

all FAIRLINGTON BULLETIN



MARCH 2022

Volume 48, Number 3

www.fca-fairlington.org

Animal control chief to address FCA in March

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Jennifer Toussaint, the chief animal control officer with the Animal Welfare League of Arlington (AWLA), will present virtually at the FCA monthly meeting on March 9 at 7 p.m.

She will cover animal issues in Fairlington including wildlife control as well as procedures for complaints of animal cruelty or neglect. Residents are often unaware of local laws relating to animals including rules about leashing and availability of resources to resolve altercations between animals and animal owners.

Toussaint has addressed FCA in past years and her presentation is usually well attended. While Fairlington is a popular area for pet owners, many families have different perspectives on how animals should be handled in close living quarters. Residents have complained about pet owners allowing their animals to roam off-leash or excessive noise as well as improper disposal of dog waste. Toussaint will offer a recap of Fairlington rules (and local laws) regarding pets and explain what to do in the case of a complaint or dispute.

On the wildlife side of things, Toussaint will be available to answer questions about the population of foxes, deer, and racoons in the neighborhood, what to do when you find an injured wild animal, and how to prevent wildlife from finding a home inside your home.

Toussaint was recently recognized as a COVID-19 hero by the Arlington County Board in gratitude for her unwavering service throughout the pandemic.

"The unsung COVID-19 heroes being honored are outstanding examples of service, sacrifice, and community," said Dr. Aaron Miller, Director of the Department of Public Safety Communications and Emergency Management. "They continually drive forward efforts to help others through the pandemic."

All Fairlington residents, whether renters or homeowners, are invited to attend and participate in the FCA monthly meeting which will be held virtually as a Facebook livestream from the FCA Facebook page.

—Regina Bethencourt



Jennifer Toussaint has served as the chief animal control officer with AWLA since 2016. Photo courtesy awla.org.

Coming up

The FCA Board invites all Fairlington residents to attend its meetings that occur on the second Wednesday of the month at the Fairlington Community Center (3308 S. Stafford St.) unless otherwise noted. Before the beginning of each monthly Executive Board meeting, FCA members have three minutes to address the board on matters affecting the community. Due to COVID-19, meetings are being held virtually and are streamed on FCA's Facebook page.

FCA monthly meeting March 9

Special presentation: Chief Animal Control Officer Jennifer Toussaint of the Animal Welfare League of Arlington will discuss animal issues in Fairlington.

Regular board business:

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

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

Online resources:

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



Find us on Facebook at Fairlington Citizens Association.

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

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www.arlingtonva.us/departments/Environmental
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All Fairlington Bulletin

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— DEADLINE —

6 p.m., **10th of month** preceding publication month for commercial advertising, mini-ads, and editorial copy. Editorial announcements, story suggestions, and letters to the Editor should be sent to: afbeditors@yahoo.com.

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

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

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1/8 page	2 3/16 in.	3 5/8 in.	\$47
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Full-Page Insert (1 Side)	11 in.	8.5 in.	\$525
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Calendar

FCA monthly meeting

Wednesday, March 9, 7 p.m.
Virtually on FCA Facebook page

Fairlington diners

Tuesday, March 15, 6:30 p.m.
See page 27 for details

Book group

Tuesday, March 22, 7:30 p.m.
See page 27 for details



Contributors this month: Barbara Berti, Regina Bethencourt, Jennifer Davies, Guy Land, Stacey McGinnis, Andrew Raab, Paula Soderlund, and Bill Sullivan.

Some images in this publication may be digitally enhanced.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

FCA provides a venue for Fairlington residents to talk with local officials and county staff. We serve as a liaison between the community and local leaders, encouraging them to consider the particular needs of our small part of Arlington and Alexandria. We help make it easy for you to engage directly with them.

Last month a number of you joined us online when Arlington School Board Chair Barbara Kanninen visited us to talk about critical school issues. She is the school board's liaison to FCA.

As you can see from the article in this month's issue, she covered a lot of ground in her presentation. Several of you asked questions or made comments through the chat box on our Facebook page. Barbara has visited Fairlington a number of times and has always been accessible to us.

