



FANS

News & Notes

February/March 2008

Kindergarten Orientation Season is Here!

February marks the beginning of the official kindergarten registration period in Arlington. Abingdon will be holding three orientations for parents interested in an introduction to Abingdon's kindergarten and an overview of the school's curriculum. Orientations are held in the school library and begin with a slide show presentation by Principal Joanne Uyeda about the school and its special programs, followed by a question and answer session. Information about how to register and registration packets will be provided. Parents will also hear from a member of the Abingdon PTA as well as kindergarten teachers, who will wrap the sessions up by leading tours of the school, including the kindergarten classrooms.

Orientation Schedule

Tuesday, February 26: 9:15 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

Thursday, March 13: 12:45 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.

Thursday, April 10: 9:15 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

To set up a private appointment with Ms. Uyeda, parents are encouraged to call the school office at 703-228-6650.

Coffee with Libby Garvey Postponed

The coffee with School Board member Libby Garvey scheduled for January 27 has been postponed indefinitely due to the sudden death of Libby's beloved husband, Kennan. A memorial service for Kennan will be held on February 23 at 1 p.m. at the Friends Meeting of Washington, 2111 Florida Avenue NW, Washington, DC; tel. 202-483-3310.

In lieu of flowers, Libby has asked that donations be made in Kennan's name to Phoenix Bikes, a bikes for youth effort; <http://www.Phoenixbikes.org> Donation checks should be made out to Greenbrier Learning Center, Attn: Phoenix Bike Shop-Kennan Garvey Memorial, 5401 7th Road South, Arlington, VA 22204.

Messages of support and sympathy can be addressed to: Libby Garvey, 4264 35th Street South, Arlington, VA 22206.

Forbes Rates D.C.-Arlington as Number 1 Place to Educate Children

Washington-Arlington received an A+ in public school support (based on teacher to student ratios and amount of money spent per student), and extremely high marks in the four other criteria used to make the rankings: private school options, library popularity, college town, and college options.

See this webpage for the rankings: http://www.forbes.com/2007/12/12/best-places-for-education-oped-cx_apa_1212educate_slide_2.html?boxes=custom and this for the full story: http://www.forbes.com/2007/12/12/best-places-for-education-oped-cx_dsa_1212educate.html

Gifted Services Parent Institute Holds Mini-Conference for Parents

Mark your calendar for the APS Biennial Gifted Services Parent Institute to be held at the Career Center, 816 South Walter Reed Drive in Arlington, on March 29, 2008, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (snow date April 5). This event provides parents of students identified for gifted services an opportunity to participate in a mini-conference about parenting gifted students.

The keynote address, "Stretching Gifted Students Without Straining Them: How to Find the Right Balance," will be presented at 9:00 a.m. by psychologist Dr. William R. Stixrud. Afterward, parents will have time to attend two 50-minute workshops on other parenting topics. For more information, contact the APS Gifted Services Office at 703-228-6160.

Does Arlington's School Overcrowding Problem Affect Abingdon?

Dave Presson, Abingdon parent and representative to the Elementary Capacity and Crowding Committee (ECCC), reported about Arlington Public Schools' overcrowding problem in Abingdon's newsletter, *The Little Bird*, this month. Here is an excerpt:

Abingdon has 346 students this year. Imagine if we had 661! Then we'd be as crowded as Tuckahoe Elementary School. Seven of Arlington's 22 elementary schools exceed 95% of their capacity and all of them are in the northwest corner of the county.

Early in 2007 the Arlington School Board formed the Elementary Capacity and Crowding Committee (ECCC) to explore and recommend solutions to Superintendent Smith and the Board. The Committee developed 17 proposals which ranged from cascading elementary school boundary changes to addressing the enforcement of the APS transfer policy as well as relocating or enhancing specific school programs.

The Superintendent presented a strikingly different recommendation to the Board at their meeting on January 17th that would change elementary school boundaries causing 655 students to change schools for the 2008-09 school year.

Though the crowding problem is a serious one and the entire Arlington community will play a part in the solution, the effect on Abingdon will likely be minimal. Although the Board may consider a number of options including hybrid combinations or entirely new options that may affect Abingdon, it is unlikely that the final solution will vary significantly from the options that are currently on the table.

For more information about the elementary school capacity and crowding issues, visit the Arlington Public Schools website <http://www.apsva.com> or review the news coverage by the Arlington Sun Gazette <http://www.sungazette.net/arlington>

Abingdon Girl Scouts Become Official

On Tuesday, January 8, the Daisy, Brownie, and Junior Girl Scout Troops of Abingdon Elementary held their Investiture ceremony, marking their official entry into a new year of scouting. Investiture is the time-honored tradition of welcoming new girls into scouting and rededicating returning scouts to the Girl Scout promise.

In addition to getting pins and badges that they have earned since October, the girls also sang songs, like "Make New Friends" and "I'm a Little Daisy"; recited the Girl Scout Law and Promise; and participated in a dramatization of the Brownie Elf story. Parents and guests joined them for cake and refreshments afterwards.

Now in its second year at Abingdon Elementary School, Girl Scouts have grown to include nearly two dozen girls. If you are interested in signing your daughter up for scouting, please contact Abingdon's Troop Coordinator, Dana Andy, at theandyfamily@comcast.net

National Cherry Blossom Festival Kicks Off March 29

Check out the official website of the Cherry Blossom Festival at <http://www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/cms/index.php?id=390> It includes predictions about peak bloom days (Bloom Watch) as well as maps and event information.

PTA Meeting Features Abingdon's Unique Music Program: Tuesday, Feb. 12 at 6:30 p.m.

All are welcome at Abingdon's PTA meetings. At the February meeting, Abingdon's violin instructor, Kristin Snyder, will talk about how Abingdon uses the Suzuki Method to teach violin to fourth graders. Students will also play violin music for the meeting attendees. Feel free to stay on for the PTA business meeting from 7:15 to 8 p.m. As always, *free childcare* is provided by the Extended Day staff. For more information, contact PTA Co-President, Dana Andy, at theandyfamily@comcast.net

Abingdon/FANS Playdate: Sunday, March 30 from 3 to 5 p.m.

Come to the school playground (in front of the school) to meet *current and prospective* Abingdon kids and parents on Sunday, March 30 from 3 to 5 p.m. Fliers on the event will be sent to all that attend an Abingdon orientation, in the hopes that people considering the school will come to mingle and ask questions. If your child is currently at the school, the playdate is a great opportunity to bond with other Abingdon families and to welcome new families to the school.

Stay tuned for more playdates throughout the spring and summer!