

all FAIRLINGTON BULLETIN



www.fca-fairlington.org

AUGUST 2016

Volume 42, Number 8

Fairlington Park improvements briefing set for August 24

Inside this month

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Arlington County staff will brief the Fairlington community on the latest plans for improving the grounds behind the Fairlington Community Center on August 24 at 7 pm in the community center. The county is proposing changes to the playground, track, and exercise area, as well as providing enhanced storm water management.

The August briefing follows a public update held on June 29 at which several residents expressed concerns about the plans for the playground. According to Aaron Wohler, the county's landscape architect who is managing the Fairlington Park project, staff is revising the plans to address some of those issues.

The original plan had only "bucket" swings and no standard swings. Parents have pushed to maintain regular swings because of their popularity, and Wohler says the revised plans will include a set of standard swings.

The playground will be a focal point for renovation, with that area segmented to accommodate 2- to 5-year-olds in one area and older children in another. Permeable materials will be used in both as part of storm water management. A new synthetic turf will also be used that is especially designed for play areas.

The current amphitheater will be phased into the new playground. It currently gets little use. The gazebo will remain, and more seating will be added, with additional features to accommodate children with disabilities.

Wohler cautions that some of the playground components will need to be relocated so that they are not underneath the "drip line" of the trees on the site. The county's foresters want to protect the health of the trees by reduc-



Much of the focus on Arlington County's plan for improvements to Fairlington Park, the area behind the Fairlington Community Center, focuses on the playground, where local families and children enjoy hanging out. Photo by Guy Land.

Continued on page 31

Coming up ...

The FCA Board invites all Fairlington residents to attend its meetings, which occur on the second Wednesday of the month at the Fairlington Community Center (3308 S. Stafford St.) unless otherwise noted. Before the beginning of each monthly Executive Board meeting, FCA members may address the board on matters affecting the community, limited to three minutes per member.

FCA monthly meeting August 10

Regular board business:

- Approval of July minutes
- Office reports
- Committee reports
- Unfinished business
- New business

Online resources:

Find more information on the FCA website, www.fca-fairlington.org. Sign up for updates delivered to your inbox.



Find us on Facebook at Fairlington Appreciation Society.

Find the latest *AFB* online at the FCA website the week before hard copies hit doorsteps.

Web design by Global Thinking, Alexandria, VA, www.globalthinking.com.

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www.arlingtonva.us/departments/Environmental	
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Fairlington Citizens Association

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All Fairlington Bulletin

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Calendar

FCA monthly meeting

Wednesday, August 10, 7 pm
FCC, 3308 S. Stafford St.

Fairlington Diners

Wednesday, August 10, 6:30 pm
The Fish Market
105 King St.
Old Town, Alexandria

Book Club

Tuesday, August 23, 7:30 pm
FCC, 3308 S. Stafford St.

Fairlington Park briefing

Wednesday, August 24, 7 pm
FCC, 3308 S. Stafford St.

Fairlington Diners

Monday, August 29, 6:30 pm
Lost Dog Café
2920 Columbia Pike
Arlington

Staying cool in the pool



A member of the Fairlington FINS swimming group heads for the wall during a recent outing at the swimming pool. Photo by Jeni Hornback.

Contributors this month: Lynne Blasi, Christine Chirichella, Jennifer Davies, Guy Land, Bill Sullivan, Anne Wilson.

Some images in this publication may be digitally enhanced.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Did you make it to the Fairlington July 4th celebration? Have you been to the Fairlington Farmers Market this summer? These two family-oriented activities suggest the richness of community that marks life in Fairlington. They help make it such a great place to live.

A record crowd, estimated at about 800 people, turned out for the Fourth of July parade. It was awesome to see the throng walking down Abingdon St., with scores of residents lining the sidewalk to cheer the marchers on. Patriotic colors were everywhere—on kids, adults, strollers, bikes, and dogs, as well as adorning patio fences.

Three members of the Arlington County Board—Libby Garvey, John Vihstadt, and Katie Cristol—joined us for the celebration. It says a lot for Fairlington that they chose to spend the holiday in our community. They get invitations to celebratory events all across the county that day. We appreciate their interest in Fairlington.

Dozens of kids enjoyed sitting behind the wheel of the police squad car that led the parade or climbing aboard the fire truck that trailed the marchers at the end of the parade. Both Fire Station 7 and the Third District police are valued members of the neighborhood.

The farmers market is enjoying a successful second season, with patronage growing as word spreads about the market's great selection of locally grown fruits and vegetables, as well as breads and pastries. The market has quickly become a Fairlington institution. Like the parade, the market is very much a family activity. Strollers are as common as tote bags.

Two key take-aways from these events: First, they are truly community activities, designed primarily for Fairlingtonians. They offer a great opportunity to meet and visit with neighbors, and help give Fairlington a small-town feel inside the beltway. And they welcome the growing number of families with small children.

