

all FAIRLINGTON BULLETIN



www.fca-fairlington.org

MARCH 2013

Volume 39, Number 3

Arlington's "Cable Guy" reveals the big picture for Comcast and FiOS



Photo, courtesy Arlington County.

FCA monthly meeting

Wednesday, March 13, 7 pm
FCC
3308 S. Stafford St.

Hunger Project meal-packing event

Saturday, March 9, 10 am – 3 pm
Abingdon Elementary School

Daylight Saving Time begins

Sunday, March 10, 2 am

MOMS Club

Wednesday, March 13, 4:30 pm
FCC

Fairlington Diners

Tuesday, March 19, 6:30 pm
Samuel Beckett's Irish Gastro Pub
Shirlington

Fairlington Diners

Monday, March 25, 6:30 pm
Ramparts half-price burger night
Alexandria

Book Group

Tuesday, March 26, 7:30 pm
North Fairlington CC

See Neighborhood News on page 23 and related articles for details about calendar events.

Rob Billingsley is Arlington's point person for tracking the performance of the cable TV companies that provide service to the county. Arlington has two cable providers—Comcast's Xfinity (traditional cable technology) and Verizon's FiOS (newer fiber optic technology). In Fairlington, currently, the only cable choice is Comcast.

At the FCA meeting on March 13, Billingsley, the director of Arlington's Cable Administration Office, will discuss the way his office acts, by law, to monitor the quality of cable companies' interaction with customers; explain the standards used to assess the cable providers' performance; and discuss the prospect of FiOS coming to Fairlington. He also will answer residents' questions about all-things-cable.

Helping to resolve conflicts for cable TV customers (who have been unable to reach satisfaction with service providers) is only one of the cable office's duties—although it is probably the "most visible" function to county residents, says Billingsley. The cable office tracks the number of customer contacts with a company, the number of complaints, the kinds of complaints, and the types of resolutions obtained. They track the company's phone answering time, and how long it takes for a new customer to receive service. It is a legal requirement that the cable companies provide this kind of information to the cable administrator. Based on the data, the county assesses the company's performance and how it matches up with the standards set forth in Comcast's or Verizon's franchise agreement.

The authority to monitor a company's performance comes from Federal

Continued on page 12

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. If you would like to discuss a neighborhood issue at the meeting, please e-mail president@fca-fairlington.org or leave a voice-mail message at 703-243-1735 by the Sunday before the meeting.

March 13 agenda:

A finalized agenda for the monthly meeting will be posted on the FCA Web site the Sunday before the Wednesday meeting.

Speaker: County Cable Administrator, Rob Billingsley, will discuss the role of his office, problem-solving help for cable customers, and prospects for FiOS coming to Fairlington.

Regular business meeting:

- Approval of agenda
- Approval of February minutes
- Officer and committee reports
- Unfinished business
- New business

Online resources:

Find more information on the FCA Web site, 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 Web site the week before hard copies hit doorsteps.

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

USEFUL CONTACTS

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Pothole Patrol Hotline	703-228-6485
Shirlington Library	703-228-6545
Street Light Hotline	703-228-6511
www.arlingtonva.us/departments/Environmental	
Services/dot/traffic/streetlights/index.htm	
Helicopter Noise Complaints	Bob Laser (FAA) bob.laser@faa.gov

Fairlington Citizens Association

PO Box 6182 • Arlington, VA 22206-0182
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6 PM, **10th of month** preceding publication month for commercial advertising, mini-ads, and editorial copy.

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E-mail editorial announcements to:

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Ad Size	Height	Width	Rate
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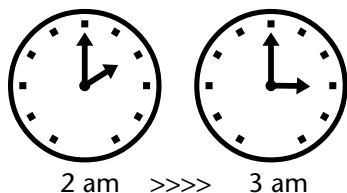
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Time to spring forward

At 2 am on Sunday, March 10, set clocks ahead to 3 am, for the start of Daylight Saving, or “summer,” time. For more information about DST, go online to the U.S. Naval Observatory Web site, www.usno.navy.mil.



Contents

Features

Cable issues explained	1
Park Shirlington	
advisory committee.	5
Bylaws amended	5
FCA activities survey.	5
Communications down	
Fairlington farmers market.	7
Fairlington home values down. . .	9
Water main break felt here	9
Fairlington at 70: The models. . . .	11
FHS Home & Garden tour.	11
Anniversary events committee. . .	11
Meal-packing at Abingdon	13
Get AFAC seeds, bring bags.	13
FCA at CivFed	15
Department of Lost & Found	15
ACPD 3rd district notes	15
CERT training this month	15
Fire chief on smoke detectors. . . .	17
FCC hours	17

Departments

Patio gardening.	19
Abingdon School news.	21
Neighborhood news	23
Mini-ads	25

Some images in this publication may be digitally enhanced.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We need your help!

Your FCA board is crafting a rich menu of 2013 activities—things that help make Fairlington a great place to live. But to be able to implement these ideas, we need help. There are only nine of us, and we can't do all of these things by ourselves. We need you.

Here's a quick list of some things on our community agenda this year:

- Park Shirlington redevelopment advisory committee (see page 5)
- Fairlington Farmers Market task force (see page 7)
- 70th Anniversary events steering committee (see page 11)
- Fairlington electronic recycling and paper shredding event
- Fairlington 5K run/walk
- Fairlington tree walk or architecture tour

Whether we can pull off these events depends in large part on whether we can get enough volunteers to help us.

