# **AFAIRLINGTON**BULLETIN

**MARCH 2019** 



Volume 45, Number 3



www.fca-fairlington.org

## Monique O'Grady to address FCA on issues facing Arlington schools

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Arlington School Board Member Monique O'Grady will be the guest speaker for the March 13 meeting of the Fairlington Citizens Association (FCA) at 7 pm in the Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St.

O'Grady was first elected to the Arlington County School Board in 2017 and officially started her four-year term on January 1, 2018.

In her role as a school board member, she is the liaison to both Abingdon and Claremont elementary schools, among others. She is also assigned to the Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth and Families (APCYF) and to the Arlington Special Education Advisory Committee (ASEAC).

Before she was elected to the school board, O'Grady was a long-time volunteer and active presence in the community. As an



Monique O'Grady is a long-time Arlington resident, a former television news reporter, and a member of the Arlington County School Board. She will be the guest speaker at the FCA meeting on March 13. Photo courtesy Arlington County.

involved parent in the Arlington Public Schools (APS), she served on a number of committees including the South Arlington Boundary Committee, the Early Childhood Advisory Committee, APS South Arlington Working Group, the Strategic Planning Committee, and the Multi-Site Committee for School Facilities, among others. O'Grady also served as the co-chair of the 2016 School Bond Campaign.

O'Grady said that she is looking forward to the opportunity to address Fairlington residents. "We have been very busy on the school board and are

Continued on page 15

### Reminder—Amazon briefing February 25

Two county board members will be on hand to give a briefing about the issues that face the county ahead of the new Amazon headquarters. The briefing will take place at the FCC on Monday, February 25, at 7 pm.

## Coming up ...

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

### FCA monthly meeting March 13

Special presentation: Arlington County School Board member Monique O'Grady will address residents and take their questions.

#### Regular board business:

- Approval of February minutes
- committee reports
- Unfinished business
- New business

Officer and

**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 Appreciation Society.

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

Web design by Avatar Systems Ltd., Alexandria, VA, www.avatar-systems.com.

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Services/dot/traffic/streetlights/index.htm

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#### **Fairlington Citizens Association**

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#### All Fairlington Bulletin

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#### — DEADLINE –

6 PM, **10th of month** preceding publication month for commercial advertising, mini-ads, and editorial copy. Send material on disk with paper proof to: FCA • PO Box 6182 • Arlington, VA 22206-0182 Email editorial announcements to: editor@fca-fairlington.org Email commercial and mini ads to: admanager@fca-fairlington.org Drop off location: Drop box in the Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford Street

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Artwork and check made payable to FCA are due the 10th of the month preceding desired publication date. Direct inquiries regarding advertising file requirements to Beth Andrews at 571-403-1942.

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

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#### Calendar

#### **Amazon briefing**

Monday, February 25, 7 pm FCC, 3308 S. Stafford St.

#### **MOMS Club Consignment Sale**

Saturday, March 2, 9 am FCC, 3308 S. Stafford St.

#### **Fairlington Diners**

Thursday, March 7, 6:30 pm Evening Star Café 2000 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria

#### FCA monthly meeting

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

#### **Fairlington Diners**

Monday, March 25, 6:30 pm Ramparts 1700 Fern St., Alexandria

#### **Book Group**

Tuesday, March 26, 7:30 pm FCC, 3308 S. Stafford St.

### Indoor playtime fun



Fairlington resident Sophia, age ten months, enjoys the soft play room at the FCC on a rainy day. The soft play room is open year-round for children ages 1–5. Photo by Susan Renehan.

**Contributors this month:** Lucy Beadnell, Jennifer Davies, Kent Duffy, Donna Felipe, Guy Land, Carrie Lewis, Joe Reed, Susan Renehan, Rebecca Sayres, Bill Sullivan, and Chris Weathers.

Some images in this publication may be digitally enhanced.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

For the past six years FCA has worked to strengthen its ties to Arlington Public Schools (APS), to better serve the growing number of Fairlington families with children.

Initially our kids went primarily to Abingdon and Claremont, but now those students have moved on to middle school at Gunston or even to Wakefield High School, while still living in Fairlington. I suspect there are now more Fairlington students at Wakefield than at any previous time in Fairlington's history.

As the demographics of Fairlington have changed, FCA's focus has expanded to include greater engagement with APS, the PTA, and parents. We recognize that school issues are important to many of you.

Our March meeting reflects this expanded portfolio. Arlington School Board member Monique O'Grady will be our featured speaker. Ms. O'Grady is the school board's liaison to Abingdon and Claremont, as well as several other elementary schools.

I believe this is the first time a regular FCA meeting has had a school board member as the featured speaker. I encourage you to join us for a wide-ranging conversation on school issues.

Inviting Ms. O'Grady builds on several school-related FCA activities, including sponsoring the Fairlington 5K, our participation in the design process for the expanded Abingdon Elementary, and weighing in during last fall's boundary change process.

A year ago we held our monthly meeting at Abingdon, to get a special tour of the renovated school. Ms. O'Grady and then-school board chair Barbara Kanninen joined us, along with APS Assistant Superintendent John Chadwick.

