



The Neighborhood Newsletter

Volume 20, Number 1

The Guilt-Free Issue, March 2013

Have You Met Them?

Please welcome Ella Takahashi (now eight months), pictured here with parents Shana Yansen and Shoji Takahashi, and big brother Kai, two and a half, of 28 Churchill Avenue. Shana writes, "We moved here about five years ago from the Baltimore-DC area, but I grew up in this area, so am returning home, so to speak, after many years away. Despite all the snow, it's great to be back!"



Jason Suchman and Kate Alson welcomed their first child, newborn baby boy Eliot Lee Alson Suchman, on November 24th, 2012. "We moved to 29 Addison Street in August of 2010," Jason adds. "See you on the Minuteman Trail!"



Our neighborhood is now home to Meg and Matt and little Luke Petrosky (pictured here with Mr. Kitty and Butters) of Morton Road. Matt and Meg "met in college at Carnegie Mellon in the late 90's, and lived in Arlington in the early 2000's." They spent eight years in Lowell, "and just moved back to Arlington last April, about three weeks before Luke arrived on the scene—because, you know, that's what pregnant people do!"



A big welcome to twins Atticus Jin and Lola Rose Evans! They were born December 12th, just a month before moving to Kensington Park with parents Darin Evans and Fenni Jin. Although the twins keep their parents close to home, neighbors may also occasionally see Darin or Fenni out walking their little dog Maddie Mae.



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Lights, Camera, Action

When the neighbors you see out walking their dog turn out to be filmmakers, you want to learn more! At the editors' request, Barbara Costa agreed to interview her husband Eric Stange (both of Woodland Street) about Spy Pond Productions.

by Barbara Costa, Woodland Street

Q: How local is your work?

A: It's all over. We make documentaries for public television, and multimedia productions for non-profits—I'll be in Paris and Moscow this month.

Q: Why is it called Spy Pond Productions?

A: Well, we had an office on the corner of Pond Lane when I was incorporating, and had to come up with a name to register in a hurry. First I thought of Menotomy Productions, but that was potentially problematic for an entertainment company!

Q: Have you ever filmed in Arlington?

A: Sure. For the Discovery Channel we filmed a cops and robbers scene in the old garage where the Legacy condominiums are now. It was incredibly atmospheric.

Q: What are you working on now?

A: I'm making a film about former Secretary of State James Baker, who helped orchestrate the end of the Cold War. I've interviewed Colin Powell, Madeleine Albright, Dick Cheney, Henry Kissinger... We're trying to reach Eduard Shevardnadze, former Foreign Minister of the USSR, but were told that the name "Spy Pond Productions" might set off alarm bells. Maybe I should have called the company Menotomy after all!



Q: What turned you on to filmmaking?

A: I started as a print journalist, and wrote about

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Make Friends and Influence People

Does the newsletter make you grin? Raise your eyebrows? Groan? Then we've done our job—and can give up the guilt about letting this issue run late. Interviews, contests, charts, hooray!

The good news is that much of this success is due "to domestic diva Marci Goldberg," says co-editor Jessie Brown. "She's our queen of thank-you notes, phone persona, and communicator extraordinaire." We also want to welcome our energetic new treasurer, Sharon May, of Woodland Road.

The bad news is that Marci is retiring. "Sadly," she writes, "I'll be stepping down as co-editor of the Neighborhood Newsletter at the end of March. It's been an amazing experience, but increased demands of family and career changes have shifted my schedule."

Will the Newsletter fold? Not if we get a little help from our friends—say, a pinch-hitter, to collude with Jessie one issue at a time...

Ever wanted to brainstorm topics, tweak headlines, test restaurant reviews? Or just get to know more neighbors? We're waiting to hear, at nbrnews@gmail.com!

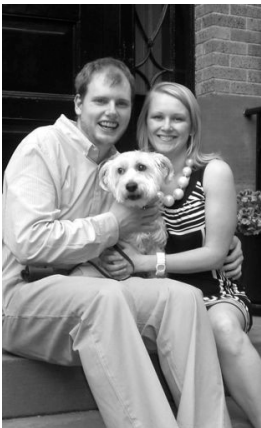
Yours,

Jessie Brown & Marci Goldberg
www.theneighborhoodnewsletter.org

Have You Met Them?

