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Volume 50, Number 2

Town hall features questions about proposed Potomac Yard sports complex

Inside this month

Features

Sports complex.	1
Home and garden tour	5
Mail carriers	5
New board member	7
Grounds committee work	7
MLK day of service.	9
Library events.	9
Paint, Build, Create!	11



Fairlington snow day.	19
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Departments

For the love of nature	13
Abingdon school news	17
Neighborhood news	21
Mini-ads	22



The proposed sports and entertainment complex would be constructed adjacent to the lot that currently houses the Potomac Yards shopping center, including Target, Best Buy, and other popular stores. Rendering courtesy of JBG SMITH.

Economic impact and quality of life issues, including traffic and housing, dominated an early January town hall discussion of the proposed Potomac Yard arena and entertainment complex that would become the home of the Washington Capitals hockey team and Washington Wizards basketball team.

In a session coordinated by the Del Ray Civic Association, Sen. Adam Ebbin and Del. Elizabeth Bennett-Parker heard citizen concerns and responded to questions about the proposed new development.

Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson joined in the conversation, while Stephanie Landrum, CEO of the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership, explained many of the details of the proposal.

The two state legislators pointed out that the package is premised on the creation by the Virginia General Assembly of a Virginia Sports and Entertainment Authority that would own the arena property and lease it to Monumental Sports and Entertainment (owner of the Capitals and Wizards), issuing tax-exempt bonds to finance much of the cost of the \$2 billion project.

The sports and entertainment authority would own the property next to the new Virginia Tech campus that is under construction. The site would have

Continued on page 15

Coming up

The FCA Board invites all Fairlington residents to attend its meetings that 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 have three minutes to address the board on matters affecting the community.

FCA monthly meeting February 14

The board will hold a virtual work session. There will be no special presentation.


Regular board business:

- Approval of January minutes
- Officer and committee reports
- Unfinished business
- New business

Meeting minutes: Minutes of prior meetings can be found on the FCA website.

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 Citizens Association.

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

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www.arlingtonva.us/departments/Environmental Services/dot/traffic/streetlights/index.htm	
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Fairlington Citizens Association

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— DEADLINE —

6 p.m., **8th of month** preceding publication month for commercial advertising, mini-ads, and editorial copy. Editorial announcements, story suggestions, and letters to the Editor should be sent to: afbeditors@yahoo.com.

Ad payment can be sent to: FCA • PO Box 6182 • Arlington, VA 22206-0182, locally dropped-off at the drop box in the Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford Street, Arlington VA 22206 or pay via PayPal to fca.fairlington.ads@gmail.com. Ad file(s) should be included with payment and emailed to the Ad Manager at fca.fairlington.ads@gmail.com.

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Calendar

Fairlington diners

Saturday, February 10, 12 p.m.
Duangrat's Thai Restaurant,
5878 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041

FCA monthly meeting

Wednesday, February 14, 7 p.m.
Fairlington Community Center
3308 S. Stafford St.

Presidents Day

Monday, February 19
FCC Closed

Fairlington book group

Tuesday, February 27, 7:30 p.m.
Fairlington Community Center
3308 S. Stafford St.



Contributors this month: Barbara Berti,
Regina Bethencourt, Sue Davis, James Harlow,
Guy Land and Jen McDermitt.

*Some images in this publication may be
digitally enhanced.*



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What are the implications for Fairlington in the proposal to create a new sports and entertainment venue at Potomac Yard? That's a question many of you have been asking since Gov. Glenn Youngkin and Monumental Sports and Entertainment CEO Ted Leonsis announced a proposal to move the Washington Capitals and the Wizards from D.C. to a new arena in Potomac Yard.

Traffic issues are the concern I've heard about most, and that topic figured prominently in a Del Ray town hall with state Sen. Adam Ebbin and Del. Elizabeth Bennet-Parker in early January. The two legislators represent the Potomac Yard area.

As a neighboring civic association, which also covers a part of Alexandria, FCA was invited to join the Zoom of the town hall meeting.

Ebbin and Bennett-Parker previously represented Fairlington, but under last year's redistricting Ebbin only represents the part of Fairlington that is in Alexandria and Bennett-Parker no longer represents any part of Fairlington. Both have previously spoken at FCA meetings and FCA has enjoyed a good relationship with them.

The traffic concerns stem from both the crowds getting to and from games at the new arena (as well as a proposed concert venue right next to it) and the additional development that will occur on the property where the Target and other stores now sit. That parcel is slated to have a mix of residential, retail businesses, and hotels. Increased congestion along Route 1 and I-395 would be a likely result.