Second, the success of both events lies in the cadre of volunteers who do the work. For the Fourth, the North Fairlington community activities committee organized the event and grilled the hot dogs, while folks from the Commons coordinated the No Kid Hungry Bake Sale. At the farmers market, a dedicated team of volunteers greets customers each week.

The Fairlington Fourth is jointly sponsored by FCA and the Fairlington Villages condo association, while FCA is a sponsor of the market. These are ways we contribute financially to life in Fairlington. But to make them work requires the help of volunteers. We need you.

Guy Land, FCA President
president@fca-fairlington.org



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Construction begins on Abingdon school expansion

Right on schedule, construction workers arrived at Abingdon School on July 5 to begin site preparation for major construction and renovation of the school. The entire school property is now a construction area and is closed to the public.

In addition to the construction work, Arlington Public Schools (APS) has moved in additional portable classrooms (relocatables). In July, workers were connect-



Construction workers do prep work at the Abingdon Elementary School construction staging area. Photos by Guy Land.



The portable classrooms get some attention from the crew working at Abingdon.



The main entrance to the school site.

ing utilities to the classroom trailers, which have been placed on the area that was previously the playing field. APS plans to have 18 of the relocables on the site. These will be used for classes when various parts of the building are being renovated.

The entire school parking lot has become the staging area for the construction contractor (HESS Construction). A part of the field area that is not used by the relocatables will become a temporary parking lot.

In addition, the trail from 31st St. is closed off at the school property, and the walk that leads from Abingdon St. to the school has also been closed at the school.

The Abingdon School office is being housed for the summer at Wakefield High School.

July work focused primarily on site prep, while August will see the creation of a new bus loop to serve students this fall, the installation of the new temporary parking lot, renovation of five kindergarten classrooms, and beginning work on the new kitchen and cafeteria.

—Guy Land

For questions about the activities of the construction general contractor, contact Sandra Hagen, Senior Project Manager, 202-740-7874, shagen@heery.com.

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County health director talks mosquito control, Zika at FCA monthly meeting

Arlington County Health Director Dr. Reuben Varghese knows a thing or two about what bugs people. And this time of year, what bugs people are mosquitoes.

Dr. Varghese was the guest speaker at the monthly meeting of the Fairlington Citizens Association on July 13, and centered his discussion on the nuisance that the pests pose summer after summer, and the very real concern among many Fairlingtonians about mosquito-borne viruses, like West Nile and Zika.

Given the fact that there are many growing families in Fairlington, the Zika virus has sparked the attention of many. And the virus has been pointed to as a reason many athletes will not be travelling to Rio for the Summer Olympics.



Dr. Reuben Varghese talks mosquitoes.

And that's the point, Dr. Varghese argued. The virus is currently found in mosquitoes in Latin American and Caribbean countries and territories, including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The virus has not been found in mosquitoes in the continental United States, he said. But that doesn't mean no one is watching, he added. The Centers for Disease Control and Arlington County are monitoring Zika diligently, he said.

Dr. Varghese focused on the mosquito as a nuisance, and how to lower your chances of getting bitten.

"Who here likes mosquitoes?" he asked to group laughter at one point.

"It's a fear-inducing topic," he said. "I'm hoping that when you leave here tonight, you'll see you are in control of your own surroundings."

The Aedes mosquito is the genus of mosquito known to carry the Zika virus, and the pest can be found in some areas of the U.S. But the bug doesn't fly more than a distance of 150 yards, nor does it fly very high. Mosquitoes more common in the U.S. can fly up to a mile.

It comes down to the battle of not getting bitten, he reminded the group. Much of it seems common sense,

but reminders rarely hurt, he added.

Eliminating standing water around homes and yards, particularly in man-made containers, is key. For some inexplicable reason, Dr. Varghese said, the Aedes mosquito breeds in the water collected in man-made vessels. If you enjoy a birdbath in your yard or patio, clean the bath and change the water once a week.

Other places standing water gathers are roofs and gutters, downspouts and pipes used for drainage, tires, wheelbarrows, tarps, and grill and furniture covers.

Using a safe insect repellent is also a good idea, Dr. Varghese said, although he included a reminder that you should apply on bare skin and clothing and not apply and wear clothing over the applied-to area.

"The insect repellent you use is the best one," Dr. Varghese said. "It's better than not using one at all." He also said that for children under three months, netting is the way to go the ensure baby is not bitten.

You need to weigh risks when travelling in areas where Zika has been found, and if you pregnant or trying to become pregnant, a talk with the doctor is advised, he said.

But it also comes down to doing the right thing as far as eliminating breeding grounds.

"If you reduce the water that's stagnant around your home," Varghese said. "You're helping everyone."

For more information on mosquitoes and the Zika virus, go to cdc.gov/zika and health.arlingtonva.us.

—Bob Bradley



Former FCA Secretary Carol Dabbs, Dr. Reuben Varghese, and current board member Evan Harvey at the monthly meeting of the FCA on July 13. Photos by Bob Bradley.



