# **BULLETIN**



FAIRLINGTON FCA

JANUARY 2024

Volume 50, Number 1

www.fca-fairlington.org

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### FCA sponsors MLK, Jr. Day of Service at Abingdon Elementary



*Fairlingtonians of all ages assist at the 2023 day of service clean up. Photo by Guy Land.* 

FCA is partnering with the Abingdon Elementary School PTA to mark the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday with a day of service cleaning the school grounds, sprucing up the landscaping of the kiss and ride triangle, and cleaning up the Abingdon community garden.

All members of the Fairlington community—not just those who have children enrolled at Abingdon—are invited to join the cleanup activity that day, which falls on Monday, January 15.

The work will begin at 10 a.m. and be completed by noon. Just show up and pitch in. Prior gardening experience is not required. Bring your water bottle, as well as garden gloves and a shovel if you have one (additional shovels and tools will be provided for the gardening work).

This year's service activity builds on last year's successful turnout of volunteers who helped weed the area and layer the garden grounds with cardboard and donated wood chips. Because the garden is in better shape now, the service project will expand more broadly to the school grounds, though work on the garden will still be part of the activity.

"We envision multiple projects all on the Abingdon grounds at once," says Sara Kirschner, the PTA vice president for community relations, who is coordinating the January 15 event. The garden cleanup activity is being led by former PTA president Sharon Burd.

Continued on page 14

### 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 January 10

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

#### **Regular board business:**

• Approval of December minutes

• Unfinished business

- Officer and committee reports
- 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.

Web design by Avatar Tech LLC, Alexandria, VA, www.avatartech-llc.com.

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#### **Fairlington Citizens Association**

PO Box 6182 • Arlington, VA 22206-0182 571-403-1943 • president@fca-fairlington.org

#### **Board of Directors**

Officers Guy Land, President Jennifer Davies, Vice President Paulin Leonida, Treasurer Jennifer Clardy Chalmers, Secretary Directors Dianna Bentley Julie Butler Lydia Redway Donald Staren-Dob F. E. Scudder Wagg

#### Fairlington Neighborhood Conservation Committee

Chair: Ed Hilz • 703-379-6435 • ehliz@earthlink.net

#### All Fairlington Bulletin

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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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For more information, visit www.fca-fairlington.org

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### Calendar

**FCA monthly meeting** Wednesday, January 10, 7 p.m. Virtual work session

**Paint, Build, Create** Saturday, January 13, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Fairlington Community Center. 3308 S. Stafford St.

**Fairlington diners** Monday, January 15, 6:30 p.m. Ramparts 1700 Fern St. Alexandria, VA 2230

**Martin Luther King Day** Monday, January 15 FCC closed

**Day of Service work project** Monday, January 15, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Abingdon Elementary School 3035 S Abingdon St

**Fairlington book group** Tuesday, January 23, 7:30 p.m. Fairlington Community Center



**Contributors this month:** Melanie Alvord, Sue Davis, James Harlow, Guy Land, and Scudder Wagg.

Some images in this publication may be digitally enhanced.



### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A busy agenda awaits the Fairlington Citizens Association in 2024.

We will be actively engaged with the City of Alexandria on key planning issues that could affect our community. While the bulk of Fairlington is in Arlington County, part of North Fairlington is in Alexandria, and Fairlington is bordered on two sides by Alexandria.

Two Alexandria planning activities will draw our attention. The city plans to update the long-term vision for Alexandria West, which includes the Alexandria part of Fairlington Villages and all of Alexandria that lies west of I-395. A comprehensive land use plan for this area is slated to go before the city council this fall. We'll be monitoring that work carefully.

Last year the city announced plans to address safety, access, and stormwater issues along King Street between N. Quaker Lane and Menokin Drive. The process began with community engagement, including a briefing for FCA by city staff, and a menu of options should be available for public comment this spring. FCA will participate in these discussions.

FCA works closely with Arlington County Board members and staff, and we will likely invite county leaders to visit us. We will continue working with the county to address the zoning problem some Fairlington owners face when they seek routine permits to do major renovation work inside their units, a complication that adds time and expense to these projects.

FCA seeks to foster a sense of community through activities that bring neighbors together. Although we have not worked out the details, we expect to continue to promote the Fairlington Farmers Market, join with Fairlington Villages in sponsoring the Fourth of July celebration, host a Family Movie Night, and welcome Santa to the neighborhood on the firetruck.

We value Fairlington's rich history and we will build on our relationship with the Fairlington Historical Society. We are discussing a possible joint application if Arlington County again offers a historic preservation grant program.