A major transportation study is underway, and the results were expected to be released in late January. Possible projects include improvements to the I-395 and Glebe Rd. interchange and upgrades to the intersections along Glebe between 395 and Route 1. Traffic planners are also looking at adding turn lanes along Route 1 at Potomac Yard.

Another transportation question is the ability of Metro to handle the increased volume. Ebbin and Bennett-Parker have stressed that the state will need to commit to robust funding of Metro as a condition of their support for the arena project.

FCA will be monitoring the Potomac Yard proposal. We will be contacting Sen. Barbara Favola and Del. Alfonso Lopez, who now represent Fairlington, to make sure they are attuned to the potential impacts on Fairlington. I welcome your thoughts as well.

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



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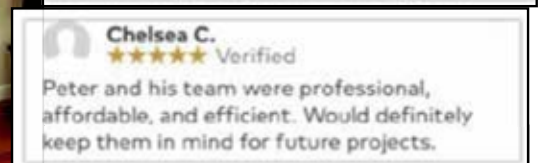
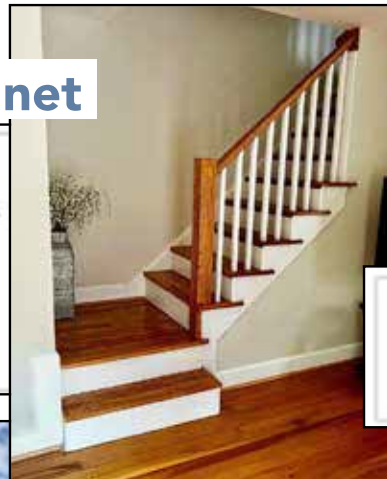
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2024 Home and Garden Tour seeks volunteers

The Fairlington Historical Society held their kick-off meeting for the 2024 Home and Garden Tour last month. Already many homeowners are eager to include their property on the tour which will be held Saturday, May 11, 2024, from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. This is an extraordinary opportunity to see what other residents have done with their units and how they have transformed their gardens.



The working committee is still looking for volunteers to serve as: (a) house sitters - assisting the homeowners with meeting and greeting tour-goers and helping with traffic flow in each unit, (b) a photographer who can take pictures of the units that will be on the tour, (c) hospitality in the Fairlington Villages community center to greet tour goers and serve drinks and snacks; and (d)

general assistance with set-up, errands, and providing help as needed. As a thank you, volunteers will be able to go on the tour at no cost.

Please send an email to: homeandgarden@fairlingtonhistoricalsociety.org if you're interested in



2024 will mark the first Fairlington Home & Garden Tour since the COVID-19 pandemic. Photos by Guy Land.

signing up or have any questions.

The Fairlington Home and Garden Tour generally happens once every two years - but our last one took place in 2019 (with a hiatus for COVID). So please don't miss this one!

—Barbara Berti

Fairlington mail carriers celebrated for exceptional service



Our Fairlington mail carriers received well-deserved recognition last month as they were honored by the Postmaster for outstanding service during the demanding Christmas season. Their commendable achievement—a staggering 99.7 per-

cent on-time delivery rate—earned them a prestigious trophy and certificate from the Postmaster as tokens of appreciation.

It is the United States Postal Service policy not to publicly share the names or photos of our local mail carriers but many Fairlington residents know them by name and regularly greet them on their rounds.

Amidst the accolades, our local postal service faces imminent changes as the number of mail carriers is set

to decrease from fourteen to twelve effective January 22. This reduction in workforce is expected to place additional responsibilities on the remaining carriers, who will need to absorb the extra work to ensure smooth delivery of mail.

One of the local carriers spoke with a Fairlington resident about the forthcoming changes and expressed a willingness to adapt to the changes but highlighted the challenge of adjusting to the increased workload. He mentioned that it might take a few weeks for the carriers to navigate the new courtyards efficiently and familiarize themselves with the names and addresses of the new customers they will be serving.

As our mail carriers navigate these changes, let's support them by expressing our gratitude for their steadfast commitment to our neighborhood.

—Jen McDermitt

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Because your safety, health, and peace of mind is our top priority, you can rest assured we are taking every precaution to ensure your safety and well-being. We have asked all members of our team to wash their hands repeatedly throughout the day and requested they do not come in to work if they feel sick or if they have a fever. They have also been instructed to be extra vigilant to wipe down all surfaces before, during, and after their shifts, to wear protective gloves and masks, and to support the social distancing guidelines with homeowners and co-workers.