We are continuing our engagement this year, working with the Abingdon PTA as they consider expanding the walk zone for Abingdon and prepare for the 2020 round of boundary changes. We are also boosting our coverage of activities at Wakefield in the *All Fairlington Bulletin* so that Fairlington is more connected to the high school that our kids attend.

Two decades ago, Fairlington had very few families with children, there was minimal engagement of the community with our elementary school, and many residents probably couldn't tell you what high school served Fairlington.

Our community is dramatically different today, and FCA's priorities reflect this changed Fairlington. Strengthening our partnership with APS is a key component of our response to those changes. We invite you to join us in this task.

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



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- Erik, Arlington, VA



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## Most Fairlington real estate assessments see rise in values

Fairlington models generally reflected the Arlington trend of increases in real estate assessments for 2019, with several significantly outpacing the county-wide residential increase of 2.9 percent. The county released the numbers in late January.

The increase in this year's assessments of Fairlington units outpaced those of last year, when Fairlington assessments tended to lag the county-wide residential increases.

A spot check of roughly 20 different Fairlington models revealed that over half showed increases above the county average, with only one model (the Bradford) experiencing no increase.

Monticello units (the ground floor unit in North Fairlington's six-unit apartment buildings) led the way, with many showing an increase of 9.2 percent. Large percentage increases were also seen by the various versions of the Dominion, as well as the Ashlawn and the Braddock (one of Fairlington's smaller units).

2019 real estate assessments, selected Fairlington units*							
Unit type	Sq. feet	2018	2019	change			
Arlington	2145	553,800	590,700	6.66			
Ashlawn	1470	388,300	418,500	7.78			
Barcroft	1490	370,100	378,100	2.16			
Braddock	711	251,000	271,900	8.33			
Bradford	1009	316,900	316,900	0.00			
Clarendon I South	1500	442,800	454,200	2.57			
Clarendon I North	1500	442,800	469,300	5.98			
Clarendon II North	1383	415,700	426,400	2.57			
Dominion I North	1830	529,400	565,000	6.72			
Dominion I South	1830	495,800	533,700	7.64			
Dominion II	1689	455,000	493,500	8.46			
Edgewood	1400	374,200	382,100	2.11			
Edgewood	1400	384,700	401,000	4.24			
Georgetown	922	346,400	355,200	2.54			
Monticello	1712	393,500	429,700	9.20			
Mt Vernon	1860	409,700	444,000	8.37			
Richmond	1031	315,400	323,400	2.54			
Sherwood	1257	347,000	369,300	6.43			
Staunton	1121	310,000	317,700	2.48			

Source: Arlington County real estate assessments
\*Units of the same type may have different assessments.

https://propertysearch.arlingtonva.us/

The large—and rare—Arlington unit, with 2145 square feet, continued to have the highest valuation, coming close to breaking the \$600,000 barrier. The assessment was \$590,700, an increase of 6.66 percent, or \$36,900.

Assessments for selected Clarendon I models (1500 square feet), which predominate in South Fairlington, and the smaller Clarendon II's (1383 square feet), which are common in North Fairlington, were both up 2.57 percent. The assessment for selected Clarendon I's was \$454,200, while the assessment for selected Clarendon II's was \$426,400.

The assessments for individual units of the same model can vary, depending on location and whether they have undergone major renovation work.

Real estate agents note that Fairlington continues to be a sought-after location.

Lauren Kolazas, a realtor who routinely handles Fairlington units, notes that she's seeing more Fairlington families choosing to purchase larger units but stay in Fairlington.

"In past years, I have had more clients move out of their smaller Fairlington units and to north Arlington or Fairfax County in an effort to find more preferable public schools and larger homes," Kolazas says. "This past year, however, I had more clients open to the south Arlington public schools and opting to make the move from a Clarendon model to Dominions and other larger Fairlington models in order to stay in this community."

She suggests that this trend helps explain why the larger Fairlington models are seeing a larger value increase this year than smaller units in Fairlington.

According to the county, the average home value, including condominiums, townhouses, and detached homes, is now \$658,600, up from \$640,900 last year.

"Rising property values mean Arlington is a place people want to live and work," County Manager Mark Schwartz said in a release. "And the revenue we collect from real estate taxes helps us maintain the high-quality amenities and public services that make Arlington so attractive."

Commercial properties and office properties both saw an increase in values, unlike last year, when office property values saw a decline. The county continues to

Continued on page 19

## YOU'RE INVITED!

**SELLER** MONDAY : **BUYER** TUESDAY **Seminar** MARCH 25 : **Seminar** MARCH 26

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## Mark your calendar for the April 5 Fairlington 5K's silent auction

As in years past, the 2019 Fairlington 5K will be preceded by a silent auction at the Fairlington Villages Community Center, 3005 S. Abingdon St. Like the race itself, the auction supports research into a cure for Fairlington resident Ellie McGinn who suffers from a very rare genetic disorder known as Leukodystrophy-LBSL.

The condition, which primarily affects children, causes deterioration of brain and spinal cord tissues, eventually robbing children of the ability to walk, then to stand, then to coordinate fine motor skills. A portion of the proceeds also benefits reading and physical fitness programs at Abingdon Elementary.