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Neighbors may recognize Luca Schiano and Michaela Bowden, who moved to 205 Pleasant Street this September. "We hail from Italy and Ireland, respectively," Luca explains, "although we've spent the best part of a decade in the Boston area. We're very happy we finally settled on Arlington for our new home—with the added bonus of finding a couple of beautiful foxes sun-bathing on our backyard terrace on the very first morning. So far we're loving our neighborhood!"



Please also greet Megan and Declan Healy, who moved into 27 Venner Road this December with their dog Finnegan. As first-time homeowners they're enjoying the nuances of fixing up an older home. They moved here from Davis Square, and feel lucky to have found a home in our neighborhood, their first choice for a place to live.

Lights, Camera, Action

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filmmakers. I got to know the local community, really liked the people, and decided to I'd like to try it.

Q: Do you use neighbors in your productions?

A: Both my kids, Alex and Mia, were extras in *Murder at Harvard*, a film I made about an infamous 1849 murder at the Harvard Medical School. I made that with another Arlington resident, Melissa Banta (Newport Street). Our composer—and the one I work with on most of my projects—was John Kusiak (Spring Street).

Q: What do you love about filmmaking?

A: It's like writing in three dimensions! It's the opposite of journalism, where the words take the lead. Even if you add a narrative, writing for film is like writing in pictures... It's a 3-D way of expressing yourself.

Q: What's hardest?

A: The coordination. There's the baggage, the camera man, the extra cost, who's going to meet the van... Sometimes I just miss the days of showing up with a pad and a pen.

Q: It's not glamorous?

A: People think of directors being on the set, ordering people around, but most of the work is probably researching. The time with the camera is really about 1/25th of making the film. Shooting's expensive, so you want to minimize it. And you get so much footage in one day, if you used it all you'd drown. Then you spend months and months editing!

Q: What surprises you?

A: The biggest eye-opener for me the past few years was learning about what it was like to live in East Germany before the wall came down. I know a guy who almost got thrown into prison because when he was 16 he put a poster of Woodstock on his wall. Hearing the stories of the Secret Police was just chilling.

Q: Is it hard to draw people out?

A: People in general love to tell their stories. Sometimes we have to do some coaxing, if the story is very difficult, but in the end most people want to help. I'm amazed at how generous they are.

Who funds the Newsletter?

You, and your excellent neighbors! Donations from individuals, including special support from Judy Weinberg (Venner Road) of RE/MAX Leading Edge Real Estate (judyweinberg@remax.net), have allowed us to keep printing approximately three times a year. To donate, go to www.neighborhoodnewsletter.org

What Makes a Good Child?

by Boris Gross (10) and Clemence Taillandier,
Monadnock Road

Our last newsletter polled kids about what makes a good parent, so we thought it was time to let the adults talk back. Boris (10) and I did a little investigation among parents living in our neighborhood. Here are the results of our very professional survey...

Monica, Norfolk Street, mother of two grown-ups: "What makes a good child? Someone I can hug whenever I want."

David, father of one, Jason Street: "Mom and Dad make a good child!"

Ruth, mother of two: "A good child is a caring, considerate, easy going, and fun person to be around... How's that for a definition?"

Suzie, 7: "Okay. Are you explaining me?"

Max, 10: "I like it."

Paul, Ottawa Road, father of two teenagers: "A good kid shows that they have been respected by their parents by being comfortable speaking with adults and respectful of other kids. They can have real conversations, and not just give one-word answers. It's okay if they get into a little trouble here and there, as long as the trouble doesn't create problems for them. In other words, if it's not a problem, it's not a problem."

Irit, Monadnock Road, mother of two (14 and 9): "A good child is the one that I don't raise!"

Tomasina, Pleasant Street, mother of three: "Somebody who's kind, and tries his or her best."

Jude, 7: "Yeah, and is nice and helpful."