Fairlingtonians lead full and busy lives—with jobs, kids, charitable work, and an occasional Nats game or Signature Theatre play. But I've heard many of you comment on how much you enjoy the special community spirit of Fairlington. And part of that derives from the work of our neighborhood volunteers.

We already have a dedicated corps of folks helping us enrich your Fairlington experience. And I'm grateful for all they do. But we need to expand our network of volunteers. We're not talking about major commitments, just a few hours a month or a little concentrated energy to help implement a specific activity.

I know that people rarely respond to generic requests like this. If I had time, I'd go knocking on doors to ask you personally to join us. But I hope you will think about whether you can give a few hours to the community. And if there is some other activity you would like to help with, just let the board know.

To make it easier for you to volunteer, we've created a special page on the FCA Web site where you can sign up, indicate your preferred activity, suggest some other ideas, and offer comments on what it would take to get you more engaged in our community work. Go to www.fca-fairlington.org.

And if you want to offer additional comments or have a longer conversation about how FCA can better meet your needs and benefit from your unique skills and interests, shoot me an e-mail, at president@fca-fairlington.org.

I look forward to hearing from you. And thank you for your help.

Guy Land
FCA President

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Seeking members for new Park Shirlington Advisory Committee



The FCA board is standing up a committee of Fairlington residents to advise the board on the Park Shirlington redevelopment proposal. The committee will delve into the details of the proposal, explore the potential impacts on Fairlington, and recommend strategies to the board.

The board is particularly interested in tapping the expertise of people with backgrounds in architecture and design, traffic analysis, housing finance, or historic properties. But just as welcome are residents who have a general interest in what the redevelopment would mean for Fairlington, and who are willing to roll up their sleeves to help FCA make a thoughtful and effective contribution to the county's review of the Park Shirlington redevelopment proposal.

If you are interested in serving on the advisory committee, contact FCA president Guy Land, president@fca-fairlington.org, this month. FCA will present an update on the redevelopment plans at its real estate development forum at the FCA meeting on April 10.

At a briefing in north Fairlington January 16, the attorney for Home Properties (owner of the Park Shirlington apartment complex) said the company expected to file a site plan with the county to redevelop the S. 31st St. property by late spring or early summer. The site plan review process will likely take at least a year, and FCA expects to participate actively in the review process. Under Home Properties' current timetable, construction might begin in the summer of 2015, with possible occupancy in 2018.

Bylaws amendment approved



At the February FCA meeting, FCA secretary Carol Dabbs (at left, with Guy Land) presented the association's bylaws amendment proposal and answered questions. The goal of the bylaws

review committee was not to make substantive changes to the association's governing document, but rather to repair some ambiguities in communications directives, clarify the way the association can do business, and make the bylaws a more useful and flexible document. The bylaws review was initiated last year by FCA past president Rosiland Jordan. Working for the last year, the bylaws review committee included Carol Dabbs, Mark Jones, and Guy Land. *Photo, Gretchen Fallon.*

Can you help? Take the online survey

The FCA board is looking for volunteers to help with an exciting line up of possible activities this year. To indicate your willingness to help plan or support an activity or event, go online to the FCA Web site, www.fca-fairlington.org, and follow the link to take the quick survey and provide your contact information.

Working group plans enhanced communications



Christine Chirichella, AFB assistant editor and FCA webmaster (left) and FCA board member Michelle Woolley at the special working session on strategic communications planning in February. The board

agreed to enhance the association's social media presence, to better serve residents, and to explore the possibility of engaging a student intern in that enterprise. *Photo, Guy Land.*

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The seed is planted for a Fairlington farmers market



Plans are afoot to bring a weekend farmers market to Fairlington. First steps in exploring the idea were taken on a rainy Sunday in January, when FCA board members Carrie Street and Jacob Gelbaum visited the Westover Farmers Market. Despite the weather, Street and Gelbaum joined a sizeable shopping crowd on the

market's first open day after the holiday break, to tour the line of vendor stalls, talk to sellers, and check out the fresh bread and cookies, fruits and vegetables, spices, and flowers. Street noted the surprising array of mushrooms. "There were dozens of varieties," she said.

As part of the locavore movement, Westover appeals to people who like eating food that's locally-grown rather than having been trucked long distances. Westover managers describe its offerings and underlying sustainability principle: "Everyone who sells at the market grows, raises, bakes, cooks, or prepares everything themselves. And it is all done within 125 miles of Arlington County."

Field to Table, Inc. (FTT) is the Arlington-based, non-profit organization that established its first, flagship market in the Westover location. Possibly, Fairlington could become FTT's second market site. The idea took root when FCA was approached by long-time Fairlington homeowner, Rob Swennes, who is a founding organizer of FTT and manager of the Westover market.

FCA board members Street and Gelbaum, along with Fairlington Villages activities committee chair Melissa Beene (who gathered a wealth of research, including the potential for eventual expansion to a night market), formed the original market working group. They began exploring the possibilities last year, which led to the fact-finding visit to Westover at the beginning of this year. Collecting preliminary information about organizing a farmers market in Fairlington, the group learned that



a market involves coordinating lots of moving parts—county permitting, site selection (to include a required bathroom and parking for vendors), market analysis, and detailed planning. Most important is identifying a dedicated cadre of neighborhood volunteers, who would work with the experienced hands at FTT to bring a market to Fairlington.

FCA board member Carrie Street, top left, inspects a wealth of mushrooms. Below, FCA board member Jacob Gelbaum with Westover's Rob Swennes. Photos, Jacob Gelbaum.