We will seek to strengthen our partnership with other organizations serving Fairlington, such as the Abingdon Elementary PTA and the Shirlington Library. And we'll continue community conversations on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

This is a full plate! To implement this agenda, we need your help. I hope you will join us. And let me know if you have suggestions of additional ways we can strengthen our neighborhood.

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

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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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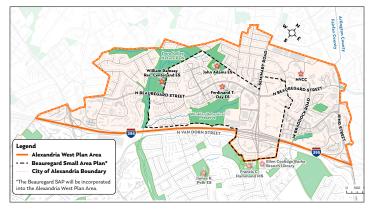
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### Fairlingtonians receive update on Alexandria West planning effort

In December Carrie Beach, Neighborhood Planning Division Chief for the City of Alexandria, briefed Fairlingtonians on the current status of work on the Alexandria West Plan. She spoke about the various components being considered as part of the Plan, including land use, housing affordability, transportation, community facilities, infrastructure, and sustainability.



*The Alexandria West area is located west of I-395 and south of King St. Map graphic courtesy of alexandriava.gov.* 

Ms. Beach shared the Alexandria West planning schedule, including milestones this month for presentations to the Alexandria Planning Commission on January 4 and to the Alexandria City Council on January 23. February is expected to bring recommendations for the Alexandria West Plan and community meeting.

Community review and additional Board and Commission meetings are expected in the spring of 2024, with community comments on the draft plan anticipated for the summer, and a public hearing in September. The Alexandria City Council is scheduled to adopt the final Plan by the end of 2024.

The lack of affordable housing in the City has been a

consistent topic of discussion among City Council Members over the past few years, and the Plan will include housing density as a primary component. Ms. Beach explained that Virginia law limits or prohibits the City from taking certain actions, such as setting rents or establishing rent controls.

The City is interested in establishing additional

affordable housing through incentivizing developers with bonus density, essentially allowing additional floors to be added above zoning height restrictions if those floors are used for affordable housing.

In response to a question, Ms. Beach explained that another community similar to Fairlington is unlikely to be built because it is no longer an economically feasible option for developers, given the lack of land availability and its cost.

Additional information, including previous community meeting presentations, on the Alexandria West Plan can be found at: https://www.alexandriava.gov/ AlexandriaWest.

-Melanie Alvord

### **County installs Fairlington EV charging stations**



A van makes use of the new EV charging ports at the FCC. Photo by Guy Land.

Arlington county has recently installed electric vehicle (EV) charging ports in the parking lot at the Fairlington Community Center on S. Stafford St. Four ports (two dual port chargers) are for public use and two ports (one dual-port charger) are for the county's fleet. They became operational in late November.

The ChargePoint public chargers are Level 2 and the cost is \$0.15/kWh under the current county ordinance. It is paid through the ChargePoint app. The cost may change. Access is on a first-come, first-served basis.

The county is planning to install signs indicating that parking at the chargers is reserved for individuals who are charging their vehicles.

Fairlington is the first of five locations (Madison and Lubber Run Community Centers, Central Library, and the Court House surface lot being the other four locations) that are planned installations of publicly accessible electric vehicle chargers through the county's FY24 Capital Improvement Plan. The county had previously installed chargers at the Long Bridge Aquatic Center and the Arlington Mill Community Center.

Continued on page 9

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### FCA annual meeting elects officers and board

The annual meeting of the Fairlington Citizens Association December 13 saw the election of officers and board members for the coming year, with one vacancy on the nine-member board yet to be filled.

Association members elected Fairlington Villages resident F. E. Scudder Wagg to the board. A transportation expert who has lived in Fairlington since 2018, Wagg said that he and his wife "really loved the peaceful feel of Fairlington but also how easy it was to reach lots of places easily. As someone who works on sustainable transportation issues, I'm thankful that I can live in a place where walking, biking, and transit are real and relatively easy options."

The voting returned seven current members to the board: President Guy Land, Vice President Jennifer Davies, Secretary Jennifer Clardy Chalmers, Treasurer Paulin Leonida, and board members Lydia Redway, Julie Butler, and Dianna Bentley.



FCA Board members Julie Butler, Lydia Redway, and Dianna Bentley discuss plans for the coming year at the FCA annual meeting in December. Photo by Guy Land.

Donald Staren-Doby and Todd Delp did not seek re-election to the board. The board thanks them for their years of service to the Failington community.

With one director slot still open, the board seeks an interested resident or homeowner who would like to contribute to the community through volunteer service on the FCA board. Let any board member know if you are interested.