Anna, 5: "A good kid is a funny kid!"

Violet, 4: "You have to be a good sharer!"

Kevin, father of two, Iroquois Road: "What makes a good child? I have no idea! Coming to parenthood late in life, I have to say that this is the most humbling experience I could have ever imagined."

Clemence, Monadnock Road: "A good kid is a happy kid, a kid who always tries to make the best of his life, of his relations with his parents, siblings, teachers, and friends..."

Boris, 10: "So, kind of like me!"



Beware of Ice

Below is an account of an event that took place on January 19th at Menotomy Rocks Park.

by David Bean, Jason Street

As I was walking into the park, I saw a commotion across the pond and heard shouting. Neighbors called, "Someone's fallen through the ice!" Running over with my dog, I found two soaked fifth-grade girls on the shore and a lot of broken ice. The rescuer, a young man with his own (dry) daughter, was soaked above the waist.

While other dog-walkers hustled the now-safe girls toward their car for shelter, I showed the wet rescuer the way to a near-by house, and commended

him to a neighbor's care. Meanwhile, a boy still on the ice in the middle of the pond was persuaded to turn around and go back to shore.

Others had called 911 on their cellphones; police arrived after the excitement was over and took the girls home. Once the valiant rescuer was warmed up, the neighbor drove him and his daughter back. Thank goodness no one was seriously hurt, but it was a close call.

How many of us consider how ponds freeze and thaw, let alone teach this to our children? There had been plenty of skating earlier in the week. But a pond that's shaded on most of its banks can still warm quickly on its sunny side. By starting from the stronger ice toward the back of the pond, the girls had crossed most of the way before the thinning ice broke, only ten yards from the sunnier shore.

It reminds me that the town used to place ice rescue boards around the pond—six-foot flat boards painted red, with rungs and long ropes. If someone fell in, the board could be pushed out over the weak ice for the victim to grab, and be pulled back to shore. I'm not sure why the town no longer sets out the boards; their absence doesn't discourage people from venturing onto the ice. It was luck that placed a capable rescuer nearby. Just one minute more in the water and that Saturday could have turned tragic.

I hope that the town replaces the rescue boards. No matter how competent our emergency personnel are, there's no guarantee that, when mere seconds count, they can be there in time. Apparently, it takes a village.



George Plimpton Retrospective Friday, March 22

The Arlington Public Art Committee, including neighbors Jane Howard and Barbara Costa, invite you to a fundraiser commemorating George Plimpton—journalist, writer, editor, and actor—on the tenth anniversary of his death. His brother, Arlington resident Oakes Plimpton, has made television programs available for a screening on Friday, March 22, from 7:30-9:30 p.m. at the Arlington Center for the Arts.

The excerpts feature George Plimpton in a variety of roles, as part of his participatory journalism: playing in the NY Philharmonic for example, conducted by Leonard Bernstein, and acting in a western directed by Howard Hawks along with John Wayne. In an interview, he speaks of his experiences with Ernest Hemingway, Tennessee Williams, and Truman Capote as editor of the Paris Review. Introduction and Q&A with Oakes Plimpton; additional comments by Arlingtonian Sven Birkerts, critic, essayist, and editor of AGNI literary magazine. Tickets for the event are available at www.acarts.org/public_art.php Suggested donation: \$10 (more welcome at the door).

Going for the Big Time: Life on Stage

by Dorothy Held, Jason Street

How do you put your passion to work? For Michele Clifford, Pleasant View Road, the answer was Menotomy Musical Theater (MMT). After years of coordinating the Bishop school's shows, she founded a professional children's theater group that produces full-scale musicals. This January, the cast of *Rodgers and Hammerstein's Cinderella* featured 47 of our youngest Arlingtonians.



Otto Rademacher, the charismatic and exuberant 10 year-old who played Lionel, was won over. The Bellevue Road resident had so much fun in *Cinderella*

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Wheat-Free, Guilt-Free

by Jane Commons and Julia Simon,
both age 11, Jason Street and Brantwood Road

We stopped by the new bakery at 169 Mass. Ave., *Something Sweet Without Wheat*, on a Tuesday afternoon. When we asked the owner, Ms. Federico, if she had time for an interview, she was happy to answer our questions.