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FCA pushes to maintain Fairlington bus service

FCA is working with county staff on options for maintaining frequent rush-hour bus service through North and South Fairlington. At its meeting on July 16, the Arlington County Board adopted a staff recommendation that responds to issues raised by FCA.

As part of its overall Transit Development Plan (TDP), the county proposed to discontinue the 22A and 22C routes, which primarily serve South Fairlington. It would replace them with the 87 ART, which would do a loop through South Fairlington and back to the Shirlington Transit Station before continuing on its regular route along Army-Navy Drive to the Pentagon.

Under the initial plan, South Fairlington riders would likely change to the 7A or 7Y at Shirlington, but this could add significantly to the overall travel time from South Fairlington to the Pentagon, and it could reduce the frequency of bus service to South Fairlington during rush hour. Under some circumstances, travel time to the Pentagon for South Fairlington residents could increase by roughly 30 minutes.

With this plan, North Fairlington residents would see improved service, with the frequency of 7A and 7Y service almost doubling.

"We strongly oppose the TDP recommendations that will impact residents who currently use the WMATA 22 during peak hours," FCA said in a July 7 letter to county board members. Noting the reduced service and increased travel times that would result from this change, the letter warned that "overall use of the bus service could actually decrease, as residents seek other modes to commute. Obviously a reduction in service to a neighborhood that genuinely values and makes heavy use of bus service is not the intent of the TDP."

The letter noted, however, that the proposed 87 ART route that would loop through Fairlington during non-peak times could be effective in providing better connections through Shirlington in non-rush hours. It praised the proposal for increased service by the 7A and 7Y buses, stating that more frequent service "will alleviate crowding and add capacity to a heavily used bus route." A copy of the letter is available on FCA's website.

At a meeting with FCA leaders in late June, arranged by FCA Director Kent Duffy, county staff agreed to examine

the possibility of an ART loop through South Fairlington direct to the Pentagon in what would be essentially a continuous loop during peak hours.

County staff responded by crafting an amendment to the TDP that would create a new 88 ART route. According to the staff presentation to the county board, the 88 ART would run during peak periods, connecting Fairlington to Shirlington and, via the HOV lane, to the Pentagon Metro. The staff memo explaining the new route



In a July 7 letter to county board members, the Fairlington Citizens Association said it strongly opposed recommendations that would impact residents who currently use the WMATA 22 during peak hours. Photo by Bob Bradley.

notes that between the ART 88 and the 22F, commuters in Fairlington will have transit access to Pentagon Metro every 10 minutes.

The new 87 ART route through Fairlington to Shirlington and then along Army-Navy Drive would be available only during off-peak periods.

The TDP also would create a new 44 ART route to replace the Metrobus 22A/B/C route from Shirlington to Ballston, and it would continue on to Marymount University.

Note that no changes to the existing bus service are possible until 2018, once the county has acquired more buses.

—Guy Land



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Fairlingtonians offer views on Arlington's open spaces



Irena Lazic (right) of Arlington County Parks and Recreation explains the POPS process to an interested Fairlington Farmers Market shopper. Photo by Guy Land.

Throughout the month of July, Arlington County Department of Parks and Recreation staff were at multiple public events around the county to ask residents for their input on the county's policies on open spaces.

On July 10, at the Fairlington Farmers Market,

residents were asked what they thought constituted open spaces, natural spaces, green spaces, and plazas and which strategic directions were most important to them. These pop-up events are being conducted as part of the Public Spaces Master Plan (PSMP) update process (POPS: A Plan for Our Places and Spaces) and ask residents to participate in some quick activities to help guide the plan's development.

The purpose of the PSMP update is to assess various aspects of Arlington's public space system and provide strategies for the future for the full breadth of public spaces, including all of the parks, natural resources, and recreational needs that make up that system.

Irena Lazic, the county's Long Range Planning Team Supervisor, led the visit to Fairlington. The county anticipates that the next series of public meetings will be conducted in the fall, where preliminary findings from the overall needs assessment will be presented.

—Guy Land

Summer fun at the Fairlington pools



The 2016 Fairlington FINS (Fairlingtonians Interested in Neighborhood Swimming) gather for a group photo at session in July. The FINS program is a regular summer fixture in Fairlington and is a fun way for kids to strengthen swim

skills, and encourage camaraderie and good sportsmanship. The program ran for for three weeks from July 11 to 29. Photo courtesy of the Fairlington FINS.



The Fourth comes first in Fairlington

As usual, Fairlington went Forth.

Despite some questionable forecasts, ominous clouds and early morning rain, the Fairlington Fourth of July parade went off as scheduled to the delight of those lining the streets from Station 7 and throughout the neighborhood.

It was red, white, and blue all over, as carriages, kids, and K-9s wore the country's colors amid waving flags. Arlington County Board members Libby Garvey, John Vihstadt, and Katie Cristol joined the festivities.