Until this crisis is over, we will continue to monitor the developments set by the CDC and our local governments and will make any necessary adjustments to our practices to keep you safe.

We support our community and feel that it is everybody's job to limit risk of exposure and spread of COVID-19 and in that light, we encourage you to take advantage of telephone, Facetime, and video consultations for all your home improvement needs.

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Sarah Hazlett chosen for FCA Board

The FCA Board has selected Sarah Hazlett to fill the remaining board vacancy that went unfilled at the December annual meeting. A North Fairlington owner since August 2023, Hazlett said she hopes “to have an impact on the community as a new resident” and bring that perspective to FCA’s work.



Hazlett is a new owner in Fairlington and eager to serve her community on the FCA board. Photo courtesy of Sarah Hazlett.

She noted that while she is relatively new to Fairlington, she has been a resident of Arlington since 2011, most recently as a resident of Arlington Village.

In other action in its January virtual meeting, the board appointed former FCA Treasurer Ed Hilz as its representative to

the Arlington Neighborhoods Advisory Committee, with new board member Scudder Wagg as its alternate representative.

The Advisory Committee makes recommendations to the county board on the use of bond funds that are reserved for improvements in neighborhoods. The installation last year of the sidewalk along Abingdon St. between 31st Rd. and 31st St. was a Fairlington project recommended by the Advisory Committee.

The board also designated its officers to be representatives to the Arlington County Civic Federation and chose Fairlington Villages condo secretary Melanie Alvord as its representative to the Alexandria Federation of Civic Associations. Alvord lives in the Alexandria portion of North Fairlington.

FCA maintains membership in both organizations as a way of strengthening its participation in discussions of Arlington and Alexandria issues.

—Guy Land

Young Fairlingtonians pitch in to help grounds committee



Burnside, Winter, and Mullins get to work to remove a tree root. Photo courtesy of Teresa Cordova.

A group of young Fairlington residents volunteered their time to help the grounds committee remove a troublesome tree root from the front yard of a townhome on 34th St. in South Fairlington. The boys, TC Burnside, Jack Logan Winter, and Matthew Mullins, put their young energy into their tools and made short work of

the project.

A hallmark of this community is the willingness of neighbors to eagerly help each other when in need, and these three boys rose to the occasion with excellence.

—Regina Bethencourt

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MLK day of service attracts a crowd

Roughly two dozen people braved cold and snow to remove vines and other invasive plants from the boundary fence at Abingdon Elementary School for the MLK Jr. Day of Service project. The January 15 event was jointly sponsored by FCA and the Abingdon PTA. *Photos by Guy Land.*



A neighborhood's best kept secret: your local library

Whether you are home with the kids on a holiday weekend, or looking for a way to escape the frosty weather, don't forget to put your local library on your list of things to do this month.



Terry Catasús Jennings.

The library is located at 4200 Campbell Ave. in the heart of Shirlington. It is part of the Arlington Public Library System.

The library has a rich slate of activities for all ages on tap for February. These include Baby Lapsit Storytime for the smallest participants, Kids Club for kids from kindergarten through 5th grade, a Blacklight Art Party for teens and tween, and a documentary screening of *I Am Not Your Negro*.

For the Spanish speaking audience, or for those who would like to improve their Spanish, the library offers a children's bilingual story hour every week on Thursdays at 10:30 a.m.

If discovering new authors is your thing, two author talks you may want to tune in for are:



The Year of Cecily by Lisa Lin.

Wednesday, February 14 at 6 p.m.: Get to know Lisa Lin, author of "The Year of Cecily", at a Zoom discussion of her book. Registration required at <https://arlingtonva.lib-cal.com/>.

Sunday, February 18 at 10:30 a.m.: Meet Terry Catasús Jennings, author of the *Definitely Dominguita* series, *Pauli Murray* and *The Little House of Hope*. There will be time at the end of the session to work on your own writing and meet other aspiring authors.

Visit the Shirlington library website for more information on events and to learn about their operating hours: <https://library.arlingtonva.us/locations/shirlington-branch-library/>

—Regina Bethencourt

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Young artists show their creativity!

Paper helicopters, color binoculars, magnet car races, balancing butterflies, and cardboard construction captured the interest of hundreds of kids at Arlington County's annual Paint, Build, Create! event at the Fairlington Community Center in January. Through hands-on activities, the event introduces kids to a diverse collection of STEAM concepts.



Photos by Guy Land.