Jane: Why did you want to open a gluten free bakery?

Ms. Federico: My daughter got really sick with Crohn's Disease when she was 12, and they were going to operate and remove part of her intestine. Instead, we took gluten out of her diet, and she was better in six to eight weeks. I started cooking differently for my whole family, and it eventually turned into a business.

Julia: Why did you choose Arlington?

Ms. Federico: We started in Woburn. We are still there, but our business has been growing and we needed new space. We found this spot, and took it!

Jane: What did you do before owning a bakery?

Ms. Federico: I was a nurse at MA General who worked with premature babies. My sister Christine, who owns the bakery with me, used to be a hair dresser.

Julia: My dad is allergic to gluten. What do you recommend for him?

Ms. Federico: Any kind of bread we offer would be a good place to start—pizza crust, focaccia, sandwich bread, cinnamon and raisin, molasses, herb bread. We also have desserts, like brownies, fresh blueberry pies, and cookies. Really, he would like everything in the store.

Julia: Is it possible to make a gluten free donut?

Ms. Federico: Funny you should ask! Our baker made one this morning for the first time. We tried it together. It is a process when we have new products.

Jane: Is all your stuff homemade?

Ms. Federico: Yes! I got used to making gluten-free products.

After the interview we bought an assortment of goodies, and split the sweets when we got home. Here are some comments:

- Brownie: Soft! Very sweet! Cooked just right. Soft on the inside, chewy on the outside—better than normal brownies! Great with milk!
- Red Velvet Cupcake: Frosting is creamy and yummy. Cake tastes a bit bland. Not a favorite.
- Raspberry drops (bite-sized): Amazing! Tastes like shortbread with a bit of raspberry filling. Yum! Buttery! Just the right size!
- Snickerdoodle Cookie: Good; tastes okay. It's dry, but chewy too—a mix between rye bread and shortbread, sweet and not sweet at the same time.

Our favorite by far was the raspberry drop, but the brownie was a close second.

It was a great bakery and fun to visit. Ms. Federico is the nicest person. She makes good gluten free pastries, and loves her job. We recommend it!

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that he auditioned for MMT's next production, *Grease* (school version). In May he'll hit the stage as Doody, one of the lead Greasers, and the jokester of the group—a role that comes naturally to him.

"Being in *Cinderella* was really fun, and it didn't take much time either," says Otto. A fifth-grader at Bishop who also plays soccer and baseball, and skis competitively in the winter, he had no problem making evening rehearsals twice a week. And MMT provides a new community of friends—*Cinderella*



included youngsters from seven different towns.

"The goal is to expose young people to the experience of live professional theater, and teach life skills through stage skills," Michele explains. "Theater provides a unique creative outlet, a chance to build self-esteem as well as social, speaking and team-building skills."

Do kids need prior training? No. "Children are capable of so much, artistically, in an environment that sets a high bar," says Michele. Menotomy Musical Theater uses live music and professional sound and lighting, and teaches cast members acting and vocal technique. "Besides having fun, we want kids to leave the experience having learned a little about theater, themselves and life."

And learn Otto did. At first he worried that he couldn't learn all his lines, or that he might forget some onstage. But with one production under his belt, he's buoyant. MMT taught him he can work on just a few lines every night.

And he no longer worries about mistakes. "I learned to just relax and do my best," he says. "If I forget a line, I just roll with it, pay attention to my part, and finish my sentence. The audience won't know the difference."

Words of wisdom for kids of all ages!

To learn more about Menotomy Musical Theater, go to www.menotomymusicaltheater.com.

A Letter to the Editors

Dear Editors,

"Shall the Town keep four vehicular travel lanes on Massachusetts Avenue in East Arlington as now practiced?"