In a meeting that was shortened by having to evacuate the building because of an unidentified odor, the group



*Fairlington Villages resident Scudder Wagg is the newest member of the 2024 Fairington Citizen's Association board. Photo courtesy of F.E. Scudder Wagg.* 

heard president Guy Land review what he called a "year of ups and downs" and outline a list of items that FCA is likely to work on in the coming year. (See page 3 for more on these.)

Director Dianna Bentley reported that things continue to move slowly on FCA's request that the county address the inadvertent zoning problem that requires some Fairlington homeowners to request a waiver of the zoning rules in order to make internal improvements to their units.

According to Bentley, county staff have indicated that this is still on their work list, but that it may not receive focused attention until the spring of 2024 after the planning and zoning department's workplan and budget have been put in place.

Janelle Shuler, Librarian Supervisor of the Shirlington Library, joined the meeting to highlight the library's interest in partnering with the civic association in meeting the needs and interests of Fairlington residents.

—Guy Land

### Would you like to serve on the FCA board?

There is one vacancy. Consider contributing to your community through this leadership role. Contact any FCA board member if you are interested or have questions.

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### WMATA budget suggests possible bus changes

At their December meeting, the WMATA Board got a first look at what might happen if the transit agency has to cut service to maintain its budget: up to 10 Metrorail stations would be closed, the frequency of Metrorail service would be cut significantly, and dozens of bus routes would be cut or reduced. For Fairlington, Routes 22A and 22F would be discontinued and Route 7A would have its service levels cut.



*Bus 22A is a common commuter route from Fairlington to the Pentagon. Photo courtesy Wikimedia Commons.* 

This year the transit agency is looking at a big financial challenge. During COVID the federal government provided extra funding to help transit agencies manage the decline in ridership and extra costs. Four years later that funding is running out and ridership on Metrorail is about 70 percent of pre-pandemic levels and Metrobus ridership is back above pre-pandemic levels.

Yet fare revenue is much lower, and costs have risen significantly. So WMATA is asking DC, Maryland, and Virginia for about \$750 million more per year to maintain current service. You can learn more about the budget situation for WMATA by reading their board reports and watching the December 14th Finance Committee the General Assembly session from January to March. WMATA must adopt a budget by April and there will likely be many ups and downs in the negotiations over funding and service levels.

Interested Fairlington residents can make a difference by contacting your Virginia legislators: Senator Barbara Favola and Delegate Alfonso Lopez (Arlington portion of Fairlington) and Senator Adam Ebbin and Delegate Charniele Herring (Alexandria portion of Fairlington). Residents can also contact Arlington County Board members, as the county does play a role in the local and regional funding process for WMATA.

—Scudder Wagg

#### Charging stations from page 5

The new EV charging stations expand the number of stations that are available in Fairlington, reflecting the growing popularity of electric or hybrid vehicles. The Fairlington Villages condo association pioneered the availability of EV charging stations in Fairlington, installing the first ones in its community center parking lot a number of years ago. More recently it has added additional stations at another location on the condo property.

Fairlington Commons has offered charging stations for its residents for a couple of years, and Fairlington Meadows recently installed stations as well.

To directly address the climate crisis, Arlington County's Community Energy Plan (CEP) is creating a carbon neutral Arlington by 2050. EV deployment is one of the key strategies to achieve this goal.

Key aspects of that plan include electrifying the county vehicle fleet by 2050, accelerating electric vehicle adoption in the private and commercial sectors, and supporting a network of convenient charging stations throughout Arlington.

According to the county, EVs offer lower total cost of ownership (TCO) than traditional internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles. While EV purchase prices can be higher than ICE vehicles, the vehicle cost is often offset by federal, state, and utility incentive programs and lower maintenance costs.

-Guy Land

Meeting at https://www. wmata.com/about/ board/.

So far, DC and Maryland have suggested that they would provide additional funding. State officials in Virginia have not indicated whether they will provide more funding. WMATA funding will likely be part of the whole state budgeting process that gets started in earnest during the General Assembly Silva Construction for Home Remodeling

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### For the love of NATURE



### Are we too in love with our lawns?

I was in Stone Harbor, New Jersey this summer, when I learned that Doug Tallamy was giving a lecture in the next town up the coast! I couldn't believe it. I had read some of his books, *Bringing Nature Home* and *The Nature of Oaks*.

He's an entomologist by training who tackles environmental issues such as native plant loss that results in the decline of all native animal populations. Finding out that Doug was giving a lecture was like learning that Taylor Swift was doing a free concert in town.\*



*Sue's native plant garden in Fairlington. Photo by Sue Davis.* 

Grass does almost nil for the environment. Its roots are short so it doesn't slow or filter rainwater that much. They could store some carbon, but there is a habit of mowing it down. Any animal action there? Not much.