Make the farmers market bloom—volunteer

If you're interested in helping the FCA find out more about bringing a farmers market to Fairlington, go online to the FCA Web site, www.fca-fairlington.org, and take the activities survey to indicate your interest and provide your contact information. For more information or to make suggestions about a farmers market, send e-mail to FCA president Guy Land, president@fca-fairlington.org. If residents are willing to help, Fairlington could have its own farmers market by summer or fall.

Farmers markets in Arlington: The Westover farmers market (located at the corner of Washington Blvd. and N. McKinley Rd.) is open Sundays, 9 am to 1 pm, December to April, and 8 am to noon, May to November. Among Arlington's seven farmers markets, most are open one day a week, rain or shine, from April or May through November or December, from about 8 am to noon; year round markets add a winter season with later or abbreviated hours. For more information, go online to the county Web site, www.arlingtonva.us, search farmers markets, and follow the links to all seven markets.

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Fairlington home values down four percent



Photo, Guy Land.

The county's real estate assessments, mailed out in January, reflect a loss in value of about four percent for Fairlington homes. County-wide, the average assessed value of all homes (single-family properties, townhouses, and condominiums) rose slightly, by one percent. Commercial property values remained flat.

County staff said that nearly half of all homeowners (47%) saw no change in their property's assessed valuation from a year before; 31% saw increases; and 22% saw declines.

"These assessments reflect the impact that BRAC and the slow economic recovery continue to have on Arlington," said County Manager Barbara Donnellan. "As we projected late last year, there will be about a \$50 million gap between the county's revenues and expenses, and both county government and schools will need to make some tough choices to close that gap."

Observers expect elected officials to increase the real estate tax rate—currently \$0.971 per \$100 assessed value. Real estate tax revenues represent more than 55 % of all county government funding. The Arlington County Board will hold a public hearing on real estate tax rates on March 28 at 7 pm in the county board room (2100 Clarendon Boulevard). The tax rate will be set by the board in April. Real estate taxes are then collected in two annual installments, June 15 and October 5.

For more information about home values, go online to the county Web site, www.arlingtonva.us, and search real estate assessments. You can use the property data search tool to look up your home's assessed value and assessment history. For county budget information, go online to the county Web site, select the County Manager's page, and click the icon for FY 2014 Budget Updates.

January water main break affected water pressure in Fairlington

When a large water main breaks in Arlington, even as far away from here as five miles north, the break, and attendant repairs that put the conduit out of service, can affect water pressure all the way south, in Fairlington. Residents discovered that connection in mid-January when several days of repair work followed a break in a 30-inch water main at Arlington Boulevard and S. Irving Street. Fairlington residents noticed periods of low water pressure over several days.



The county asked Arlington residents to help reduce demand by minimizing water usage during peak hours—in the morning (6 to 9 am) and in the evening (5 to 9 pm). The water bureau suggested running dishwashers and washing machines during off-peak hours (and only when full).

Though more common in winter because of freezing temperatures, breaks and leaks in the county's aging infrastructure of water pipes can occur at any time. If you see a leak, or have other water concerns, contact the Water Emergency hotline at 703-228-6555.

Water works

Starting in February, and lasting for perhaps 40 days (barring delays), county contractor crews will replace an 80-year-old, 8-inch water main along Columbia Pike. The water main has failed several times over the past year, resulting in emergency repairs and traffic disruptions.

Watch for traffic delays/detours during project operation hours, Monday through Friday, 9 am to 3:30 pm. Water bureau engineers say the repairs are not expected to impact water pressure for Fairlington residents.



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A model community



One-time Fairlington resident and FCA past president Nancy Hunt locates her then-home on the north Fairlington model. Photo, Gretchen Fallon.

The models of Fairlington were last-century marketing tools—two 3-D, table-top displays, or architects' maquettes—that were used by sales agents in the 1970s when Fairlington's 1940s rental units were converted to condominiums. The models were constructed (they are large and heavy) to show potential home buyers the layout of the neighborhood. With winding streets and clustered buildings, Fairlington is faithfully reproduced in the models—complete with little green trees.

And you can see them today, mounted on a wall of the north corridor at the Fairlington Community Center. Residents enjoy the "Where's Waldo?" search to locate their own homes on the models.

In the decades after the condos sold, the models shifted from one caretaker to another and fell into disrepair. Their unwieldy size presented a storage problem: The

triangle-shaped one, showing south Fairlington, is 7 feet wide at the base and 6 feet tall; the rectangle, showing north Fairlington, is 6 ½ feet wide by 4 ½ feet high. Destined for the dustbin, the models were rescued in 2010 through the support and funding of the Fairlington Historical Society, the FCA, and the neighborhood's seven homeowners associations.

They were restored through the county's Historical Preservation Program, directed by program coordinator, Michael Leventhal, who said: "While the models themselves are not historic, they do allow viewers to understand the sheer size of this historic complex and the enormous pastoral setting the buildings are laid in."

Save the date—FHS Home and Garden tour, May 11

This very popular biennial event sponsored by the Fairlington Historical Society is now in its sixth year. The tour will feature a wonderful group of homes with renovated kitchens and bathrooms, tasteful interior decoration, and beautiful gardens.

Look for details and the ticket order form in next month's newsletter. If you can volunteer to help with ticket sales or home guiding, contact the tour committee, FHGshow2013@gmail.com.

Happy Birthday, Fairlington!

This year, as Fairlington marks its 70th birthday, a steering committee is forming to suggest and make plans for anniversary events. If you're willing to serve on the committee, go online to the FCA Web site, www.fca-fairlington.org, and take the short survey to indicate your interest and provide contact information.