This year's auction will take place Friday, April 5, and will once again feature an exciting array of items both big and small. Attendees will have the chance to snag high-value items such as jewelry, vacation packages, tickets to sporting events, and autographed sports memorabilia. Over 100 items will be up for bid. Come get some great deals while supporting a good cause!



Last year's silent auction gave residents the opportunity to support the Fairlington 5K by bidding on a large variety of items. Photos by Guy Land.

Doors open at 6 pm and bidding will start at 6:30 pm. Light snacks and adult beverages will be served. Free babysitting is provided by the Abingdon PTA (details to follow).

And don't forget to register for the race itself, which takes place Saturday, April 27, at Abingdon Elementary School. Last year's winner, Andrew Whitacre, finished in 18 minutes and 15 seconds.

There is also a special "1K Walk & Fun Run" for those

with small children or participants seeking a less challenging course. Roads will close on a rolling basis starting at approximately 8 am, and reopen shortly after the last runners pass through the area. The cost of registration for adults is \$35 and includes a t-shirt.



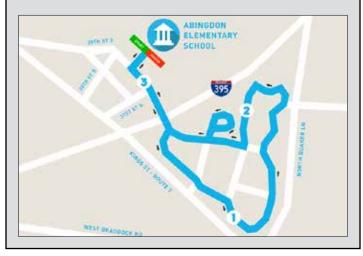
Silvana Yaroschuk and Sunee Claud show off their acquisitions at last year's silent acution.

Children ages six to 16 register for \$20, and children five and under are free. Dogs and strollers are always welcome. Register at www.Fairlington5K.com.

If you would like to donate to this year's auction, please email Beth McGinn at bfrigola@gmail.com.

—Joe Reed

## **Registration for the Fairlington 5K is now open!** You can register for the race at www. Fairlington5K.com. Early bird registration rates apply through February 28.



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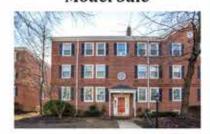
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## Arlington County Civic Federation welcomes school board members



On Tuesday evening, February 5, Arlington County's Civic Federation welcomed all five members of the school board for a briefing and question period.

Arlington Public School (APS) board members fielded six prepared questions ranging in topics from the recent Fall 2018 re-districting process, to growth projections, to a looming APS budget deficit, and economic inequities among county schools.

It was clear that the biggest priority facing the school board and APS is how to manage the school system's aggressive growth rate and the related impact on budget. In the past ten years (2008-2018), APS student population has grown 40% and is projected to continue growing at this pace. It now has enrollment levels on par with the peak of the baby boomer student population of the late 1950's and early 1960's.

Through 2028, APS projects a 75% growth rate from 2008. That means over the next decade, there will be enough new students entering the school system to fill a new elementary school every two to two and a half years.

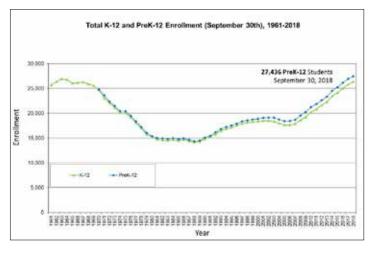
School board members fielded questions as to whether the county would consider reclaiming community centers that had served, or could serve, as elementary schools to address booming student population.

A delegate specifically asked about Fairlington Community Center. School board member Barbara Kanninen responded by explaining that in many cases, the costs of retrofitting facilities to meet APS building standards would be costly, although some centers could be considered. She did point out that Fairlington Community Center is one of the busiest in the county and therefore would not be a good candidate.

Given land scarcity and APS's need to address growth, Kanninen specifically referenced what she called the "Abingdon Approach," meaning a renovation and expansion of existing school facilities. While initially indicating skepticism about the Abingdon project, she acknowledged the past few years have proven how successful this can be, and she described the new school as beautiful. This was a noteworthy given that in the recent past, APS had been reluctant to take on large renovations and expansions and had favored construction of new buildings.

Related to the student population growth rate, board members expressed concern over APS's projected budget deficit of \$43 million dollars. This was largely attributed to increased expenses related to the system's growth (i.e., costs associated with the need for more staff, more facilities and increased transportation services).

It was noted that APS's growth rate exceeds the growth of countywide tax revenue collected. Arlington County has no dedicated school tax. Instead, the county allocates a set 47% of local tax revenue, regardless of growth in schools. This deficit was of clear and pressing concern to all school board members, as they could be faced with the unenviable choice between increasing class size or freezing teacher salaries.



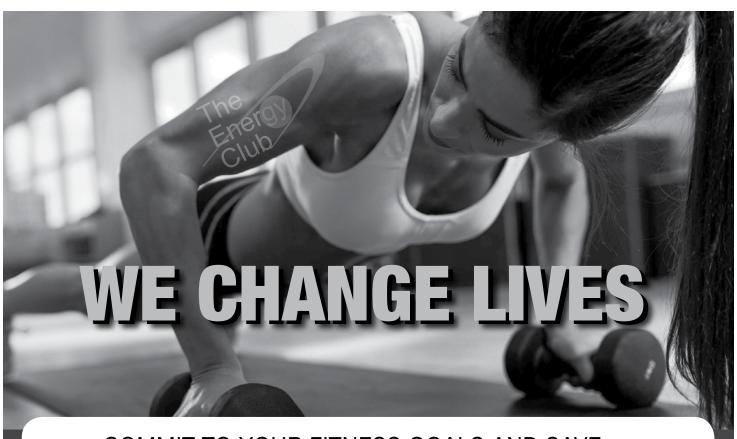
This chart from a 2019 APS report shows the historic trends in student enrollment. Courtesy Arlington Public Schools.