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For the love of NATURE



Doug Tallamy: From theory to practice

Last month we explored Doug Tallamy's idea of native plant "corridors" as an extension of regional park land. These provide additional food and shelter for a greater diversity of animals.

Do these efforts actually help? A few years ago, Lisa Schulte Moore won a MacArthur Genius Grant for Prairie Strips. In Iowa, these were planted in corn fields in between rows of corn. All were planted with native grasses and flowers from the prairie representing 10 percent of the field. The results were less erosion, runoff, and greater pollination.

Tallamy's corridor idea reduces lawn by creating native landscapes where grass once grew. If more people did this, there would be corridors between parklands that would support greater biodiversity, connect our fragmented woodlands, and allow for species migration. The biggest problem, he admitted, is changing the public aesthetic from useless lawns to active natural areas: the home-grown national park.

Does this work? To find out, I reached out to Nate Erwin, who studied under Tallamy and is now a "bugscaping" landscaper.

Sue: I know that you studied under Doug when you were in college. How have his ideas changed from then to today?

Nate: Dr. Tallamy is an outstanding insect behaviorist. His studies of insects and the natural world have evolved over time as happens with any good biologist. I think Rachel Carson's statement about biologists sums up Tallamy very nicely:

There is one quality that characterizes all of us who deal with the sciences of the earth and its life—we are never bored. We can't be.

There is always something new to be investigated.

Tallamy continues to learn more about the natural



Native spring perennials planted along the King Street fence line in Fairlington Mews, Court 6. Photo by Sue Davis.

world with his research and advocacy for its preservation.

Sue: How long have you been creating bugscapes?

Nate: I've been having fun with seeing how many insects I can attract and maintain in my own gardens wherever I've lived since the 1980s. I really started getting serious about it when I bought my house in 1997 and could plant and experiment without worrying about landlords. In 2013 I became self-employed, making "bugscaping" just a part of my business activities. Tallamy's publications have helped fuel my business. Today, it's the bulk of my work.

Sue: As a scientist, what have you discovered after planting native plants?

Nate: It is so gratifying to see the insects and birds that start showing up after a planting becomes established as well as the clients' excitement of observing these animals for the first time. Caterpillars feeding on plants, a variety of insects nectaring on flowers of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants, and birds feeding on berries and insects on the plants are just some of the interactions that people get to experience in their own backyards.

It's only February, and usually the time that gardeners of all kinds begin looking at plant catalogs and thinking ahead to spring. Consider adding native plants to your patio and community gardens this year to create a corridor. Then join other Fairlington neighbors and register your plantings on the Homegrown National Park website.

Need some help? The Fairlington Gardening Community Facebook page has lots of gardeners, your neighbors, ready to lend a hand and answer questions. Email forthe love of nature@googlegroups.com with comments.

—Sue Davis

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an arena for Capitals and Wizards games, along with a performing arts venue, Monumental corporate offices, a sports network studio, and a practice facility.

JBG Smith would own the property where the Potomac Yard stores (such as Target and Best Buy) are located. In a later phase, it would feature residential, retail, restaurant, and hotel businesses. It would be financed largely by private investment, though there would be Alexandria financial participation for a potential school on the site.



The proposal to move the Washington Capitals and Washington Wizards to Virginia promises to attract thousands of visitors to the area. Rendering courtesy of JBG Smith.

According to Landrum, the project will generate \$12 billion in positive economic impact for the Commonwealth and the City of Alexandria after debt servicing, including \$4.7 billion in new tax revenues.

Landrum noted that dedicated revenues from the arena and entertainment property would be used to pay off the bonds. She said the agreement was structured in a way that the modeling indicates revenues will be twice what is needed to pay off the bonds. The state and the city would be on the hook for bond payments only if revenues were off the projection by more than 50 percent. The costs would be split if there were a shortfall.

A number of town hall questions raised transportation concerns. According to Ebbin, a major transportation study is being conducted by the state and is tentatively scheduled for release in January.

Potential transportation projects under consideration include a number of improvements along Route 1 (such as the addition of turn lanes at multiple intersections), additional VRE/Amtrak connections, Potomac Yard Metro station mitigation, and improvements to the I-395 and Glebe Road interchange. Another option includes investment in real-time transit technology that can encourage fans to use public transit and carpool.

Landrum suggested that the transportation improvements would likely cost \$200 million.

Discussion of the proposal will be a major part of this year's agenda for the General Assembly in Richmond. The legislative session began January 10 and will conclude in mid-March.