What is this about? The ballot question is a cleverly worded effort by some in Arlington to stop the Mass. Ave. Reconstruction Project, designed by the town and Mass DOT to improve safety and traffic flow through East Ar-

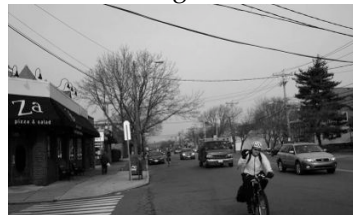


lington. If opponents succeed, the town could lose all of the Mass DOT and federal funding already allocated—forcing the town to raise taxes instead.

Is the only purpose of our streets to speed car traffic as quickly as possible? Mass. Ave. is the heart of our community—and our most important business artery, pumping life into our town.

The proposed plan will have two travel lanes on the eastbound side of the road, one travel lane westbound, and will incorporate a five-foot bicycle lane "on both sides of Mass. Ave. as well as an eight- to 10-foot wide shoulder for on-street parking and bus stops," with dedicated turning lanes at major intersections.

Despite what opponents want you to believe, the existing roadway does *not* have four lanes. Mass. Ave is a single, variable-width, lane each way, where cars



sometimes drive side by side—or swerve and pass. The road is not consistently wide enough to support four vehicle lanes under state guidelines. Multiple studies have shown that neither current nor projected traffic volume will slow substantially with the proposed plan.

As we move into the future, we cannot ignore the growing needs of businesses, car traffic, buses, bicycles and pedestrians. The town and Mass DOT have worked hard to incorporate public comment and come up with a plan that serves all. You can see details here: http://www.arlingtonma.gov/Public_Documents/ArlingtonMA_PLanning/MassAve/index

Please vote "NO" on this misleading referendum. Let the town and the state know that you support a vision of Arlington that meets the future needs of all her citizens.

Laura Notman, Longfellow Road



The Message Board...

Make Our Neighborhood Safe

Neighbors who live next to Menotomy Rocks can protect us all by checking that invasive plants like English Ivy and Burning Bush are not “jumping the wall,” and spreading into the Park. Both can be fairly easily pulled up by the roots when young, or cut back on a recurrent basis to ultimately kill the roots. Contact MaryAnna Foskett or Becky Edmondson (781-646-5882 and 781-859-9786) for more information.



Home Wanted

We’re in search of a 3-bedroom home nearby (even a two bedroom condo if something like that were available), hoping for a yard of any size. We sublet last summer on Bartlett St. and fell in love with the area. We hope to find a warm and lovely house to call our own in Arlington, preferably in your Jason Heights neighborhood. Please call Laura or Ed at (978) 239 3180.

Local Talent in Musical Review

Our neighborhood's own Zoe Sachs, along with fellow AHS student Robert Harrelson, will be performing several songs in the upcoming *Side by Side by Sondheim* at Arlington Friends of the Drama. Show dates are March 29-30, April 5-7, and April 12-14; tickets are \$25. For showtimes and more information, please visit www.afdtheatre.org.



Making a Clean Sweep—Together

The Friends of Spy Pond Park will hold the first work day of this year on Saturday, April 20, 1-4 p.m. The goal is to clean up the park and eliminate invasive plants! To volunteer and obtain more information, please contact lallystow@yahoo.com or (781) 777-2759. Please urge your friends and neighbors to join in!

Get Your Leather Jacket

and poodle skirt—let's rock and roll to the Burger Palace, baby! Starring young members of our own neighborhood, the ever-popular *Grease* is coming to Belmont Town Hall Auditorium May 10-12. Shorter and more suitable for pre-teens and teens, this version retains the fun-loving spirit and classic songs that make the musical a favorite among all ages. Tickets available at www.menotomymusicaltheater.com

Unwind at the Park: Tai Chi

The Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park are pleased to sponsor another Tai Chi class this spring in the Park. Dorri Li of Dorri Li Fitness will return as teacher. The classes will be free, held Thursday mornings from May 2nd to June 20th, 9:30-10:30 a.m. Mark your calendars! You can attend on a drop-in basis but registering through the Arlington Recreation Department (<http://www.arlingtonrec.com/info/>) would be most helpful.