According to several school board members, APS is committed to finding ways to reduce the deficit. Almost all school board members urged Civic Federation delegates to lobby county board members to find ways to allocate more money to APS, while recognizing that the county is dealing with its own tough choices.

School board members also addressed "lessons learned" from the recent Fall 2018 school re-districting process, in which Abingdon and Fairlington were very much involved. Members said the best way to communicate is to use engage@apsva.us to provide additional feedback.

In the meantime, board members listed two strategies they plan on using for the 2020 process. First, better

Continued on page 19



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## Capital Region Members of Congress request GAO study on helicopter noise

Five members of Congress representing DC, northern Virginia, and parts of Maryland, have written the Government Accountability Office (GAO) requesting a study of helicopter noise within the Washington metropolitan area. The members included Rep. Don Beyer (D-VA) whose district includes Arlington and Alexandria. The other members were Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD), Rep. Anthony Brown (D-MD), and Rep. David Trone (D-MD).



Congressman Beyer joined several members of Congress from the DC area to request a helicopter study. Photo by Guy Land.

In their letter, dated January 28 of this year, the Members wrote, "Many of our constituents live with the impacts of regular helicopter noise that interrupts sleep patterns, causes their homes to shake and negatively impacts their quality of life. While disturbances from helicopter noise have been a longstanding problem for some, others have noted recent increases in the frequency and severity of helicopter noise in their neighborhoods.

"We understand that helicopter activity is an essential part of law enforcement, military and medical operations and appreciate the critical efforts of employees serving in those sectors. However, we also believe that, through information collection, analysis and coordination, we can identify strategies to minimize the negative impacts of helicopter activity without impeding the work of the agencies operating helicopters within the region."

The letter goes on to request that the study take particular note of the following factors, among others:

- The types of helicopters that generate the most noise;
- Current helicopter flight paths;
- Frequency of flights over neighborhoods;
- The number of flights that occur, both during the day and at night;
- The altitude at which helicopters currently fly and how this compares to altitudes in the past;
- Possible causes of the increase in helicopter noise;
- Options for noise mitigation.

Helicopter noise and its impact on residents has long been a concern of many Fairlingtonians. Congressman Beyer hosted a town hall meeting in January, 2018, to address the concerns of Fairlingtonians and other area residents. At that meeting, many residents expressed the desire to have better data and more transparency sur-



FCA President Guy Land is joined by County Board member Libby Garvey and Congressman Don Beyer at a helicopter noise forum last year. Photo by John Vihstadt.

rounding helicopter flights in the region.

The letter, which is addressed to Comptroller General Gene L. Dodaro, goes on to request a response in the next 30 days. To read the full text of the letter, go to the FCA's website, www.fca-fairlington.org.

-Susan Renehan

## Hundreds attend fourth annual Home Improvement Seminar

Approximately 200 attendees turned out on January 26 for FCA's fourth annual Home Improvement Seminar at the FCC. Silva Construction, GH Contractors & Handyman Service, AKG Design Studio, Frosty's Heating & Cooling, Custom Design Tile, and LS Remodeling Services greeted visitors at tables throughout the day, while also holding 30-minute intensive and interactive sessions with participants.

Topics and discussions included the importance of taking time to design a kitchen in coordination with living spaces before remodeling, finishing attic spaces to suit your living situation, HVAC options to keep a home efficiently heated and cooled, the process and benefits of fully gutting a home for a remodel, and smaller projects that have a great impact on comfortable living.

Participants found that the event gave them a nice diversity of general contractors and specialists with inside knowledge of the community, while showing there is a variety of ways to approach home remodeling projects. It was an opportunity to size up the contractors

and learn key aspects of remodeling a home or taking on smaller, more specific projects.

Mike Daren, a Fairlington resident who has what he considers an original kitchen, remarked "I came last year, as well. I came today to get ideas and see photos." Presenting contractors obliged with several intriguing photographs of "before and after" remodels and fresh perspectives of current trends for design and finishes.

The tabling area stayed very busy for the entire four-hour duration of the event. Participants were able to ask questions that pertained to their Fairlington model or specific situations.

Contractors involved with the event had a chance to acquire new contacts and potential business in the community, while offering specialized knowledge to those faced with the need to improve their home. "Customer preferences have changed over the years—HGTV has had a lot to do with that," said Brian Brennan, a Fairlington owner and proprietor of Custom Design Tile with his son









Mike. "Our presentation includes a lot of product knowledge."

After another successful turnout, the FCA has determined that the event will most likely be held again in 2020 with some minor tweaks based on observations and feedback received. As long as contractors find a value in the event and participants continue to show up in great numbers, this event will continue to be a tradition for the community. For information about this year's contractors, feedback on the event, or ideas for next year, please feel free to contact Chris Weathers at Chris. Weathers@SothebysRealty.com.