Ebbin noted that the proposal has drawn mixed reactions from both fellow legislators and from his constituents. While saying she wants to get more information, Bennett-Parker said that if the vote were taken that night, she would oppose it. But she made clear that was not necessarily her final position.

Ebbin stressed that state financial support for Metro would be essential if the proposal were to get his support. Bennett-Parker agreed on the importance of Metro funding. "This project doesn't work without the Metro and so [I'm] wanting to see a commitment from the state for how that will be funded," she said.

"Transportation is probably the number one quality of life concern that I've heard about from the residents who have written to me, and it'll be really key to me in making my final decision," Ebbin said.

Bennett-Parker likewise noted the impact on traffic along Route 1 and in neighborhoods in the general area of the arena. She pointed out that she lives closer to the arena site than any other member of the General Assembly.

Residents also raised questions about the impact of the development on housing affordability and whether the project would have an impact on local taxes.

If the General Assembly does create the sports and entertainment authority, the focus will then shift to the City of Alexandria, which will oversee the normal local questions of design, massing, zoning, and safety.

Both legislators expressed a desire to know more about the details of the proposal and the underlying analysis, along with the results of the major transportation study.

—Guy Land



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ABINGDON *school news*



Winter is all but dull for Abingdon Elementary



Community members support the MLK grounds cleanup. Photo courtesy of Maggie Bush.

Winter isn't slowing us down at Abingdon Elementary. Students kicked off the second half of the year with a slew of new activities and events. This month, new after-school enrichment classes will have students exploring printmaking, LEGO building, coding, double dutch; and more.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that Abingdon Elementary was a segregated school in its first years? Black students were not allowed to enroll; Black students living in South Arlington attended Drew Elementary. Abingdon remained segregated long after the Supreme Court's 1954 ban on segregation in public schools, and Arlington's 1959 integration of Stratford Junior High, because the apartment complexes that constituted Abingdon's attendance zone were openly discriminatory. The Fair Housing Act of 1968 affirmed that housing discrimination was illegal, which paved the way for the first three Black students to attend Abingdon in 1968. One of these students stated that her time at Abingdon was difficult, but we know little else about Abingdon's integration. Do you remember this time in Abingdon history? Share your memories with us at pta@abingdonpta.org.

Students from several grades have headed over to the Arlington Planetarium (located at Washington-Liberty High School) for out-of-this-world learning adventures. The fun will continue into spring!

Save the date! Winter wonderland skating & pizza spirit nights at Pentagon Row 2/15-2/16

The Abingdon Community is invited to join us at Pentagon Row Ice Rink on Thursday, February 15 from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Ice skating is free for Abingdon students & staff. Parents cost \$5.00 to skate. Please email meregreene5@gmail.com with any questions.

You are invited to kick off the evening at Nighthawk Brewery and Pizza (next door to the rink) beginning at 5 p.m. There will be a special area in the restaurant reserved for Abingdon beginning at 5 p.m. They will provide 10 percent of the proceeds to Abingdon both that night

and Friday, February 16 when you use the word: **CARDINAL!**

Coming soon: School book fair

This month, Abingdon students will flock to the school library to explore a world of new book titles. Parent volunteers will help our youngest students create a "wish list" of books they'd like to purchase. If you want to help ensure all kids can participate in the excitement, donate \$5 toward books at the QR code below, or at <https://abingdonpta.memberhub.com>.

Faculty grants update

PTA has funded five faculty grants so far this year and is considering several additional applications right now. These grants provide furniture, learning materials, books, recess equipment and more to benefit Abingdon students and staff.

BINGO night brings big fun

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our first-ever PTA BINGO Night on January 19! Our loud and energetic crowd enjoyed games, food and prizes provided by several local business sponsors.