How do we get to homegrown parks? Just as there are big national parks, there are many small regional and county parks, too. Arlington has a lot. So the idea is to create natural areas in your yard using native plants. These become a "corridor" between parks and help to diversify otherwise sterile

The big message that night was about homegrown national parks. So what is a national park? Originally selected for conservation and recreation, they now protect historical and cultural sites, as well. Often these areas represent sacred Native American sites. Even though these are large areas, they are not large enough to support the biodiversity in it.

Years ago, Tallamy and his wife bought an overgrown property. After clearing debris, he began replanting with native plants. Being an entomologist, he knew what plants insects eat, so he began planting those that would attract them. Before long, many found their way to his home. Along with insects came the birds who ate them, as well as frogs, salamanders, and turtles.

It turns out that most Americans have virtually sterile yards, by their own creation, that support no wildlife. The suburban aesthetic for most of us is a huge swath of lawn - one of the reasons I moved to Fairlington - and a few carefully placed trees - many non-native.

The Washington Post recently reported that "turf grass…including residential and commercial lawns, golf courses and similar landscapes….represent the largest irrigated crop in the United States, three times bigger than corn." Let's just say the size of New England.

areas, such as lawn.

So how does this apply to Fairlington? Utah hill is one example of a "corridor." Volunteers in the Commons work to remove ivy and other invasive plants and periodically thin the exuberant native plants. The best part is that these native "overachievers" are usually up for adoption once removed. The Fairlington Gardening Community Facebook page will keep you advised of when and where to find these freebies.

Another area for consideration might be planting "corridors" along the King St. fence line. Where else could these corridors be placed? Let's build this homegrown national park together.

More in February about "Doug Tallamy: From Theory to Practice."

\*Taylor Swift began her career at Coffee Talk in Stone Harbor, New Jersey.

Email fortheloveofnature@googlegroups.com with questions or for planting recommendations in your patio and follow Fairlington Gardening Community on Facebook.

—Sue Davis

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#### FCA from page 1

Burd notes that the goal of the garden is to "enrich students' and families' knowledge of environmental sustainability and to be good stewards of our Earth, while providing first-hand experience in learning about our food supply and our pollinators."

Additionally, on the MLK garden workday, volunteers will be removing invasive plants on school grounds and digging out one of the garden beds to get rid of the invasive milkweed. The PTA hopes there will be a volunteer with carpentry skills to hang some shelves inside the new shed.

In 1994 Congress passed legislation to dedicate the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday as a national day of service. FCA views the garden workday as an excellent way to provide service to the Fairlington community by helping improve the grounds of our neighborhood elementary school.

For more information on the event, see https://www. abingdonpta.org/.

—Guy Land

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# ABING Densol news



### Abingdon takes 2024 in stride



Abingdon faculty & friends support the Holiday Food Drive for families in our school community. Photo courtesy of Maggie Bush.

And just like that, we're headed into our Spring semester at Abingdon Elementary! The weather is still cold, but our students and teachers are keeping busy and warm with non-stop excitement. Huge thanks to everyone who participated in our Thanksgiving Food Drive and Holiday Gift Drive.

More than forty Abingdon families in need benefitted from neighbors' incredibly generous donations of toys, books, and more in the lead-up to the holidays. Thank you for sharing in the holiday spirit!

### Join us for an MLK Day of Service

On Monday, January 15, the entire community is invited to participate in a school grounds and garden cleanup day. More details will be available at www.abingdonpta.org.

### Did someone say "BINGO"? Join us January 19!

All neighbors are invited to swing down to Abingdon for a fun Friday night of BINGO and raffles on Friday, January 19. More details coming soon!

### Save the date! Winter wonderland skating & pizza spirit nights at Pentagon Row February 15 and 16

The broader Abingdon Community is invited to join us at Pentagon Row Ice Rink on Thursday, February 15th from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Ice skating is free for Abingdon students and staff. Parents are \$5 to skate. Please email meregreene5@gmail.com with any questions.

Did you know that Abingdon Elementary had the very first parent volunteer crossing guards ("Mothers' Volunteer Patrol") in the country?! Abingdon moms in the 1950s—concerned as ever about Fairlington traffic—organized themselves to ensure kids' safe travel to and from school. Fifty moms took two shifts each on a monthly basis. 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% of the proceeds to Abingdon both that night AND Friday, February 16th when you use the word: CARDINAL!