—Chris Weathers







Photos by Guy Land.

### Remodeling thanks

FCA extends a very special thank you to FCA Director Chris Weathers for organizing this popular event. Thanks also to the following vendors and services for participating and offering their expertise to the community.















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FOR LYE TO BEARION





### Volunteers needed for 31st annual Four Mile Run stream cleanup

Arlington County Park Rangers are calling on volunteers to help clean up Four Mile Run on Saturday, March 9, from 10 am to 1 pm at five locations along the stream, including Shirlington. Get outdoors and help Arlington restore its natural spaces. This is a great project for individuals, families, service clubs, and school groups.

#### Where to meet:

- Arlington Mill: courtyard area
- Barcroft park: pavilion located by the stream
- Glencarlyn park: 4th St. entrance, main pavilion
- Madison Manor: main park pavilion
- Shirlington Park: foot bridge area between Shirlington dog park and Jennie Dean park

Volunteers should wear waterproof boots and bring gloves. Bags will be provided. An adult must accompany volunteers under 18 years old.

## Seeking homes and volunteers for Home & Garden Tour

The Fairlington Historical Society's biennial Home & Garden Tour will be held on Saturday, May 11, from 11 am to 3 pm. This very popular event showcases the architecture, grounds, and unique homes in our community.

Tour co-chairs Julie Butler and Rebecca Sayres along with a great team of volunteers are looking for homes and gardens to be featured on the tour. We



are also seeking help planning, fundraising, and organizing tour day events.

If you would like to nominate a home or garden—or would like to volunteer to help—please contact us at rebecca@fca-fairlington.com.

-Rebecca Sayres

Monique O'Grady, continued from page 1

looking at issues like a tight budget with a multi-million dollar deficit, a growing school system, transportation challenges, and creating an equity policy," said O'Grady. "I look forward to returning to the Fairlington Citizen Association to meet with community members to discuss their concerns and answer questions about our school system."

Fairlington families recently met with school board members, including Ms. O'Grady, during the "Fairlington United" campaign to keep all Fairlington children in the boundary of Abingdon Elementary.

While ultimately the school board voted to keep Fairlington within the boundary of Abingdon Elementary for the 2019-2020 school year, the next boundary revision process is scheduled for 2020 and it remains a concern of many Fairlington families.

FCA Director Jennifer Davies, a former Abingdon PTA President and current APS parent, has had the opportunity to work with O'Grady in the past. "I met Monique five years ago when a group of us started gathering informally to identify common areas of concern among schools in South Arlington," Davies said. "This preceded the South Arlington Working Group to site a new elementary school or my involvement as an Abingdon PTA leader.

"Monique was willing to listen to several of us who felt that Abingdon had long been overlooked for renovation and expansion. She supported our advocacy to ensure that the school was included in the 2014 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)," Davies noted.

O'Grady has lived in Arlington for 26 years and she has been an APS parent for the past 20 years. Her three children have all attended APS schools including the Arlington Career Center Preschool Program, Drew Model School, Thomas Jefferson Middle School, Gunston Middle School, and Washington-Lee High School. Her two daughters are both graduates of Washington-Lee and her son is a 7th grader at Gunston.

In her professional life, Monique O'Grady has worked in broadcast journalism and communications. She worked as a television reporter for a number of stations and was the Washington Bureau Chief for three stations in the Midwest. She later worked as the Capitol Hill Correspondent for Black Entertainment Television. She is currently working as a public relations professional.

—Susan Renehan

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## **Pinewood Derby**

On Saturday, February 2, Cub Scouts from Pack 350 held their annual Pinewood Derby at Abingdon Elementary. Cub Scouts as well as siblings and leaders competed in the race with cars they designed, built, and decorated. Approximately 75 scouts had the opportunity to cheer on their own cars and those of their friends as each car competed in a minimum of three heats. Awards were

given for the top three finishers in each Den/age group and there were awards for the most creative and imaginative designs. Pack 350, which meets at the Fairlington United Methodist Church, includes both boys and girls from Kindergarten through 5th grade. To learn more about Pack 350, go to www.pack350.mypack.us. *Photos by Tom Kise*.



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## MOMS Club consignment sale to take place March 2

The MOMS Club of Arlington-Fairlington VA© is holding its semiannual consignment sale on Saturday, March 2, from 9 am to 1 pm at the Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St. The sale will feature new and gently used children's clothing, shoes, books, games, toys, and maternity items. Items are generally priced at \$3–\$4 each on average.

The MOMS Club will donate a portion of the proceeds from the sale to



The MOMS Club consignment sale typically attracts a long line of shoppers who wait for the sale to open at 9 am. Photos by Lucy Beadnell.

a local charity, and many unsold items will go to charities that directly give their goods to families in need. Savvy shoppers normally get there before 9 am to stand in line. At 12:30, most items will be reduced to 50 percent off until the close of the sale. Credit cards will be accepted.



The sale includes a variety of gently used goods including clothing and toys.

Information will be updated routinely at www.face-book.com/FairlingtonMomsClubConsignmentSale. The Facebook page is also where passes to shop early will be given away and sold, item previews will be posted, and shoppers can learn details about the sale in advance.