As the number of families with school-age children in Fairlington has grown, FCA has tried to increase our focus on school topics, including inviting school board members to our meetings.

County Board Chair Katie Cristol is slated to be our guest for our May 11 meeting. I'm hoping by then we'll be able to hold this session in person at the Fairlington Community Center. But whether in-person or online, please join us for a conversation with her. Katie has visited us before and always offers thoughtful comments on county board choices and policies.

We have invited Del. Elizabeth Bennett-Parker, who represents most of Fairlington in the General Assembly, to join us later in the spring, once the legislature has adjourned for the year. She is in her first year in Richmond.

While most of her district focuses on Alexandria, there's a part of Arlington in it as well, and this would be an opportunity for our residents to raise with her matters that flow from state decisions. During last year's campaign, Elizabeth was frequently seen knocking on doors in Fairlington or visiting the Fairlington Farmers Market.

In addition to facilitating communication between Fairlingtonians and local leaders, these presentations help FCA establish strong relationships with elected officials, making it easier for us to get their attention when there are matters before them that have a particular effect on Fairlington.

We hope you will take advantage of the opportunities for direct access to decisionmakers that FCA offers you.

Guy Land, FCA President
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School board chair shares local education update

At the February monthly FCA meeting, Arlington Public Schools (APS) Board Chair, Dr. Barbara Kanninen, spoke to FCA board members over Zoom as well as residents streaming through Facebook. Kanninen, who is serving her final term on the school board, acknowledged the many challenges and opportunities the school district is facing as the pandemic enters its third year.

Her timely visit occurred on the same night the Virginia Senate passed a bipartisan bill to allow parents to determine the use of face masks at school and on the eve of a school board meeting addressing elementary school boundary issues.

Kanninen emphasized the need to address learning loss while also providing adequate social-emotional support.

“It has been really horrible what is happening to [the kids],” she said, referring to the pandemic’s impact. She hopes that as vaccine rates continue to grow and cases of COVID decrease, the school system can adjust the layered mitigation strategies in place to protect students and staff.

She acknowledged that APS started the academic year with many students performing below their grade level but was optimistic that results from mid-year student

assessments will reveal that progress has been made in terms of catching up academically. She did note that such progress would likely be uneven, noting first and second graders would be closely monitored.

Boundaries and capital improvement planning

While elementary school growth has been tremendous this past decade, Kanninen observed that enrollment may have hit its peak, both in a slightly pandemic-related drop in current enrollment as well as in a slowing birth rate. However, the 2020 Census shows the likelihood of future population growth.

Kanninen pointed out that a major issue on the horizon is keeping Abingdon Elementary School with the right enrollment numbers. While small fixes like reducing the number of pre-K classrooms might provide a solution this year, Abingdon’s attendance zone will remain a school board focus over the next several years, although no elementary school boundary process will occur during the 2022–23 school year.

In terms of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), of which Abingdon was awarded the funds to expand and renovate

Continued on page 23

Attic fire in townhouse closes 34th street

A fire broke out in a Fairlington Commons townhouse on February 2 that brought emergency personnel from Arlington and Alexandria. Operating on a “Mutual Aid” call for assistance, the fire closed part of 34th street and caused \$80,000 in damage. At least three townhomes were affected by smoke and fire damage.

Arlington fire officials say the brief blaze was caused by a plumber soldering pipes containing water in a process known as “sweating.” The fire was considered accidental and not the fault of the homeowner. There were no injuries.

The National Fire Prevention Association says sweating pipes is among the top 10 causes of residential fires.

Some tips from the Arlington County Fire Department:

- Make sure the company that performs work in your home is licensed and fully insured.
- Make sure you have a ‘fire watch’ anytime anyone uses a flame to connect pipes...the workman needs



An attic fire shut down part of 34th St. as several engines arrived to put out the flames. Photo courtesy Barbara Berti.

to remain on site after work is performed in case fire breaks out from areas near the repaired pipes.

- Opt for ‘compression fitting’ which does not require soldering. It may be more expensive but it’s safer.