Kent Duffy tracks Fairlington telecom issues



FCA vice president Kent Duffy, who arranged for Arlington's Cable Administrator to speak at the March 13 FCA meeting, disclaims any particular geek-level interest in technology. Rather, he came to his interest in local telecom issues as a typical Fairlington resident

and, therefore, a captive Comcast customer.

Along with neighbors, Duffy identified problems in his cable service and sought to resolve them. That led to research into the role of the county's cable office in assisting customers, and an additional look at the limitations of the county's reach: "Really, I can do without TV for days, no problem," says Duffy. "But it's when the Internet goes down that I, like many others, really realize how dependent we all are on one provider."

That led to more research into the likelihood (or not) that FiOS would ever be available in Fairlington. Duffy agrees it would be great to have the FiOS option here, but he remains skeptical, noting that there is some question about whether Verizon essentially backed out of its franchise agreement with Alexandria.

Cable, continued from page 1

Communications Commission regulations that permit cities and counties to determine what cable companies may do and what levels of performance they must achieve in their jurisdiction. "Their cables are using our right of way (ROW)," says Billingsley, referring to the public streets, public property, and the areas between sidewalks and curbs. "They make money from that use. And we—the county—charge them for it. We get something in return for permitting them to be in the ROW." In the current franchise agreement with Comcast, for example, Arlington receives community-interest channels for educational, arts, and county government programming, as well as an equipped television studio.

Billingsley points out that the county's regulatory authority extends only to TV delivery, not to phone or data service. In addition, there is no regulatory authority to control a cable company's pricing or programming.

For both Arlington cable providers, there has been a slight improvement in meeting performance standards over the last couple of years. "It's nothing dramatic," says Billingsley, "but, yes, the numbers reflect that things have improved somewhat."

Interestingly, the typical complaints from Comcast customers differ from those of FiOS customers—and there's even a noticeable difference between a few years ago and today. Customer service used to be the single most common complaint of Comcast customers, but those complaints are fewer now than formerly. Now, customers complain about "weird things happening" with their TVs: the picture is pixilated or it freezes; the audio cuts out, stutters, or becomes garbled; the recording function stops; the TV turns off for no discernible reason. "They are the signs of a system with aging infrastructure," says Billingsley.



In the early years of FiOS, the initial flood of phone calls came from people asking when the Verizon service would be available in their neighborhoods. Now, FiOS customers call with billing problems. "That's the sign of a fairly new system," he says. Although an established telecom company, Verizon is relatively new to the cable TV business, so they're still working to improve some basic functions.

The county's most pressing cable issue at the moment is its franchise agreement with Comcast, which comes up for renewal this year. The 15-year agreement is in the contract renewal phase, which is a three-year negotiation. Arlington is now in the third year of that process, with expectations that an agreement will be reached by June 2013.

FiOS in Fairlington? Billingsley can explain the county's franchise agreement with Verizon, which calls for FiOS to have built out a "significant portion" of the county by 2013, and to have built out "completely" by 2016 (although the legal meaning for those terms is unclear). The agreement would seem to indicate that

Continued, next page

Verizon must provide the availability of FiOS cable service to all parts of the county, including Fairlington, by 2016.

Billingsley offers some interesting advice to Fairlington residents about a potential FiOS build out: Before construction can start, each of Fairlington's seven condo associations (and management companies) must reach a separate agreement with Verizon. Because utilities are underground in Fairlington, FiOS construction here could encounter any number of unforeseen problems, and an association's agreement should specify who takes care of the problem before digging begins. Also, the association's agreement should clarify how the wiring to each individual unit should be completed—and what constitutes satisfactory completion. Lastly, condo associations should not discard e-mails or letters from Verizon FiOS—it might look like an advertisement, but it could be the opening of a negotiation.

Call the cable office—703-228-3242

"People really don't know much about the cable office," says Billingsley. He notes that your cable bill includes the phone number for his office—703-228-3242. "But it's in very small print." Billingsley is happy to get the word out about the things the county's cable office is authorized to do in the way of complaint resolution between cable TV customers and cable companies. "It's one of our functions," says Billingsley, "to serve as a sort of consumer watchdog agency on behalf of Arlington residents."

And when you call the office, you won't get a bewildering menu of phone tree options. "You'll talk to a staff person," says Billingsley. If no one can answer your call at that moment, leave a message, and a real person will return your call shortly—usually within 15 to 20 minutes, he adds.

Plant, plan for AFAC: Free vegetable seeds are now available for gardeners who support the Arlington Food Assistance Center's Plot Against Hunger program. Plant now, and then donate tomato, pepper, and eggplant seedlings in early May for distribution to clients and area Plot program gardeners. For more information, contact Puwen.Lee@afac.org.

In addition, consider donating your extra reusable bags for AFAC clients, and consider holding a reusable bag drive for Earth Day, April 22.

Arlington Hunger Project's pack-a-meal event at Abingdon, March 9



A Feeding Children Everywhere meal-packing event in Florida last year. Photo, courtesy FCE.

On Saturday, March 9, Abingdon Elementary School will host the Arlington Hunger Project and hundreds of volunteers for a Feeding Children Everywhere meal-packing event. Patti Covington, a Fairlington resident and the event organizer, reports that by early February, more than 400 volunteers had already signed up for work shifts on meal-packing day.

Volunteers include a sizeable neighborhood contingent, including Abingdon Daisy and Girl Scout troops, as well as students from T.C. Williams HS in Alexandria.

Currently, with most volunteer slots filled, the Abingdon event is more in need of donations to purchase the healthy meal ingredients for March 9 (rice, lentils, dehydrated vegetables, spices, vitamins). "At only 25 cents a meal, one dollar can provide four healthy meals," says Covington, who requests that you "please consider donating to the Arlington Hunger Project" via the online link: feedingchildreneverywhere.com > Upcoming events, scroll to Arlington Hunger Project/March 9, and click the Donate button.