—Lucy Beadnell

Real estate assessments, continued from page 5

suffer from a relatively high vacancy rate (17.4 percent). County officials expect this to improve over the long term as the impacts of the new Amazon headquarters take effect.

In announcing the assessment data, the county's press release noted that in spite of the increase in assessments, revenue growth is not expected to keep pace with growing expenditure pressures, including additional funding for Metro, investments in public infrastructure and schools, and employee compensation. The county board will be facing difficult choices as it works on the budget this spring.

Real estate assessments are based on previous sales figures, so they may lag behind current resale prices. Residential assessments are based primarily on neighborhood sales occurring July 1, 2017, through August 31, 2018. Assessments for specific units may not reflect the current fair market value for that unit as determined by the marketplace. This may be particularly true for Fairlington units that have had major internal improvements.

—Guy Land

Arlington County Civic Federation, continued from page 9

quality control on data being used for recommendations, even if it means delaying decisions. Given the pace of the process, it was acknowledged that mistakes were made in 2018. Hiring an outside consultant to review data would also be considered.

Second, helping parents learn about a potential new school that they could be re-districted to well before final decisions are made.

As board member Tannia Talento put it, "How to get families to fall in love with a new school." Residents are encouraged to remain engaged in preparation for the 2020 process.

The 100-year-old Civic Federation is composed of over 80 member organizations across Arlington County and is dedicated to advocacy and community involvement. Its purpose continues to be promoting the general welfare of the county and vicinity in a non-partisan, non-sectarian, non-sectional, and non-political manner.

—Jennifer Davies

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## Alexandria to review potential changes to residential parking

The City of Alexandria is introducing the city's next parking policy project, entitled RPP Refresh. The RPP Refresh project is a review of the existing Residential Permit Parking (RPP) program. The RPP program manages on-street parking for residents of the City of Alexandria, including portions of Fairlington. As part of this project, City of Alexandria staff will be compiling data about the current program, researching how other



A sign advises residents of parking rules in North Fairlington. Photo by Susan Renehan.

cities manage residential parking, and getting feedback from residents about potential changes that could make this program more effective.

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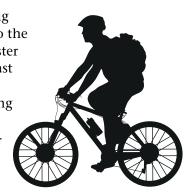
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## Bicycle plan update nears completion

Arlington County is nearing completion of an update to the Bicycle Element in the Master Transportation Plan. The last update was completed in 2008. Since that time, biking has grown substantially in popularity, while best practices in bike facilities and infrastructure have also evolved.



The Bicycle Element seeks to increase bike use and safety, including expansion and completion of the bikeway network through 2030. No major changes are proposed to the existing bike lanes and routes in Fairlington.

The long-term plan envisions a new bike lane along Quaker Lane, although no specific design is proposed as it is still in the conceptual phase at present. Future work would be needed to determine the best way to design and implement a bike lane, including collaboration with the City of Alexandria and input from FCA.

More information is available at: https://commissions.arlingtonva.us/projects/master-transportation-plan-bicy-cle-element-working-group/

—Kent Duffy

### Coming up this spring

April 5 Fairlington 5K silent auction

**April 27** Fairlington 5K

May 4 Family movie night (tentative)

**May 5** Farmers Market opens

May 11 Home and Garden Tour

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## ABING School news



## What's "Special" at Abingdon? History Comes Alive!

Abingdon Elementary School's Project GIFT (**G**uiding **I**nstruction through **F**ine Arts and **T**echnology) provides the school focus to increase student achievement and community engagement by integrating arts and technology into daily instructional practices. To this end, students participate daily in a rotation of "specials," including art, vocal and instrumental music, STEAM lab, architecture, Spanish, PE, and Living Histories.



Students bring history to life in Living Histories class. Photo by Kathi Aagaard.

Living Histories is a unique class that integrates social studies, writing, visual art, and drama. The course was created by Abingdon teacher Kathi Aagaard, in coordination with two teaching artists from the Kennedy Center. They created the course in response to findings that when learning through an art form, students usually develop deeper understanding and retain the information longer. Students often forge more of an emotional connection to events in history since they are acting them out, which in turn helps their writing become stronger.

Ms. Aagaard meets weekly with all kindergarten, first, second, and fourth grade classes. Examples of recent innovative projects include:

- First grade students created a covered wagon scene in a unit on the past, present, and future;
- Second graders learned to "read art" and analyze the symbolism in portraits of famous Americans;
- Fourth graders wrote poetic lines about the Great Depression and acted it out in a drama tableau set to music from that time period.

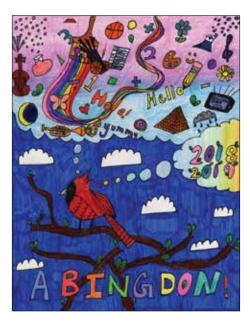
Ms. Aagaard explains, "It is exciting to see students light up and become engrossed in topics about history. I'm so thankful for Abingdon's partnership with the Kennedy Center. It has really revolutionized the way I teach, which in turn positively impacts student learning. I feel so grateful to have the opportunity to teach this course!"

Students express similar excitement, saying:

- "Studying portraits helps trigger emotions. This improves my writing and helps me better understand events and people in history."
- "Working in a group helps me better understand other people's perspectives."
- "When I make a tableau the information becomes completely absorbed into me."