As ever, Fairlington is grateful for the assistance of ACPD's Third District officers and the firefighters of ACFD's Station 7. Thanks to Cathy Malin and Fairlington Commons for organizing the annual bake sale; to Villages contractor Purofirst for donated ice cream; and to Villages Activities Committee co-chairs Melanie Alvord, Elizabeth Greczek, and Christine Chirichella for coordinating the summer's most popular event.





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Spring's cold impact on farmers markets

The unseasonably cold spring weather may be a distant memory, but it had a significant impact on fruit and vegetable crops from local farmers, such as market vendors Kuhn Orchards, Pleitez Produce, and Spring Valley Farm and Orchard. While our vendors have a wide variety of fresh summer produce, you may have noticed shortages of certain items, or some higher prices.



A young Fairlington Farmers Market patron partakes of some fresh cauliflower. Photos by Guy Land.

One example is this year's Kuhn Orchards' cherry crops. April's cold temperatures destroyed nearly all of the blossoms; the fruit that did form from the very small percentage of surviving blossoms left about 10 individual cherries on each tree. Kuhn Orchards reached out to a neighboring orchard who was able to grow tart cherries



Customers line up at the Kuhn Orchards stand at the Fairlington Farmers Market.

that meet their standards, and with permission from market management brought this crop to the market to meet the demand for tart cherries that are not available in the grocery stores. While sweet cherries and apricots were additional casualties of the cold spring weather, 50 percent of Kuhn's peaches and nectarines survived, so you're seeing a good supply at the market. Blue Italian plums and Asian Pears will be available this summer, but in limited quantities.



Shop in style at the market with the new Fairlington Farmers Market tote bag! Get one while they're still available; \$7 at the market information booth.

In this challenging crop year, our vendors appreciate your support more than ever. If you have questions about what's available, or why prices may be a little higher than last year, just ask—they're happy to talk with you!

The market is open every Sunday from 9 am to 1 pm, Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St.

—Lynne Blasi

FFM in the news

"10 Great Things to Eat and Drink at D.C.-Area Farmers Markets"

- Bonaparte Breads chocolate almond croissant

"Bonaparte Breads are a familiar presence at almost a dozen markets throughout the region, and deservedly so. Their handcrafted pastries, made with high-fat European butter, would not feel out of place in Paris. The chocolate almond croissant, a variety of the bakery's signature item, is generously spread with egg-white-lightened almond paste on top and in the middle, where you'll also find two veins of dark French chocolate."

—*The Washington Post, Going Out Guide, June 15, 2016*

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ACPD Block Party to be held August 27 at Kenmore Middle School

The Arlington County Police Department is hosting the 2016 ACPD Block Party on August 27. The event will take place at Kenmore Middle School, 200 South Carlin Springs Road, Arlington, from 9 am to 4 pm.

Planned attractions include:

15 minutes behind the badge: Participants will receive a brief training from police instructors on police tactics, attend a simulated Roll Call to gather information, and play the role of a police officer in two live scenarios.

ACPD KidZone: There will also be a KidZone inside the school featuring kid-friendly activities like trying on police equipment, learning about fingerprints, exercising, and playing video games.

Vehicle VIN-etching: A free service offered by the Virginia State Police, which etches the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) on the vehicle's windows as a deterrent to auto theft.

Distracted driving simulator: Participants will drive a golf cart through a cone course while being distracted by various methods including the use of special goggles. This event highlights the dangerous effects of distracted driving.

Police vehicle expo: Police specialty vehicles will be on display, including a motorcycle, the Mobile Command Vehicle, the Chooser Cruiser, and a SWAT Armored Personnel Carrier.

Police K-9 demonstrations: K-9 handlers will discuss and demonstrate some of the capabilities of their canine partners.

Police motorcycle demonstrations: Motorcycle officers will demonstrate some of the riding skills needed to perform their work.

Bicycle registration: This free service registers bicycles with the county so it is possible to identify and recover them if they are stolen.

Child safety seat inspection: A certified child safety seat inspector will verify that child safety seats are properly installed to best protect children.

Inflatable attractions: A moon bounce and similar activities will be available for kids.

Free food, drinks, and music: Rockland's BBQ and Grilling Company is providing free food. Free cold drinks will also be available thanks to the generosity of Coca-Cola. There will also be a live DJ from HOT 99.5 providing entertainment.

Various informational tables: There will be a variety of county and private organizations with informational tables and free giveaway items.

—Bob Bradley

Grants to plant or maintain trees on private property in Arlington

Through Arlington County's Tree Canopy Fund, residents can receive grants to plant or maintain trees on private property.

The Tree Canopy Fund is administered by Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment (ACE) and the Arlington County Urban Forestry Commission (UFC).

The grant covers planting large native trees, such as Southern magnolia, bald cypress, and red oak. Trees generally have a caliper of two inches and are about seven feet high. If a large canopy tree is not appropriate for the location, smaller or non-native trees will be

considered. A list of trees is available online at www.arlingtonenvironment.org. Property owners must agree to maintain the trees. Applications are due by August 12.