Your contribution is tax deductible, and all donations underwrite the Abingdon event this month. The meals packed will help stock local food pantries: 30,000 meals will go to the Arlington Food Assistance Center and 70,000 to Capital Area Food Bank (serving northern VA, DC, and MD).

For more information, contact Covington at patticovington@gmail.com or go online to the FCE Web site.



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CERT training this month, March 7 and 12

Community Emergency Response Team training offers free classes in emergency preparedness, to help Arlingtonians be ready to respond effectively in the event of an accident, emergency, or disaster.

One person's testimonial, posted on the local blog, ARLnow.com:

My Arlington CERT training helped me save a life when a friend fell down a stone staircase and was bleeding profusely from his head. While others went into panic, I knew what to do: Assign someone to call emergency, stanch the bleeding by applying pressure, and keep him still. This could happen at work, at home, or when travelling. Get the training—it lasts a lifetime.

There are two training sessions scheduled for this month, one beginning on March 7 and another on March 12. Each session includes eight classes, which meet on six weeknights and two Saturdays, at the Arlington County Fire Department training academy near Shirlington. Classes are taught by ACFD and

Office of Emergency Management staff, as well as active CERT members. For more information, contact volunteer coordinator Cynthia Kellams, at ArlingtonCERT@gmail.com.

New video enters training: In the wake of the Connecticut school shooting last December, Kellams reported on a six-minute YouTube video designed to prepare people for an “active shooter” situation. “Run. Hide. Fight. Surviving an active shooter event” was prepared by DHS and posted by ReadyHoustonTX.gov at www.youtube.com/watch?v=5VcSwejU2D0.

Kellams suggested sharing the video with friends, family, and co-workers, as appropriate; it is not appropriate, she cautioned, for young children. The video has been incorporated into Arlington’s CERT training.

Constabulary notes

Captain Brett Butler, commander of Arlington’s 3rd police district, cautions residents to be vigilant—“If you see someone hanging around a car or acting suspicious, call 911.”

The warning comes because of a current uptick in auto-related thefts—specifically, Ford Crown Victorias (mainly taxis) and Econoline (or similar) vans—mostly along the east and west ends of Columbia Pike. “The suspects are using the vans to steal motorcycles.”

FCA at CivFed

FCA secretary Carol Dabbs and Arlington County Board chairman Walter Tejada (below) at the February 5 meeting of Arlington’s Civic Federation meeting. FCA board members routinely represent Fairlington at CivFed—in February, Dabbs and FCA president Guy Land were in attendance.



CivFed (<http://civfed.org>), an umbrella group that brings together representatives from eighty member organizations like neighborhood civic associations, sponsors monthly speakers on issues of importance to county residents. CivFed’s mission is to “promote the general welfare of the county in a non-partisan, non-political manner.” At the February meeting, CivFed hosted the five elected officials of the Arlington County Board. *Photo, Guy Land.*

Arlington alerts: You can sign up for electronic emergency notifications and updates (via e-mail, cell, text, or pager) at www.arlingtonalert.com. It’s a free county service, but your service provider may charge fees for receiving wireless device messages.



Department of lost and found: Tree-hugger on S. Wakefield Street in January, and cold hands on S. 34th and S. Wakefield in February.

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**Arlington Fire Chief reminds,
Check your smoke detectors:**

Arlington County Fire Chief James Schwartz reminds us that when the clock springs forward to Daylight Saving on March 10, it's time to check your smoke detectors.

"Smoke detectors remain one of the best defenses against loss of life. If your smoke alarms are less than 10 years old, you don't need to replace them. We do recommend people have a mix of different types of alarms—ionization and photoelectric—to provide quick alerts regardless of the type of fire." In addition, Chief Schwartz offers these timely tips: Have at least one alarm on every level of the house and one in each sleeping area. Test all home alarms monthly, and replace the batteries twice a year when the clocks change.

For more information or questions, contact the Arlington County Fire Prevention Office at 703-228-4644 or fireprevention@arlingtonva.us.

Four Mile Run watershed clean-up:

Saturday, March 9, 9 am – noon. Join the volunteer brigade at multiple sites, including Barcroft Park and Shirlington Park. The clean-up is co-sponsored by Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment and Arlington Park Rangers. For more information, call 703-228-6406 or send e-mail to volunteer@arlingtonenvironment.org.

Bird walk, March 6: Join members of the Northern Virginia Bird Club for an informal walk, 9 to 11:30 am, through Long Branch and Glencarlyn Parks in search of resident and migratory birds. Experienced and novice birders are welcome. Bring binoculars and field guides. The walk is free; registration required. Meet in the parking lot at Long Branch Nature Center, 625 S. Carlin Springs Rd., Arlington 22204. For more information, call 703-228-6535.

**FCC hours and
contact info**

Monday through Friday,
8 am – 9 pm

Saturday, 8 am – 5 pm

Sunday, closed.

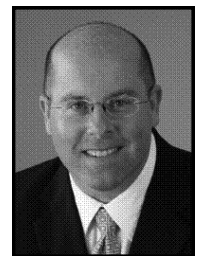
Hours are subject to change. For updates and more information, call the FCC at 703-228-6588. The center manager is Patrick Mallon, 703-228-6590, pmallon@arlingtonva.us.

Summer camp: Registration for summer camps began in February. For camp availability or a complete description of all classes, go online to www.arlingtonva.us > DPR or call 703-228-4747.