- "Each tableau is a little puzzle piece of history. When you put them together they tell you the story of the time period."
- "Learning through drama helps my concentration get better, because you have to be focused to be a good actor."

## Yearbook cover contest winner announced



Winning cover art. Photo from Abingdon Twitter Feed @AbingdonGIFT.

Congratulations to Fairlington resident, 5th grader Jackie Lutz, winner of the annual Abingdon Yearbook cover contest! All 5th graders submitted artwork and voted on their favorite to grace the cover. Nine runner-up covers will share the back cover of the yearbook.

—Carrie Lewis

#### Award Winning Furniture Line created by former Fairlington resident

Simplicity Sofas is a High Point, NC custom furniture manufacturer specializing in *Furniture for Small Spaces & Tight Places*.

Recently Simplicity Sofas was rated **Best American Made Sofa Sectional** by independent review site AllAmericanReviews.com



The company was opened in 2007 by 40 year furniture industry veteran Jeff Frank. He and his family were Fairlington residents from 1978 through 1993.

As a Fairlington homeowner Mr. Frank recognized the need for high quality furniture scaled for smaller rooms and narrow stairways.



Simplicity Sofas builds its own solid oak frames and super premium 2.5 density foam and Spring down cushions.

"This is hand crafted furniture," Mr. Frank explained. "It is custom built one piece at a time by expert North Carolina craftspeople and scaled to fit small Fairlington rooms & stairways."

"Most companies don't build furniture this way anymore," Mr. Frank continued. "because it costs twice as much. When Restoration Hardware sells a \$2000 sofa they are buying it from a manufacturer for about \$1000. That sofa cost the manufacturer \$750 to make. They add on a \$250 profit.

Simplicity Sofas sells direct to consumers only. No retail middleman. Our \$2000 sofas may cost us twice as much to manufacture, but we can do it because there is no retailer markup to double our cost."



The furniture shown in these photos does not look or feel small even though it has an overall depth of only 32".

This is 5 – 10 inches less than most sofas.

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For additional information about Simplicity Sofas check out the website at <a href="https://www.simplicitysofas.com">www.simplicitysofas.com</a>

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## **Wakefield Happenings**

#### **Athletics**

Congratulations to the Wakefield Varsity Gymnastics team which won the National District Championship. The Warriors were led by Seniors Gabby Spranger, Anne Felipe, and Sydney Hanley. Scoring well on multiple events for the Warriors were Sophie Gamboa, Liz Martin, Emma Bort, Elena Cura, Alejandra Galdo, Liz Haley, Liz Martinez, and Gabby Watts (Anne Felipe and Liz Haley are Fairlington residents). The team will move on to participate in Region 5C competition. This is the first time in 11 years the WHS gymnastics team won districts!

Former Abingdon students won big at winter sports district competitions. Isaiah Mefford won Male Field Athlete by placing in Long Jump, Triple Jump, and Shot Put as well as placing in track events at



The Wakefield Varsity Gymnastics team won the National District Championship. Photo courtesy Wakefield Athletics Twitter feed @WakeAthletics.

the National District Championship. Emily Andrews qualified for State Swimming Championship. Wakefield wrestling team was the National District Runner-up team with individuals winning several weight divisions.

#### Arts

Congratulations to the Wakefield Theatre Festival Team to the Region 5C Section 1 Championships! Wakefield also earned Best Actress, Samantha Rios, and Best Actor, Avery Johnson. The Theatre team participated at the Super Region on February 9. "Runaways" was the performance that earned the Warriors #1.

Former Abingdon student, Julia Sonn, won Outstanding Interpretation of the Theme in photography for the Arlington CCPTA Reflections Contest. In the 2019 APS MLK Visual and Literary Arts contest, Wakefield students won in literary and visual arts.

—Donna Felipe



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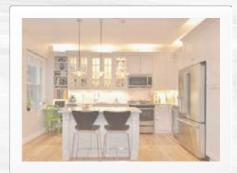
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## neighborhood news

### **Fairlington Diners**

The Fairlington Diners generally gather a couple of times a month for relaxed dinners nearby. We focus on having a good meal and an opportunity to chat with neighbors. In February, we did get to Hank's Oyster Bar, and had a splendid meal.

Thursday, March 7, 6:30 pm, Evening Star Cafe, 2000 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria, 703-549-5051, www.eveningstarcafe.net. Self-described as a "rollicking neighborhood gem" located in the heart of Del Ray, this local favorite opened in 1997. Evening Star serves a seasonal American menu, much of which features produce grown in the rooftop garden.

Monday, March 25, 6:30 pm, Ramparts, 1700 Fern St., Alexandria, 703-998-6616, www.rampartstavern.com. We'll return to this perennial local favorite on a Monday, when they offer a reduced price on hamburgers with the purchase of any beverage. The rest of the menu is also available.

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

### **Book Group**

Join the Fairlington Book Group in March to discuss *The Painted Drum* by Louise Erdrich.