Water Project in the Pipeline

A new MWRA 36-inch pipeline project will start on Pleasant Street, travel up Brunswick Road onto Hillsdale and connect to MWRA’s Spring Street Pump Station. What kind of work will this entail? When will it start? If you missed the first public meeting this February at Town Hall, come to the next. Keep checking arlingtonma.gov/mwra for information and updates.

Rake or Shovel for Pay!

Are there any young people in the area of Hillsdale Road who would like to hire out for raking or snow-shoveling in the future? If so, please get your name and phone number to mgcxx@verizon.net. You may not get called until next season, but you will most likely hear from several of us then!

Thanks

Deer Naybors, Tanks for putting olives on yore sno man. Dey were delishus. I also like raysins. Yore nayborhood dawg.



Roving Reporter

by Karen Dillon, Brantwood Road

We asked local youth, “What would you like to see in the old Foodmaster space, instead of a grocery store?”

“A big big big fat teddy bear!” –Francis, 5, Norfolk Road

“A DVD store.” –Sam, 12, Brantwood Road

“A music store.” –Owen, 8, Jason Street

“A place where teens can get together, make art, and hang out.” –Lillian, 13, Brantwood Road

“It would be nice if they put in something like Toys R Us.” –Leah, 11, Irving Street

“Sky Zone! It’s a place where the floors and walls are trampolines and you can bounce around and stuff.” –Lexi, 6, Irving Street

“An indoor soccer field and outdoor pool.” –Michael, 15, Brantwood Road

“A mini mall with food courts, and a lounge in the middle with comfy furniture where kids can hang out and do homework.” –Joji, 12, Brantwood Road

“A video-game store.” –Henry, 13, Brantwood Road

“A roller-coaster.” –Andrew, 52, Devereaux Street

“Anything but a Dunkin’ Donuts!” –Max, 9, Highland Avenue





Vacation Begins at Home

by Bill Berkowitz, Pelham Terrace

Hey, parents! Hey kids! Are you tired of playdates, lessons and leagues? Do computer games crowd out outdoor play? Don't let the winter blahs leave you blue. Who says you have to leave town to vacation? Save your hard-earned pennies for Arlington.

Florida, Mexico, the Bahamas—they're old hat. Dare to be different. Think bridges, towers, tunnels, slides... Our neighborhood boasts more playgrounds than you might imagine. Bring your own beverage, and unwind at your own pace.

Depending on how you count, at least four playgrounds await you between Mass. Ave. and Route Two, and between Highland and Spy Pond. They vary in size and setting, but all of them feature attractions, with quirky corners to climb and explore. Are you ready for a brief tour?

- Spy Pond Playground—prime bike-path location at the end of Pond Street, right on the water. Popular and well-populated. Ducks, geese, ice-cream trucks, and the best selection of swings!
- The Hidden Jewel—easy to miss, behind the library and the Whittemore-Robbins House. Tall shade trees, benches for tired parents, low-key sandlot nearby.
- Menotomy Rocks playground—nestled by the woods on the park's back field. Now with a circle of tree stumps available for meetings! (See page eight.)



- Fenced forecourt of the Arlington Children's Center—corner of Academy and Irving. Large truck tires rooted in the ground! Ball court! Come ride your trike, or shoot baskets after school!

Ponds and picnics, flowers and fountains... Who needs a visa? Our neighborhood playgrounds (and playing fields) are major assets, not to mention accessible. Why worry about airfares and carbon footprints, when you can stay home guilt-free?

REASONS FOR NOT WRITING

My pencil broke, my ink is dry,
my lights are out.

Words hide in the closet,
afraid of sounding trite, looking silly.

There are all the bills to pay.

Where's the revelation?
It's supposed to be original. Profound.

The cupboard is bare, the purse empty,
the muse took flight—Delta 275
to the Keys. And here I am
cleaning the bathroom tiles with
a toothbrush. Then
there's the laundry. The dishes...

Inadequacy leers.
What will people think?

—Collaborative poem

A group exercise from the "Invitation to Poetry" workshops hosted by the Arlington Senior Center, this "excuses" poem was the brainstorm of ten neighbors.