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DOWN TO EARTH patio gardening



It's prep time! Make your garden spring-ready

Come March, nurseries move plants out from under protective bubble wrap and place them on the open lot for sale. Sometimes, a snowstorm or two will coat the plants white, but warming temperatures melt the precipitation and irrigate the specimen root balls. Before shopping for these nursery-bred shrubs, though, now is an ideal time to “prep” your garden. It sounds simple enough, but it's vital to ensure new plantings will thrive in fertile soil and an uncluttered landscape.

When we have a sunny day with 40-degree temperatures, shove a spade fork into the soil. If the garden has been neglected, you may not be able to push the teeth of the spade fork deep in the ground. And even if the garden has been cared for, you may be surprised to find hard clumps of clay with rocks. Repeated mulchings and shallow plantings (for annuals like impatiens and begonias) will improve the soil only a few inches deep. Dig deeper and you'll discover a wasteland of compacted orange dirt housing porcelain, glass, mashed aluminum cans or plastic bottles, string, macadam, and even gravel.

In order to plant a shrub such as an azalea, be prepared to dig a hole at least 16 inches deep with a similar width. When the ball of a new shrub is placed in a hole, there should be enough “free space” to allow plant roots room to grow into the surrounding dirt. By digging a larger-than-needed hole, you have



Clean up garden beds now to showcase May blooms. Photo, Guy Land.

aerated the root zone, which allows water, oxygen, and earthworms (living soil tillers) to maneuver down to a plant's roots.

If you're re-arranging the landscape, azaleas are easy to transplant since they have a shallow root zone. Just dig up the plant together with a sizeable ball (a plant's nutrient source), so it doesn't go into shock once moved. The same rule applies to liriope, which can be divided by splitting the root ball into “new” plantings.

Also notice if perennials need a seasonal pruning. A clematis vine now has soft woody leaders that are flimsy and wheat-colored. Trim these back to near the ground since new green foliage will appear when

the weather warms. Your vine will be prettier without the clutter of old stems.

The same principle applies to ornamental grasses like miscanthus, calamagrostis, pennisetum or hakonechla. The tassels (or flowers) at top are pretty but the spent, cream-colored growth of old stems looks unsightly when new green leaders appear in May.

For evergreen ground cover such as hellebores (Lenten rose), periwinkle, ivy, pachysandra, or wintercreeper euonymus, cut back sprawling leaders along the ground, which can be invasive to nearby plants.

— Bill Sullivan,
www.sullivanlandscaping.net



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Under the direction of Kerry Abbott and Katharine Hale, sixty Abingdon students will perform "Go West" on March 21. There will be performances at 1 pm and 6 pm. Photo, Dan Branch.

You're invited to CETA Day at Abingdon

Abingdon Elementary invites all of the Fairlington community to attend its Art Integration Day on the morning of March 15. This event will highlight student Claymations, drama productions, architecture projects, and the ways technology, such as IPADS, are broadening learning opportunities for all students. Abingdon is proud to display the multitude of creative, innovative, and positive student learning outcomes derived from our long-standing and acclaimed partnership with the Kennedy Center. Please come to Abingdon on March 15, and join us for a light breakfast, student performances, and classroom visits.

7:50 am, Light breakfast

8:10 am, Student performances

8:25 – 10 am, Classroom visits

Ms. Hale's 5th graders learn fundamental economic lessons

Students in Ms. Hale's 5th grade class earn a monthly salary of \$36, in currency called "Hale dollars." The monthly salary is for working hard and making strong choices, just as adults do in the work place. Through a system of bonuses and fines, the salaries are subject to adjustment.

For example, a student completing all homework during the week, making good choices, and displaying good effort will receive a bonus of \$1.25. On the other hand, fines can

be levied for littering or for receiving a complaint from another teacher. A monthly expense of \$15.75 covers the use of desk, textbooks, and other classroom materials. Students can also pay a flat yearly fee of \$56.25 to cover these costs. "I bit the bullet and paid the yearly fee. After 3 1/2 months, I began to see the savings," said Jacqueline Branch.

Each quarter the students can use their earnings to purchase items in the "Hale Market." All students need to save \$125 in their savings accounts for a ticket to the end of year party. Ms. Hale adds, "I want my students to learn about participating in a positive community, while also learning money management skills."

Final Movie Night in March

The Abingdon PTA's last free movie night of the year is Friday, March 15, featuring *Wreck-It Ralph*. Doors open at 6 pm and the movie begins at 6:15. The PTA will be selling pizza, snacks, and drinks. And we'll raffle off copies of the movie and other movie-related prizes. In addition, the Abingdon Juniors will be selling Girl Scout cookies—one of the last chances to buy cookies before area sales end on March 24. The Abingdon staff, students, and parents thank Michelle Marston for bringing movie nights to Abingdon the last couple of years.

Uyeda tweets! Follow Principal Joanne Uyeda on Twitter and stay updated about Abingdon: <https://twitter.com/AbingdonPrinc>.