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Animal Talk

Trash is No.1 source of raccoon problems

If you think it's OK to take out your trash during non-designated times (including Sundays), or leave it on your patio, think again. Fairlington's large volume of easily-accessible trash is the main reason for its raccoon (and rodent) problems.

That was the biggest takeaway from the July 5 special meeting on raccoons, hosted by Fairlington Villages. The meeting, which attracted 35+ concerned residents, was held to discuss and advise residents on interactions and conflicts with wildlife in light of an injury suffered by a resident resulting from an encounter with a raccoon.

The encounter, posted on Facebook, was picked up by Arlnow.com.

The resident was sitting on her patio with her dog around 8:30 pm one June evening, when a raccoon and its two babies, or kits, climbed the fence and entered the yard. The dog went after the raccoon, which went into protective mode because of its young ones. Trying to intervene, the resident sustained significant injuries on her arms and legs, and had to go through a series of post-exposure prophylactic shots to prevent rabies.

The meeting featured Susan Sherman, Chief Operating Officer, and Jennifer Toussaint, Senior Deputy Animal Control Officer, of the Animal Welfare League of Arlington (AWLA), and John Griffin, Director, Urban Wildlife at The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS).



Senior Deputy Animal Control Officer Jennifer Toussaint gives her point of view at the July 5 meeting. Photos by Guy Land.

The HSUS and AWLA often work closely on wildlife issues, as the AWLA has a very humane approach to wildlife.

Sherman kicked off the meeting with some information about the AWLA, which began operating with volunteers in 1944. In the 1980s, the league was con-

tracted by Arlington County to handle animal control.

Griffin, a wildlife conflict specialist, addressed typical raccoon behavior, interactions with humans, and rabies. His department at HSUS has worked for decades to resolve problems and conflicts similar to Fairlington's recent attack. They try to get to the root of the problem to figure out why there's conflict.

"Fairlington's a very rich place, from a raccoon perspective," he began. He cited our dense population (including humans and dogs), trash accessibility (in plastic bags), and daily trash pickup as the culprits. In addition, Fairlington's many trees and older buildings provide shelter and cozy dens for raccoons.

Griffin went on to explain that Fairlington is definitely not alone—raccoon issues are the number one wildlife concern in urbanized areas all across the United States. And contrary to popular belief, raccoons are not always nocturnal, so seeing a raccoon during the day does not mean it is rabid.

"Raccoons are North America's answer to primates," Griffin said, noting that raccoons are intelligent, can easily climb the corners and downspouts of our buildings (often descending head first using back feet that rotate 180 degrees), and have incredible manual dexterity. "There are few challenges they are not up to, and it's easier to talk about what they won't eat than what they will."

Essentially, raccoons have become habituated to some sites within Fairlington because of the abundant sources of food and shelter. In addition, raccoons are not very nomadic, so once they find a place they like, they move in. Mitigating the amount of food and shelter available



John Griffin, director of Urban Wildlife at The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), addresses a group of concerned citizens at a July 5 meeting hosted by Fairlington Villages.

Continued on page 29

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neighborhood news

Fairlington Diners

The Fairlington Diners gather a couple of times a month for relaxed dinners nearby. We focus on having a good meal and an opportunity to chat with neighbors. In July, we explored the Del Ray Café in Alexandria.

Here's what's planned for August:

Wednesday, August 10, 6:30 pm, The Fish Market, 105 King St., Old Town, Alexandria, 703-836-5676, <http://fishmarketva.com>, where we can enjoy the weekly lobster special, or anything else on the menu.

Monday, August 29, 6:30 pm, Lost Dog Café, 2920 Columbia Pike, 703-553-7770, www.lostdogcafeairlington.com. It's time to try another combination from the amazing array of sandwiches and other dishes is available; each can be customized. There is free parking under the building after 6 pm, accessed from Walter Reed Dr.

Please call Carol at 703-379-6840 if you plan to attend, and leave a voicemail if you don't reach her—include your name and how to contact you the day of the event, in case plans change. If you want to receive a copy of these notices early in the previous month, send an email to carol_dabbs@yahoo.com.

Book Group

Join the Fairlington Book Group in August to discuss *My Losing Season: A Memoir*, by Pat Conroy.

"Anyone who has ever sat in the bleachers and rooted for the home team will connect with this powerful sports memoir written by one of America's finest storytellers. From the first time Pat Conroy shoots a basket at 10 years old, he knows he's found his most important outlet. The feel of the basketball, the swoosh as it passes through the net, offer solace to the tormented son of a brutal father." —*AudioFile Magazine*

The Book Group welcomes first-time visitors and drop-ins. No commitment required! We are meeting on Tuesday, August 23, at 7:30 pm in the Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford Street. We hope you'll join us.

