed questions on the bonds if necessary.

The Year 2000 program will feature the Northern Virginia Year 2000 Community Action Group presenting issues for our region as the calendar reaches the millennium, including the potential for civil defense-type emergency problems. Then Arlington County will describe the current state of the County's preparations for Y2K malfunctions. We are planning the program to start promptly and end as close to 9:30 PM as possible.

Neighborhood Day This Saturday, Many Activities

The October 3rd Neighborhood Day celebration, sponsored by the Civic Federation, the Neighborhood Conservation Advisory Committee and the County Council of PTAs, will take place on Saturday. It will feature joint events held by neighborhood civic associations and their neighborhood schools, a "Neighborhood Heroes" ceremony at Ballston Common Mall at noon and an old-fashioned parade at 3 PM from the old Sears lot to the Courthouse, followed by a celebration with school bands and other entertainment.

Participating civic associations and other organizations include Arlington East Fall Church, the Arlington Gay and Lesbian Alliance, the Arlington Mill Center, Arlington Ridge, Ashlawn Elementary School, Ashton Heights, Aurora Highlands, Barcroft, Bluemont (formerly Stonewall Jackson), Cherrydale, Glebe School, Glencarlyn, Lyon Park, Madison Manor, Patrick Henry School, Safeway stores, Waverly Hills, Williamsburg Middle School and Yorktown.

Legislation Committee Report

by Nancy Graham, Committee Chair

The Legislation Committee will have copies of its 1999 draft report available for distribution at the October 6 Federation meeting and will include the package in the November newsletter. The report follows the same format as last year's report; thus the 20 articles in the main body of the report were approved unanimously. The one item which received majority, but not unanimous, support appears in a separate section.

The package will be voted on at the November 10 (*second* Tuesday) meeting. In order to facilitate the deliberations, additions to the package will be accepted until 7:15 PM that evening. Delegates wishing to submit additions must present written copy with 75 copies available for distribution before the meeting begins. No additions will be accepted from the floor.

This procedure has been worked out to respond to comments from delegates that they need time to digest legislative items and consult in their neighborhood before having to vote on them. The best way to advocate a new legislative plank is to bring it to the Committee, so that everyone gets ample time to research the question. With this much notice there is no real excuse for last-minute items. If you plan to "ambush" your fellow delegates, you at least must provide written copies for everyone to consider, and will risk an automatic "no" vote from those who need time to research and reflect. Eventually the Federation may want to consider requiring new planks to be submitted to the committee.

Traffic Calming Task Force Making Rapid Progress

Work on the Traffic Calming task force has progressed rapidly now that the group is into its fall program. Difficult issues are being resolved now, in part due to personal attention from Sam Kem, Director of Public Works. There is still time for your association to submit comments on the earlier draft, but the group will be producing its next--and perhaps even final--draft in late November.

Schools Committee Will Meet on Oct. 17th

The Federation's Schools Committee has scheduled a meeting for October 17, and is asking anyone interested in being a member of the committee to please come. The meeting will be at 2 PM at the home of Terri Prell, one of the Co-Chairs, at 653 S. Harrison Street in Forest Glen, behind Greenbriar Baptist Church. For info please call Roger Meyer, the other Co-Chair, at 671-3655.

Committee Chairs Filled

As you may notice from the listings, we now have a full roster of committee Chairs. In addition to Schools Committee Co-Chairs Roger Meyer and Terri Prell, we welcome Patrick Smaldore, Jr. as Chair of Environmental Affairs. Patrick is a computer programmer at EPA and has a strong interest in this area. He already has expressions of interest in serving on the committee from Ernie Ragland, Vic Muniec and others. Please call him at 528-3935 if you are interested.

Year 2000 "Bug" What, Me Worry?

Why should the Federation devote a program to the "Y2K" issue? Is this a community-level concern? We think it is.

The Year 2000, or Y2K, problem began with computer chips and software that used a two year date, rather than all four years. For 1999 many of them show only 99. When they flip over to 2000, they will show 00, which older software will confuse as 1900. This does not sound that serious, but it can be.

The group coming to help us understand what the millennium bug can mean to Arlington is the Northern Virginia Year 2000 Community Action Group. Although they are not alarmists, they want you to know what the cumulative effects of many computers experiencing difficulty on the same day can be, and how we are not organized locally to deal with the local effects. They also are available to do a program at your civic association meeting, so you will want to see if there is something here that your neighborhood needs to hear.

In short, dates are used by unseen computer chips that control many, many things in our daily lives. If a large number of them go flooey at once, we could lose electric power, water, telephones, pagers, Internet connections, banking services, elevators, medical equipment, air travel, traffic lights and more. The biggest concern is that the cumulative effects could reach the proportions of a community disaster similar to a major storm, a flood, a terrorist attack, war or some other civil defense emergency.

Some see the Y2K problem as possibly triggering secondary effects on food distribution, business activity and the global economy.

The second part of our program will focus on the steps being taken by the Arlington County government to deal with changes needed to update its computer system and ensure that other County infrastructure is ready. Suppose the Treasurer's office could not generate tax bills, for example. How would that affect the County's income stream, and how would we deal with it?

The Federation and its members need to assess the risk involved and keep abreast of the potential impact in their neighborhoods. Do we need to build an ark? Are there reasonable advance precautions that may be helpful if the doomsayers are correct, but would not be so expensive or ridiculous that an easy transition would make us all fools? This program will probably not answer that question entirely, but it will give you a framework to understand over coming months the media coverage you may be ignoring now for lack of context.

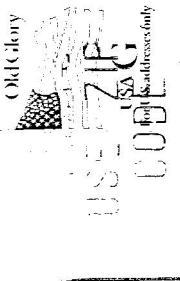
We hope to see you on October 6th!

Coming Up

**October 3rd:
Neighborhood Day**

November 10th
(second Tuesday)

**ACCF Meeting: Legislative
Package for 1999**



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 David Foster 276-0206
- Cultural Affairs**
 Herschel Kanter 536-6286
- Environmental Affairs**
 Patrick Smaldore 528-3935
- Housing**
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- Legislation**
 Nancy Graham 243-4650
- Membership**
 Frances Finta 528-2882
- Parks & Recreation**
 Robert Nester 524-5418
- Planning & Zoning**
 William Gearhart 522-2276
- Public Services**
 Rebecca Gray 549-3277 &
 Stan Schachne 522-1358 (Co-Chairs)
- Revenues and Expenditures**
 Robert Atkins 527-8859
- Schools**
 Roger Meyer 671-3655
 Terri Prell 820-3782
- Special Events**
 Ann Rudd 536-8270
- Transportation**
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