—Barbara Berti

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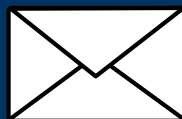
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Fairlington real estate assessments trail county-wide average increase

The real estate assessments for most Fairlington models in Arlington lagged behind the county-wide increase in residential real estate assessments for 2022, with some units experiencing no increase at all. This followed last year's significant increase in assessed value for most types of Fairlington units.

A spot check of almost 20 different Fairlington models revealed that four of them showed no increase in their assessments, and all of them had increases less than the county-wide average increase of 5.8 percent for residential real estate.



The assessment for an Arlington unit, the largest model in Fairlington, exceeded \$700,000. Photo by Guy Land.

Last year, by comparison, a check of these same models showed all of them with increases in assessments, ranging from just over 4 percent to almost 13 percent.

For the first time, the assessment of a Fairlington model broke through the \$700,000 mark, with a large Arlington unit in North Fairlington showing an assessment of \$702,800. The Arlington, Fairlington's large-

est model, has 2145 square feet. Its assessment rose 4.1 percent.

The other large models—Dominion I and II and Mt. Vernon—showed assessment increases in the 3 to 4 percent range.

On the other hand, Clarendon I units, which predominate in South Fairlington, showed no increase in assessment, with the regular unit holding steady at \$559,600 and a Clarendon with a finished attic at \$585,600. In 2021 the South Fairlington Clarendon I saw an increase of 12.87 percent.

Other units reflecting no increase include Braddock, Bradford, and Edgewood models.

Reflecting on the local condo market, former Fairlington resident Jennifir Birtwhistle, a real estate agent with Keller Williams Metro Center—Alexandria/Old Town who frequently handles properties in this area, commented, "Overall we saw a bit of a slow down in sales of the condo market from late September through the end of last year due to an uptick in condo inventory. We are however seeing more movement now as 2022 starts to heat up."

Overall, the total assessed value of all residential and commercial property in Arlington increased 3.4 percent, compared to the 2.4 percent growth in 2021. Residential property values increased 5.8 percent overall, while commercial property values increased by 0.6 percent. New construction in the county contributed 1 percent of the 3.4 percent overall tax base growth.

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2022 real estate assessments, selected Fairlington units*				
Unit type	Sq. feet	2021	2022	Percent change
Arlington	2145	674,400	702,800	4.21
Ashlawn	1470	476,400	495,200	3.95
Barcroft	1490	435,600	454,400	4.32
Braddock	711	312,000	312,000	0.00
Bradford	1009	370,300	370,300	0.00
Clarendon I South	1500	519,200	541,500	4.30
Clarendon I North	1500	559,600	559,600	0.00
Clarendon II North	1383	487,200	508,100	4.29
Dominion I North	1800	647,400	675,400	4.32
Dominion I South	1830	629,700	651,400	3.45
Dominion II	1689	564,200	588,300	4.27
Edgewood	1400	443,300	462,100	4.24
Edgewood	1400	479,500	479,500	0.00
Georgetown	922	409,500	426,900	4.25
Monticello	1712	490,900	511,700	4.24
Mt Vernon	1860	511,400	533,100	4.24
Richmond	1031	369,700	385,200	4.19
Sherwood	1257	421,600	438,600	4.03
Staunton	1121	362,900	377,900	4.13

Source: Arlington County real estate assessments
 *Units of the same type may have different assessments.
<https://propertysearch.arlingtonva.us/>

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Welcome Beeliner: there's a new diner in town

There is a new eatery in the Bradlee Shopping Center across from Fairlington on King St. and its goal is to become a new community hangout center. Occupying the entire space of the former Atlantis Restaurant, the Beeline Diner will be bringing a variety of modern comfort fare with an open dessert kitchen.

Co-owned by Markos Panas, Loelie Rickey, and Dagmawi Abedje, the Beeline Diner will be the newest addition to their Bread and Water Company restaurants, located in the Belle View section of Alexandria and in South Arlington.