Card players welcome

Join your Fairlington neighbors for a friendly game of Canasta. No previous experience is necessary to enjoy this card game. We are happy to teach you. The group meets Tuesday mornings at a local church hall near Fairlington. Call Carol Ann at 703-931-8533.

Fairlington Babysitting Co-op

If you are looking for a night out without the kids, or an afternoon to yourself, join the Fairlington Babysitting Co-op. For more than 30 years, Fairlington families have been exchanging free babysitting services using a card system. It's perfect for parents who would like to know dependable adults to watch their children and meet other families in the community.

Email the coordinators Elizabeth Shea, and Monica and Jeremy Wedemann, at fairlington.babysitting@gmail.com to request more information and an application.

Three-day tax holiday August 5-7

This year's sales tax holiday is August 5–7, beginning 12:01 a.m. Friday and ending Sunday at 11:59 p.m.

Legislation enacted by the 2015 General Assembly combined Virginia's three sales tax holidays into one three-day holiday beginning the first Friday in August.

During the sales tax holiday period, consumers can purchase qualifying school supplies, clothing, footwear, and hurricane and emergency preparedness items, without paying sales tax. This includes qualifying items purchased online, by mail, or over the phone.

In addition to the specific items exempted, retailers may also choose to offer other items "tax-free" by paying the sales tax themselves during the holiday.

Qualified school supplies and clothing and footwear will also be tax-free that weekend.

Go to www.tax.virginia.gov/content/sales-tax-holiday for more information.

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Abingdon welcomes new assistant principal, Blandine Liguidi

The Abingdon community is excited to welcome Blandine Liguidi as new assistant principal to the start of the 2016–17 school year. In fact, she was already working the Book Bus in July to better get to know students and parents.



Blandine Liguidi is a new assistant principal at Abingdon Elementary School. Photo courtesy of Blandine Liguidi.

“I’m really looking forward to meeting and being part of the Abingdon community,” she said.

Liguidi’s heart was always drawn to education, but her career didn’t begin there. After earning a BA in communication arts, she worked at the David Letterman Show and the Independent Film Channel. She soon returned to school, however, to earn her MA in general education and special education. She has since spent the last 16 years in education, starting with the New York City Public Schools, where she served as a middle school and first-grade teacher.

During that time, she held positions in general education, special educa-

tion, as an intervention specialist, as well as volunteering her time to teach adult literacy. After teaching eight years in New York, she moved with her husband to the Washington, D.C. metro area. She started working at APS as a first grade teacher at Barrett elementary in 2013.

Liguidi achieved National Board Certification in Early Childhood Education in 2013, and returned that same year to graduate school to obtain a degree in educational leadership at George Mason University, which she earned in 2015.

She is a dedicated practitioner and has been involved with numerous initiatives. She recently began a network of National Board Certified Teacher Leaders in Arlington.

Recognized by the Department of Education as a teacher leader in her field, Liguidi was invited to speak on behalf of educators with the Secretary of Education. She serves on the Teacher Advisory Council for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation as an educational consultant, and has also dedicated her time leading professional development in schools and throughout the district. She has mentored many aspiring teachers throughout her career, and has served on several committees, including the Cultural Competence Council.

Abingdon alumni celebrate Wakefield High School graduation

Four Abingdon alumni recently graduated from Wakefield High School and celebrated their achieve-

ments with a party at the North Fairlington Community Center.

Anthony Felipe, R.J. Garardo, Eli Mefford, and Miles Kerby all finished school at Abingdon in 2009 and later attended Gunston Middle



From left to right are R.J. Garardo, Miles Kerby, Abingdon third grade teacher Laurie Shaw, Eli Mefford and Anthony Felipe. Photo by Jennifer Davies.

School. Family, friends—and even Abingdon teachers—attended their graduation party.

Felipe and Mefford will attend Virginia Tech; Kerby will attend the University of Maryland; and Garardo plans to attend Northern Virginia Community College.

Fairlington resident Felipe can still trace many of his academic inspirations back to Abingdon, including Mr. McDavitt’s architecture class and musical instruction from Ms. Gomez (he ended up as principle bass at Wakefield because of her early influence). Kerby and Felipe both still have ties to Abingdon—their mothers work at the school. Kim Kerby is a pre-kindergarten teacher and Donna Felipe is a teacher’s assistant.

—Jennifer Davies

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DOWN TO EARTH patio gardening



Some sights worth noting while taking that daily walk or run

On my daily rounds, I notice people on the move everywhere in Fairlington. Some pedal bicycles, mothers jog with their three-wheeled strollers, and others run with their dogs. There are couples strolling hand-in-hand or those alone with ear buds in as they speed-walk.

For all of them, I've created a landscaping map that they can tear from the *Bulletin* and take with them on their neighborhood wanderings.