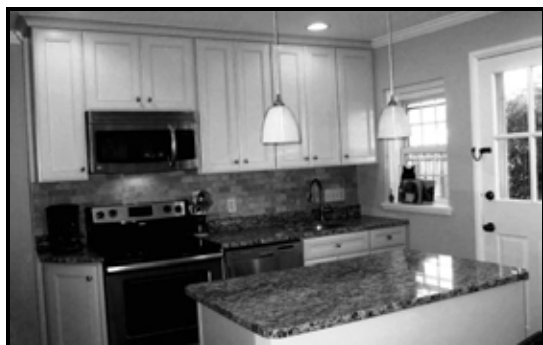
—Dan Branch, PTA co-president

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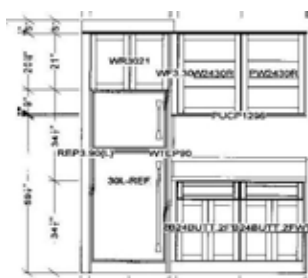
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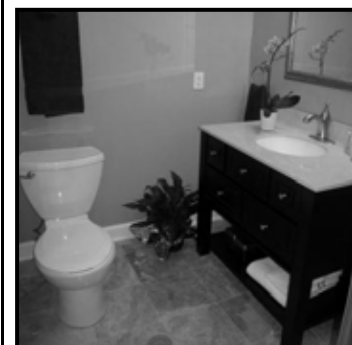


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neighborhood news

Book Group

In *A Briefer History of Time*, Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow answer basic questions about the universe, including how it began and where it's going. Join us on Tuesday, March 26, at 7:30 pm in the North Fairlington Community Center, 3005 S. Abingdon St., to discuss this updated and more accessible version of Hawking's celebrated 1988 work, *A Brief History of Time*, which has reportedly sold one copy for every 750 people on earth.

Fairlington Diners

Fairlington Diners is a group of Fairlington and non-Fairlington friends who gather for relaxed dinners nearby. We focus on having a good meal and an opportunity to chat with neighbors. This year, we generally hold our ethnic dinners on the second Thursday of the month, and burger night at Ramparts on the fourth Monday of the month.

Tuesday, March 19, 6:30 pm, Samuel Beckett's Irish Gastro Pub, 2800 S. Randolph St. (Shirlington), 703-379-0122, www.samuelbecketts.com. To honor St. Patrick's Day on the 17th, an Irish theme seems appropriate for March. We'll go on a Tuesday, so that we can participate in Quiz Night at 7:30, which tests general knowledge and awards prizes.

Monday, March 25, 6:30 pm, Ramparts Restaurant, 1700 Fern St, Alexandria, 703-998-6616. This is a local favorite that we usually visit monthly. On Mondays, they offer half-price on burgers with the purchase of a beverage, and the rest of the menu is also available.

For either event, please call Carol at 703-379-6840 to let us know you plan to attend, and leave a voicemail if you don't reach her directly—include your name and how to contact you the day of the event, in case of a change in plans. If you'd like to be included in our e-mail list, please send your e-mail address to carol_dabbs@yahoo.com.

MOMS Club of Arlington-Fairlington

Members and their children of the MOMS Club of Arlington-Fairlington VA© chapter of the International MOMS Club participate in fun activities, service projects, Parent's Night Out, meetings with interesting speakers,

and groups such as our walking, dinner, and book clubs. Our weekly age-specific playgroups start as young as birth and go up to 3+ years old. Playgroups are wonderful for kids, but they also offer parents a chance to find support and friendship.

Parents and parents-to-be are welcome to join us for our next general meeting on Wednesday, March 13, at 4:30 pm at the Fairlington Community Center. Children are always welcome. For more information about the club, the meeting, or membership, contact our Membership VP at fairlingtonmomsclub@gmail.com or visit www.fairlingtonmomsclub.com. Annual dues of \$25 support our club activities and charitable projects.

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 accepting new members

If you are looking for a night out without the kids or an afternoon to yourself, look no further than the Fairlington Babysitting Co-op. For more than 30 years, the Babysitting Co-op has been a community of parents helping parents right here in our neighborhood.

The Co-op is a network of Fairlington families who exchange free babysitting services. It's perfect for parents who would like to know dependable adults to watch their children and meet other families in the community.

How to join? Fairlington residents (north or south) can send e-mail to the coordinators at fairlington.babysitting@gmail.com for more information or to request an application.



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FCA activities survey

Go online to the FCA Web site, www.fca-fairlington.org or <http://www.fca-fairlington.org> and follow the link to take the quick activities survey. Mark the items that you're interested in and willing to help with in terms of planning and same-day support. Provide your contact information. You can also suggest events that are not listed here. FCA looks forward to hearing from you!



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Mini-ads

CLIMATROL HEATING & COOLING CORP. 703-981-6664. www.climatrolhvac.com. Only \$79.95. Serving all Fairlington citizens. Family owned, operated, licensed and insured business. Our staff is reliable, trustworthy, punctual and detail oriented. Our prices are extremely competitive, and our service is thorough. Have us professionally perform residential heating or cooling system inspection. Or if you currently have a problem, we will be happy to diagnose it. We can also inspect the accessory equipment including the electronic air cleaner, programmable thermostat, condensate pump and hot water heater at no extra charge! Read real reviews from satisfied Climatrol customers at Angie's List, Get 10% discount on repairs with this ad. We also perform FREE second opinion and heat exchanger and compressors.

STAPLES REMODELING. For all of your improvement needs. Specializing in kitchens, bathrooms, basements and painting. Give us a call to set up an appointment for a free estimate at 703-499-2249 or visit our website at www.staplesremodeling.com.

WITT CONSTRUCTION. Kitchens, baths, built-in cabinetry and design consultation. Licensed/insured. Fairlington resident. 703-626-6429. garywitt44@gmail.com.

JOEL RIGGS REMODELING AND HOME IMPROVEMENTS: Joel Riggs Home Repair Service. Your Fairlington specialist. Kitchen and bath renovations, bath ceramic tile repair, painting, drywall, handyman services, trim work, flooring, carpentry, wallpaper removal. Free design services. Free estimates. VA. Class-A lic./ins., fast turn around time. 20 years N. Va. Experience. Joel 703-929-4676.