"While appraising the estate of a New Hampshire family descended from a North Dakota Indian agent, Faye Travers is startled to discover a rare moose skin and cedar drum fashioned long ago by an Ojibwe artisan. And so begins an illuminating journey both backward and forward in time, following the strange passage of a powerful yet delicate instrument, and revealing the extraordinary lives it has touched and defined." — goodreads.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. We are meeting on Tuesday, March 26, at 7:30 pm in the Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St. We hope you'll join us.

### Canasta Group Doubles the Fun

Our local Canasta group has multiplied the cards, the luck and the fun. We are now playing "Hand and Foot," a Canasta-type card game played coast to coast. If playing your hand was fun, there may be wild cards waiting in your foot! Join this local group, which plays Tuesday mornings at a church hall near Fairlington. Having card-sense is helpful, but we're happy to teach you the rules of this game. Call Carol Ann 703-931-8533.

### Fairlington Babysitting Co-op

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

### **Fairlington MOMS Club**

The MOMS Club of Arlington-Fairlington VA® is a group for moms of young kids to find friends, get support, and have play opportunities for the kids.

The Club participates in a number of annual service projects to help our community, four big annual parties, routine playdates and crafts, and moms' nights out. We have a great listserv for sharing advice and connecting to other Fairlington families.

We welcome all moms! Please email fairlingtonmom-sclub@gmail.com for information on joining and visit us online at www.fairlingtonmomsclub.com. \$30 in annual dues goes to support the club's work and service projects. The MOMS Club of Arlington-Fairlington VA is the local chapter of International MOMS Club®.

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CHRISTIE'S

# DOWN TO EARTH patio gardening



## Spring is the time to rediscover your garden

Though snowflakes were fluttering outside my window as I wrote this, March is the time to re-discover your patio garden. The landscape will look ragged after three months of snow, ice crystals, and bitter wind chill temperatures. But plants revive fast in our climate. Before we think about patio design, let's walk through the nursery, deciding which plants, soil amendments, and mulch to buy for your spring cleaning.

**Shrubs:** Depending on the nursery, shrubs take up the most `floor" space. They are divided by size and sun/shade requirements. Still, it can be a maze of greenery with little differentiation. Think about what you like in a plant—evergreen, variegated leaf, fragrance, flower, fruit, and leaf structure. Don't forget habit. Plants you see may grow twice the size (height and width) as they mature.

Ground Cover: These are small plants that grow no larger than one-foot-tall with a similar spread. They're attractive between or in front of larger plants since size differential is aesthetic to the eye. Three or four identical shrubs lined up in a row resembles a "green" fence or soldiers in formation. This concept applies to ground cover, shrubs, and trees as well. Ground cover is affordable and easy to transport and plant in the soil.

**Trees:** `Dwarf" is recommended for a Fairlington patio. So, search for trees that reach no higher than 10-12 feet. Since trees dominate the landscape, their prices are higher.



A trip to the local nursery offers a variety of options for your patio garden. Photo courtesy of Pixabay.

Ornamental trees flower and fruit but will lose their leaves in autumn. Evergreen trees showcase a full-foliage effect all year despite having no flower (aside from a magnolia).

**Perennials:** These are placed on wooden tables. They flower in spring, summer, or fall. Some need sun and others need deep shade. They are affordable and flower in many forms and colors. Fern is about the only perennial which doesn't flower. And some ferns are deciduous. Bulbous plants (lily, gladiolus, or allium) will be located with the perennials.

**Soil Amendments:** These can be added as fertilizer (humus), loam (soil conditioner), or to balance soil pH levels. If your plants need acidic soil, try adding Holly Tone in the root zone once a year. If your plants need alkaline soil, apply

some lime. Most evergreens (azalea, laurel, boxwood, yew, rhododendron, and pieris) prefer acidic soil. I always pour soil conditioner into the plant hole since this softens the area where new roots will grow to retain ground moisture and oxygen. It's also malleable for earthworms, natural soil tillers.

Mulches: This depends on preference. Think about texture, color, size of the mulch pieces, and smell. All mulches (except rubber) are organic, though cedar mulches commonly are treated with orange or black dye. My suggestion is to avoid ``large-chip" (Silver Dollar) mulch since its edges cup and turn gray. If applied liberally, it becomes a breeding ground for rodents who may nest beneath the large chips.

—Bill Sullivan www.sullivanslandscaping.net

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Weeds growing wild? Shrubs in need of pruning? Want new plantings and mulching? Thinking about a new flagstone patio? Reach Bill at Sullivan's Landscaping. I'm in my 29th year serving the homeowners of Fairlington. I grew up here, still live nearby and will provide testimonials to my work. E-mail or call: Billsullivan41@gmail.com or 571.213.9567.

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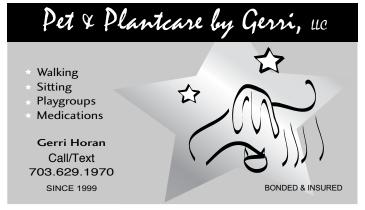
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**Due date for ads and payment:** 6 pm on the 10th of the preceding month (March 10 for April issue).

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

Email: admanager@fca-fairlington.org

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

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

**Cost:** 50 cents per word.

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



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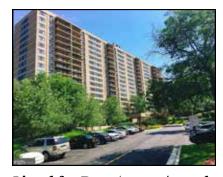
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