Arbor pool: On one side, miscanthus sinensis (Chinese silver grass) blankets the 10-foot-tall fence. Its stems and foliage provide privacy to sunbathers and cover an otherwise sterile-looking facade. At the east end of the pool grounds, there are three crape myrtles, each about 18 feet tall. The palomino-colored bark is so smooth, you can run your hands over the limbs and not get a sliver. The sinewy nature of each limb resembles the arms of Hercules or Superman.

South 31st St. Fairlington

Entrance: Next to the brick façade with "Fairlington" stands a 24-foot-tall crape myrtle tree. It started blooming the third week in June and will show its pale lavender flowers until early October. If you can get close to a low-hanging branch, you'll see each bloom has tiny florets, each one with a yellow center. Smell it and it gives off an earthy scent. Beneath this tree and across the street are crape myrtle shrubs. One

has vivid lavender flowers and the other, rich pink. And they both are under six feet high.

Traffic Circle at South Stafford

& South 36th Streets: Beneath a dominant tree in the rotary are rows of nandina, a flowering evergreen shrub. Notice the "baby's breath-like" flower at the branch tips. In late fall/winter, you'll find clumps of red, holly-like fruit so heavy, the branches lean downward. The small, triangular-shaped leaves are flimsy and will flutter in the slightest breeze. In some Nandina cultivars, the foliage turns a pale red in winter.

South Wakefield St. Fairlington

entrance: On the median, there are three dwarf crape myrtle trees but one has pink and red flowers on its branches. Nearby is a sycamore tree bearing fat, five-lobed leaves. In winter, globular fruit dangles from its stems. The bark on the upper limbs is a canvas of gray, ivory and faint olive.

South 33rd St. Fairlington

entrance: On this median, there are six cherry trees which burst with whitish-pink flowers in spring. A visit here is beautiful and a lot less convenient than dealing with tourist traffic at the tidal basin downtown. Beneath these trees are orange lilies, which bloom most of the summer. Even commuters in vehicles waiting to turn onto Quaker Lane can enjoy this show of color from April to September.

Intersection of South Utah &

South 32nd Road: One can't miss the catalpa tree just off the sidewalk. It has large leaves, showy white flowers in summer and long brown fruit pods that resemble those of the locust tree, only these are much longer (up to 16 inches). In November, the fallen fruit covers the understory.

Intersection of South Stafford

& South 32nd St.: Be careful walking up to the median in the middle of the road. When you arrive, notice the grouping of abelia shrubs, whose branches bear pink, trumpet-shaped, fragrant flowers off thin red stems. For traffic safety, these shrubs need to be pruned, but in the wild, abelia is prettiest when their branches are left to meander.

Real Estate Office and South

Wakefield St. circle: At each venue is a southern magnolia, a flowering evergreen that never would fit in a Fairlington patio. Everyone recognizes the magnolia's white fragrant flower but notice that the underside of the tree's leaf is a pale orange and the fruit is a football-shaped, 4-inch-long aggregate packed with red seeds in autumn. The understory of a magnolia is filled with dead leaves. It's an evergreen but like many other evergreens, the magnolia sheds (then replaces) its leaves.

—Bill Sullivan
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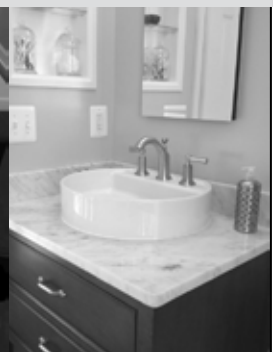
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is key to resolving the problem. Griffin explained, "If you want to control how long they stay, control the food."

Toussaint echoes Griffin's findings. "Here in Fairlington, trash is the biggest issue with raccoons," she stated. "It's like a buffet here." She pointed out that while community trash cans are intended for disposal of dog waste, many residents add food items to it, for example, while cleaning out their cars. In addition, most trash cans sit under trees, where raccoons often live. "Trash needs to be addressed," she said. "We can't trap raccoons because they'll just replace themselves if the food source is still there, and the problem will be back in a year or so. Everyone has to band together to make this work, or raccoons will stay or just shift to a new location in the neighborhood."

Raccoons start having babies in February, so June and July are months with the most raccoon-related complaints, mostly due to baby raccoons growing up and starting to

disperse. The mama still watches them for a time, and can become overly protective when something threatens their safety.

Fairlington Villages' General Manager Colin Horner answered a few questions about sealing up sub-basements that used to contain boiler rooms, stating, "There is some work to do," and about how often maintenance empties the community trash cans. This is currently done on a rotating basis, but Horner noted that Fairlington can look into more frequent emptying as another mitigation strategy. And finally, Horner and Board President Terry Placek indicated that Fairlington Villages can and will fine residents \$50 for trash left out during non-designated hours.

The animal control officers at AWLA work 365 days a year and are available by phone at all times. If you have a wildlife question or problem, you can reach them at 703-931-9241. If the situation is an emergency, you can call 911 and the dispatchers will know how to contact them.