### Coming soon: school book fair

Next 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 here, or at https://abingdonpta. memberhub.com.

### Abingdon School Dates

**January 15**—Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - NO SCHOOL/ Grounds Cleanup at Abingdon

January 19—BINGO Night

January 29—NO SCHOOL

**February 15**—Winter Wonderland at Pentagon Row

February 19—Presidents Day—NO SCHOOL



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### Santa rides through Fairlington

With stops at Park Shirlington, Abingdon Elementary, and the Fairlington Community Center, Santa visited with scores of Fairlington kids as he rode the firetruck through Fairlington on December 9. Special thanks to Lt. Kristin Pardiny and her team at Fire Station 9 for making this a special event for Fairlington children. *Photos by Guy Land and Jennifer Davies.* 

















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## neighborhood news

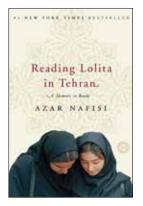
### Fairlington Diners

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 December, we enjoyed our traditional visit to the Auberge Chez Francois in Great Falls, which was quite merry!

Monday, January 15, 6:30 p.m., Ramparts, 1700 Fern St., Alexandria, VA 22302, (703) 998-6616, http://www. rampartstavern.com. We'll return to this perennial local favorite on a Monday, when there are burger specials galore. The rest of the menu is also available.

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 at yahoo.com.



### Book Group

Join the Fairlington Book Group in January to discuss *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*, by Azar Nafisi. We will meet Tuesday, January 23, at 7:30 p.m. in the Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St.

"Azar Nafisi's luminous tale offers a fascinating portrait of the Iran-Iraq war viewed from Tehran and gives us a rare glimpse, from the

inside, of women's lives in revolutionary Iran. It is a work of great passion and poetic beauty, written with a startlingly original voice." —Amazon.com

The Book Group welcomes first-time visitors and dropins. 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

### Paint, Build, Create set for January 13

Paint, Build, Create is an annual Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (S.T.E.A.M.) special event sponsored by the Arlington County Department of Parks and Recreation. This year's event will take place on Saturday, January 13, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St..

With a rich variety of hands-on activities for kids along with a few for adults—the event is designed to foster creativity and science learning. Activities will include glitter bracelets, fractal patterns, balancing butterflies, paper helicopters, playdough circuits, and a cardboard build room.

Paint, Build, Create annually draws scores of children from across the county. It is a free offering. For more information see https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/Parks-Recreation/Programs/Art/ Paint-Build-Create.

Celebrate the **Martin Luther King**, **Jr. Day of Service** by helping clean the grounds and garden of Abingdon Elementary.



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### Home Improvements

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References available. Small drywall/ plastering repairs. Wallpaper installation and removal. Small or large jobs. Steve Chute. 571-216-9338/703-912-1450.

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A color version of this newsletter is available online at www.fca-fairlington.org.



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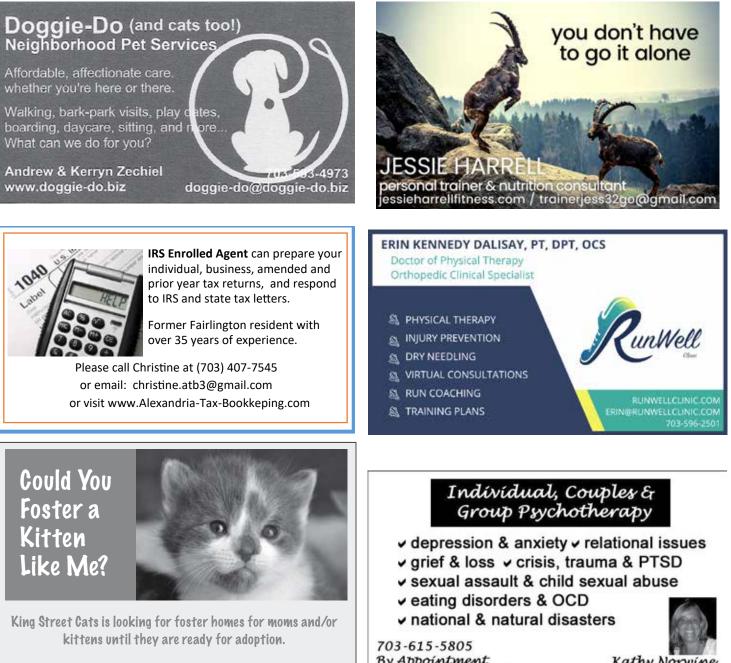
**Due date for ads and payment:** 6 pm on the 8th of the preceding month (January 10 for February issue).

- 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

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

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