Jackson's Joke Corner

by Jackson Dray, age 9, Jason Street

Q: What's white, has four legs and a trunk?

A: A mouse going on vacation.

Q: What did the puppy say when he sat on sandpaper?

A: Ruff, ruff!

Q: Where did Napoleon keep his armies?

A: Up his sleeves.

Q: What has the head of a cat, the tail of a cat, and isn't a cat?

A: A kitten.

Q: What's big, red and prickly, has three eyes and eats rocks?

A: A big red prickly three-eyed rock-eater.

Q: What do you call a fake noodle?

A: An impasta

Q: Why does a chicken coop have two doors?

A: Because if it had four it would be a chicken sedan.

Q: Why did the pirate donate his gold?

A: The gilt was weighing on him.



Mystery feature at the playground at Menotomy Rocks, back field.

Contest: Name That Thing

Cast a Vote, Come Celebrate!

This fall a new structure appeared at Menotomy Rocks—but not the kind that you can mail-order. Is it for sitting, for eating meals, for theater, for circus tricks? Above all, what should we call it?

Below are some suggestions from park visitors—or you may have your own. Don't be shy about write-ins! You can always lobby neighbors to vote for your favorite name.

There are two ways to vote. Mark your choice on this ballot and drop it in the box at 46 Jason Street, or go to our online survey. You'll find the link on our website, neighborhoodnewsletter.org, or go directly to <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MHJ7GFY>. The deadline is Patriot's Day, 2013.

We will immortalize the winning name on a plaque this June—don't miss the grand unveiling with fabulous cookies and refreshments! Make sure to include your email or phone with your vote to receive your VIP invitation!

What should we call the mystery structure?

- The Colosseum
- Wood-o-rama
- The Druid Circle
- The Round Table
- The Jumping Circle
- Stumphenge
- The Council Ring
- Other _____

Your Name/Contact _____

Opinions? Yeah, We Got Opinions: Car Repair

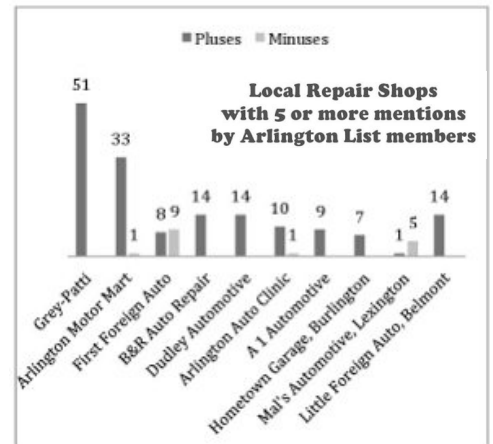
by Nicholas Herold, Pleasant Street

Arlington-Listers are notoriously opinionated. Please note that I have no dog in this fight. I don't even own a car. I just wondered whether there were strong feelings about shops in the area. I found plenty.

Although the effort was exhausting (though fun), this review is not exhaustive. It isn't meant for publication in an academic journal, and it has weaknesses. I must warn you of the possibility that at some point I became so bleary or coffee intoxicated that I started double-counting. For the curious (or skeptical), here is my method.

I started with an Arlington List Archive search of the key phrase "car repair." I then reviewed the recommendations and made a list of every shop mentioned.

This yielded 23 shops. Next step: I searched each of these names separately, keeping track of both positive and negative mentions. When additional shops turned up within this search, I put them on the list and added them to my shop-name search terms.



Finally I compiled the data and created the chart attached. I left off shops with five or fewer data points, thinking that too few reviews would bias the results. The remaining positive and negative comments created the skyline you see.

So what do we learn about repair shops in Arlington? Well, some shops have vocal fans. Other shops have irritated A-List members enough that they felt compelled to share. Maybe the good reviews mean that you'll get good service. Maybe the bad ones mean you should stay away. How's that for deep insight? I advise nothing.



If you find fault with the results, I commend your skeptical spirit, and encourage you to re-do your own analysis. Please let me know if you do your own research, but for heaven's sake don't ask me to check your work or further justify mine! My curiosity on the subject is satisfied. I'm done, acabado, finito.