—Christine Chirichella

Tips for dealing with raccoons

What should you do if attacked by a raccoon? Both Griffin and Toussaint recommend loud, bold things like yelling, waving your arms, spraying them with a hose, or shaking/throwing a can full of pennies to scare them off. Toussaint cautioned, "You don't want to back them up, especially with kits." To deter raccoons from your property:

- Never leave food or trash outside
- Prop cans of pennies atop your fence
- Keep ammonia-soaked rags in your yard or patio
- Put caps on outside dryer vents
- Put up lattice around any gaps under your patio



Toussaint has worked for AWLA for five years. During that time, 90 percent of the attacks involving injuries to humans have also involved a dog. Last year, a resident was bitten while walking her dog,

which inadvertently discovered a baby raccoon under a parked car. If you find yourself in a situation with your dog battling a raccoon, try to remove yourself and your dog, or put a physical barrier between you and the raccoon. "Once the raccoon feels the pressure of your presence abate, she will take off fast," Toussaint noted. She gave these other tips for dog walking safety:

- Keep dogs on leash at all times to limit interactions and maintain control
- Don't use a flexi-leash, which can allow your dog to roam and get into trouble
- Don't let your dog smell storm drains where raccoons could be hiding
- Don't get too close to parked cars at night
- Carry a can with pennies, a blow horn, or a legal deterrent spray

Some final trash reminders:

- Only put trash out during designated times
- Put trash out in sealed bags only (consider spraying inside and outside with ammonia)
- Do not place food trash in community receptacles
- Do not store food or trash in your yard or patio

—Christine Chirichella

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ing the soil compaction around them.

Parents have expressed a preference for staged construction so that the playground could remain open during the construction period, but Wohler notes that the decision on staging will ultimately be up to the construction contractor.

The updated design shared by the county on June 29 incorporates feedback from the citizen survey conducted in the spring. The online survey received 342 responses. Survey respondents named the Utah St. entrance as the most frequently used access to the grounds. The county has modified the design to add new shrubs and flowers to enhance that entrance.



The playground at Fairlington Park will be a focal point of the renovation project. Photo by Guy Land.

be added in the exercise area to connect users to fitness routines on their smartphones.

The county will work to minimize any loss of trees, though a couple are already slated for removal. Native plants will be used to landscape around the new playground.

The project will have an emphasis on improved storm water management in the area, with the existing storm water collection area (rain garden) being expanded and an additional collection area

being installed near the current drainage site on the northwest side of the property.



Concerned parents have pushed to maintain regular swings at Fairlington Park because of their popularity. Revised county plans will include a set of standard swings. Photo by Guy Land.

Wohler reports that the timeline for the project remains on target, with four-to-five months needed to acquire permits and two months expected for bidding and contract approvals.

Construction is expected to begin in the summer of 2017. Of the \$2 million overall budget for the project, \$1.6 million will be spent on actual construction.

Information about the project can be found at <https://projects.arlingtonva.us/projects/fairlington-park-project/>.

—Anne Wilson and Guy Land

Fairlington Park survey results

According to the Arlington County Department of Parks and Recreation, 342 people responded to this spring's online survey about improvements to the Fairlington Park, the area behind the Fairlington Community Center. County staff have taken the survey responses into account in developing plans for the park renovation.

Here are some of the county's key findings from the survey:

- The majority of users access the park off of S. Utah St. and from the parking lot
- The majority of kids are in the 2- to 5-year old age group
- Stretching, simple strength training, and high impact strength training are preferred types of exercise
- A slight majority would like to be able to do a total-body workout using equipment that is similar to that of indoor fitness equipment
- The existing path is used frequently for exercise and most users would prefer to have a surface that provides greater spring-back, shock absorption, and stability
- Most everyone is "satisfied" with the current park facilities
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A color version of this newsletter is available online at www.fca-fairlington.org.



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Enhance your community by volunteering for FCA activities.

In the Market for a tote bag



For sale: Fairlington T-shirts

Show your neighborhood pride with a Fairlington T-shirt. T-shirts are \$15 and available in white or hunter green in 100% cotton. Sizes S, M, L, and X-L. Child sizes are also available.

To place your order: email president@fca-fairlington.org or contact any FCA board member.

MINI-ADS INSTRUCTIONS

Due date for ads and payment: 6 pm on the 10th of the preceding month (May 10 for June issue).

- Checks payable to "Fairlington Citizens Association."
- Send mini-ad copy via email, regular mail, or drop off at FCA drop box.
- Send checks via regular mail or drop off at FCA drop box.

E-mail: admanager@fca-fairlington.org

Mailing Address: FCA-AFB, PO Box 6182, Arlington, VA 22206-0182.

Drop Box Location: Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St. (Hours: 8 am – 9 pm, M-F, 8 am – 5 pm, Saturday; closed Sunday.)

Cost: 50 cents per word. Examples: "998-0000" and "stove" = one word; "interior/exterior" = two words.

Include with ad copy: Name, address, phone #, email address, and ad category (see Mini-ads for options).

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