When the space in Bradlee Center opened up in 2021, all three agreed that this would be a great location to branch out their business for a variety of reasons and jumped at the opportunity. Panas said that he grew up in South Fairlington and made many trips over to Bradlee Center.



*The Beeliner Diner moved into the space formerly occupied by Atlantis Pizzeria and Family Restaurant.
Photo by Andy Raab.*

Rickey is originally from the Seattle, Washington area and for many years the local restaurant near her parent's home was a diner named the "Beeline".

All the food at the Beeline Diner will be made from scratch and the diner will feature different eatery sections. "Bun Papa" will feature burgers, hot dogs, and a variety of sandwiches. "Boom Chicky" will serve fried chicken, while "ALX Pizza" will have a variety of artisan-style pizza.

Although the diner is still in the construction phase and an opening date planned for the spring, local residents can order online for curbside pickup or delivery at www.bunpapa.com. Panas says the response to online ordering has been really good.

—Andy Raab

Fairlington 5K moved to May 7



This year's 5K will again go through both North and South Fairlington.

the race beginning promptly at 8:30 a.m. at Abingdon Elementary School. If you registered and this day does not work for your schedule, please check your email for information on how to receive a refund. If you are able

The 7th Annual Fairlington 5K has been moved to May 7 due to COVID-related staffing shortages within the Arlington County Police Department which provides critical safety and logistics during road closures.

Starting times remain the same with roads along the race course closing at around 8 a.m. and

to run on May 7, you do not need to do anything and will automatically be registered for the new date.

The early bird registration discount which guaranteed participants receive their official Fairlington 5K t-shirt now expires on April 2.

Additionally, organizers have now added a special canine category. The first dog to finish the 1K and 5K course will receive a special prize from long-time race sponsor, the Animal Welfare League of Arlington. Registration for dogs is free and will take place on the day of the race, but all pooches must be accompanied by a registered human. You can register for the race at www.Fairlington5K.com.

To become a sponsor or donate an item to the accompanying silent auction, please contact Beth McGinn at bfrigola@gmail.com. Donors who provide a good or service valued at \$200 or more get their logo on the race day t-shirt.

—Beth McGinn

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Landmark area set for major redevelopment

Last month's *Bulletin* described real estate development projects right around Fairlington. This month's issue looks at a group of activities in the area of the former Landmark Mall in Alexandria, where several separate projects are on the drawing board.

Landmark Mall

After a number of years of decline and uncertainty, which saw the closure of anchor tenants Macy's and Sears and the use of the parking areas as storage for delivery trucks and new cars, the area that was Landmark Mall (Duke and Van Dorn Sts.) is slated for complete redevelopment.

In July last year the Alexandria City Council approved a package of agreements that will cover the redevelopment of the full site. The project will be anchored by the relocation and expansion of Inova's new state-of-the-art Alexandria Hospital, bringing more than 2,000 health care workers to the medical campus. The hospital will be located on the I-395 side of the property.

The rest of the property will include medical office buildings, condos, and apartment buildings, along with



Major developments are on the drawing board that will transform the larger Landmark area, including the former Landmark Mall (center), Landmark Overlook (lower left), and ParcView Apartments (upper right). Graphic by Lisa Pulaski.

retail, commercial, and entertainment offerings. Additionally, the project will provide outdoor parks, a replacement for a fire station, affordable housing, and a transit hub anchoring the city's proposed bus rapid transit network, DASH, and Metrobus.

In a briefing for a city advisory committee in late January, the developer (Foulger-Pratt) announced that the new development

will be called West End Alexandria and will be described as part of the larger area surrounding the site of the former mall.

"We are reintroducing this site to the region and not anchor ourselves in the history of Landmark Mall," Foulger-Pratt representative Jay Kelly told the Eisenhower West/Landmark Van Dorn Implementation Advisory Committee.

"We want this site to feel like it's the heart for this part of Alexandria," he said. So going forward the project will use the West End Alexandria name instead of Landmark Mall.

Construction at the site could begin as soon as 2023, with the first buildings becoming available in 2025. Total investment in the site is projected to exceed \$2 billion.