Abingdon School Dates

February 15—Winter Wonderland at Pentagon Row

February 19—Presidents Day - NO SCHOOL

March 15—NO SCHOOL

March 25-29—SPRING BREAK



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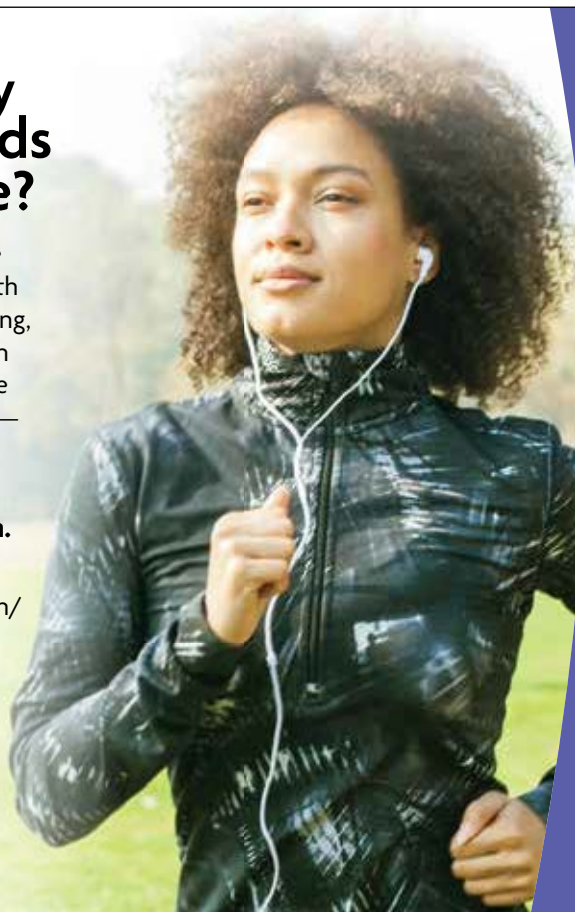


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Finally, a Fairlington snow day!

After a poor snow year in 2023, Fairlington kids are finally enjoying a day in January with enough snow to get a sled down the hill at the field behind Abingdon school. *Photos by Guy Land.*



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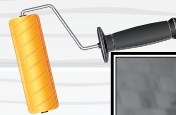
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—Mary Thomasson,
Former Fairlington owner



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neighborhood news

Fairlington Diners

The Fairlington Diners generally gather monthly for relaxed dinners nearby. We focus on having a good meal and an opportunity to chat with neighbors. In January, we enjoyed a visit to Ramparts, our “home base” on burger night.

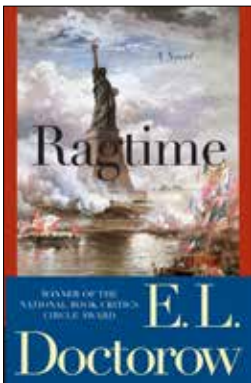
Here’s what’s planned for February:

Saturday, February 10, at 12 p.m., Duangrat’s Thai Restaurant, 5878 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041, (703) 820-5775, <http://www.duangrats.com>. Excellent Thai cuisine, including luncheon specials, even on Saturdays; parking is on the side away from Bailey’s Crossroads when approaching on Rt. 7 from Fairlington.

Please call Carol at 703-379-6840 not later than 24 hours in advance 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 your email address to carol_dabbs@yahoo.com.

Book Group



Join the Fairlington Book Group in February to discuss *Ragtime*, a novel by E.L. Doctorow. We will meet Tuesday, February 27, at 7:30 p.m. in the Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St.

“Ragtime changed our very concept of what a novel could be. An extraordinary tapestry, Ragtime captures the spirit of America in the era between the turn of the century and the First

World War.... And almost magically, the line between fantasy and historical fact, between real and imaginary characters, disappears.” —Amazon.com

The Book Group welcomes first-time visitors and drop-ins. No commitment required! Join us for our discussion, even if you haven’t read the book.

Fairlington Moms’ Club

Are you a Fairlington Mom looking for more support, play opportunities for kids, or just a group of friends in the same period of life for some fun? The Fairlington Moms’ Club is the place for you. We offer:

- Playgroups for different age groups, accommodating all moms, no matter your schedule
- Family holiday-themed events
- Moms’ nights out
- Meal trains and support for when you need it most
- Our very own classifieds listserv and WhatsApp group

All moms welcome! Please email Fairlingtonmomsclub@gmail.com for further information.

Second Saturday Crafternoon workshops



Each month this Arlington county program presents a new, fun, free hands-on art project. This program is for all ages, however children must be accompanied by an adult. Drop in to the Fairlington Community Center Art Studio (room 130) any time between 1:30-3:30 p.m.



Saturday, February 11—Love is in the air, make a sweet valentine for your sweetie

Saturday, March 11—Make some attractive glass bead magnets.



Mini-ads

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A color version of this newsletter is available online at
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MINI-ADS INSTRUCTIONS

Due date for ads and payment: 6 pm on the 8th of the preceding month (February 8 for March issue).

- Checks payable to "Fairlington Citizens Association."
- Pay via PayPal at fca.fairlington.ads@gmail.com.
- Send mini-ad copy via email, regular mail, or drop off at FCA drop box.

Email: fca.fairlington.ads@gmail.com

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

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