House Cleaning

MICHELE'S MAIDS. Reliable, honest, affordable. BACKGROUND CHECK ON EVERY EMPLOYEE. Window cleaning now available. LICENSED, BONDED INSURED. 13 years in Fairlington. Fairlington references available. No Machines to talk to. 703-820-1808 Visit our website at www.michelesmaids.net

FAIRLINGTON MAID SERVICE. 703-820-8635. Serving Fairlington since 1978. Family owned and operated. Call for our Spring Cleaning Specials. We have satisfied customers throughout the neighborhood as references. We offer schedules to fit your needs. Call for a free estimate.

HOUSE CLEANING. Reliable, experienced, good references, flexible scheduling, reasonable rates. We bring our own equipment. Weekly — bi-weekly — monthly — occasionally. One-time, move-in/out, offices. For free in home estimate call Maryen/Raul at 703-321-5335.

Pet Services

PET & PLANTCARE BY GERRI, LLC. Reliable, loving care for your dogs, cats, rabbits, birds, or fish. Petsitting, playgroups, walks, feedings, medications. Indoor/outdoor plantcare. Established 1999 by 19-year Parkfairfax resident; bonded and insured. Competitive rates; flexible arrangements. Call 703-379-7719.

DOG WALKER & CAT SITTER - REASONABLE RATES. Special rates for regular walks. Mature, responsible, reliable and dependable woman with excellent Fairlington references. Suzanne Mitchell: Pal4Paws.Suzanne@gmail.com or call 703-868-8894.

HOME ALONE FELINES. Loving, professional, in-home care of your special feline. 703-671-5504; homealonefelines@gmail.com

ALL WAYS CARING PET CARE. Dog walking, cat sitting. Flexible, reliable, reasonable. 703-765-0990; 703-405-2775.

Get your Fairlington T-shirt!



- 100% cotton
- Fairlington on front, FCA logo on back
- Sizes S, M, L, and X-L
- White or hunter green
- \$15, cash or check payable to FCA

To get your Fairlington T-shirt, come to an FCA-sponsored event or monthly meeting; e-mail president@fca-fairlington.org; or call the FCA at 703-243-1735 to leave your name and phone number.

Doggie-Do (and cats too!) Neighborhood Pet Services

Affordable, affectionate care,
whether you're here or there.

Walking, bark-park visits, play dates,
boarding, daycare, sitting, and more...
What can we do for you?

Andrew & Kerryn Zechiel
www.doggie-do.biz



703.583-4973
doggie-do@doggie-do.biz

Pet & Plantcare by Gerri, LLC

- ★ Walking
- ★ Sitting
- ★ Playgroups
- ★ Medications

Gerri Horan
703.379.7719
SINCE 1999



BONDED & INSURED

NOTICE TO ALL ADVERTISERS

Due Date for All Ads: 6 pm on 10th of the preceding month (Mar 10th for Apr issue)

Payment: BOTH payment and ad copy must be received by the 10th.
Make checks payable to "Fairlington Citizens Association."

NEW E-Mail Address for All Ads: admanager@fca-fairlington.org

Mailing Address for All Ads and Checks: FCA-AFB, PO Box 6182, Arlington, VA 22206-0182

Drop-Off Location for Ads and Checks: Drop-Off Box in Fairlington Community Center,
3308 S. Stafford Street. The FCC is closed Sunday.
Open 8 am – 9 pm M – F, and 8 am – 5 pm Saturday.

MINI-AD FORM

Mini-ad copy can be e-mailed to admanager@fca-fairlington.org and then submit your payment by mail to
FCA AFB, PO Box 6182, Arlington, VA 22206-0182 or drop off ads and checks to the drop-off box in the Fairlington
Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford Street. E-mailed ad text will not be processed until payment is received.

Write key words from your ad on the check for reference. (Example: "Yard Sale" or "Lost Camera")

Cost is 50 cents per word (e.g., "998-0000" and "stove" are each one word; "interior/exterior" are two words).

Please include the following information with all ads:

Name: _____ Phone (h): _____

Address: _____ Phone (w): _____

City, State, Zip: _____ E-mail: _____

Category (see newsletter for options): _____

Mini-Ad Text (please print clearly): _____

LONG AND FOSTER
ARLINGTON/ALEXANDRIA

OFFICE

ArlingtonAlexandriaSales.Lnfre.com

4800 S. 31st Street | Arlington, VA 22206 | 703-998-3111

**January
TOP PRODUCERS**



Lynn Gant
Top Producer



Vera Gyor
Top Selling Agent



Pat Shannon
Top Listing Agent

FEATURED LISTINGS OF THE MONTH



Arl/Fairlington—
Picture perfect
2BR loft unit w/
HDWDs, updated
kit. & bath.
Spiral stairs to
loft & huge attic
\$335,000
Call Lynn Robinson-Gant



Alta Vista/Arl.—Penthouse Con-
do. 2BR/3.5BA w/stunning views.
\$699,900 Call Kristin Usaitis



McLean/Chesterbrook Woods—
Spacious 2 lev. Rambler. 4BR/3BA.
\$830,000 Call Marian Stifle

“The FAIRLINGTON Shred”

Bring your documents, files, papers, records & more for a free shredding event

Sponsored by your neighborhood friends at

LONG & FOSTER REALTORS!

WHO: TrueShred– Secure Document Destruction

WHEN: Saturday March 23rd, 9am-12pm

**SERVING FAIRLINGTON
& ALL NORTHERN VA**