The new Inova Hospital is expected to open in 2028. Last summer the Alexandria City Council rezoned the site of the current hospital for future residential development. The rezoning will likely make it easier for Inova to sell the property to a developer.

Inova has indicated that it needs proceeds from the sale of its existing property to help finance the new hospital.



Conceptual design of West End Alexandria development. Graphic by City of Alexandria.

Continued on page 29



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Painting your Garden

So many choices! English gardens, formal gardens, peaceful zen gardens, woodland gardens, container gardens, herb and edible gardens, bee and butterfly gardens; you probably know what you love.

Whatever your preference, first determine the location, shape, and size of your space. Do you get a lot of sun, some sun or just shade, or both. Is it morning sun or afternoon? What is your soil type? Does it drain well? Is your garden contained or open on all sides? Measure your space and draw it out to scale on a piece of paper. Plants grow upwards and sideways, so dimensions are important in order to not outgrow your available space.

Look at plants online or in garden centers. Match your favorites to your growing conditions. Make lists. Consider plants that have winter interest: evergreen shrubs, for example. The easiest garden to maintain is one that utilizes plants native to our area that will naturally thrive. These also attract pollinators and need less water: added bonuses! Consider perennials as they are less expensive in the long run and easier to maintain. Some non-native plants are fine, but careful! Garden centers still sell invasive plants; don't buy them and don't plant them.

Whichever type of garden you prefer, there are some basic design principles to keep in mind:

Vary the height: you will want some taller plants, some mid-sized, and some shorter ones and these can include shrubs. If you have a fence as a backdrop, place the taller ones against the fence in the back. If not, then center the tall ones, then place the medium ones and the shorter ones toward the edge of the bed.

Plant in multiples of odd numbers and stagger their placement for a less rigid look.



Dappled early morning light illuminates dogwood, heuchera, and woodland phlox in Fairlington Arbor's Shade Bed. Photo by Paula Soderlund.

Let the eye move through the garden by not clumping one color of plants in only one area: if you plant one color plant on one side of the bed, then add that same plant elsewhere.

Limit the varieties: too many make the garden look confusing and unkempt.

Shade only? no problem, an all-green garden can be quite colorful; shade plants come in a variety of greens and whites.

Pastel colors lend a peaceful and soothing look in the hot summer months and often prefer shade.

Vivid pop: choose bright reds, oranges and yellows.

Contrasting colors: purple and yellow or blue and orange allow for harmony with a punch.

But, your plant choices will be dependent on your site conditions: the amount of sun, dry or moist soil, etc.

Sketch in your plants on your plan and draw, to scale, the maximum diameter of your plants, when full grown. Some overlap is good. Color them in and see if you like the effect. If so, go for it! Plants can be moved later. Nothing is ever final and gardens need time to achieve their full potential. Remember to water and be patient. And then sit back and enjoy. You have created a work of art!

For more information on the right plant for your garden, check out the websites for Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia at <https://mgnv.org> and Plant NOVA Natives at <https://www.plantnovanatives.org/>. Feel free to send us questions or comments at fortheloveofnature@google-groups.com and follow Fairlington Gardening Community on Facebook!

—Paula Soderlund

Winter festival

Unusually warm temperatures provided a perfect setting for this year's Abingdon Elementary Winter Wonderland. Sponsored by the Abingdon PTA, the outdoor event featured Alpacas, face painting, a DJ, preparation of the student garden, and a visit by the Abingdon Cardinal. *Photos by Guy Land.*





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Letters to the Editor

Climate change. What can I do?

The vision of the environment my 5-year-old granddaughter will grow up in is not optimistic given climate change. When I see videos of our melting polar ice caps and consider the fires and serious weather events the U.S. has been experiencing, I ask myself, "What can I do?" It is easy to view climate change as a macro problem that only science and industry can solve, but I believe there are many things we, as individuals/households can do, that when done by many, can make a difference at the micro level.

Toward that end, I would like to form an all Fairlington working group to identify actions that individuals/households can take to begin tackling the climate change problem. Below is an outline of the initial plan—if you share my concern about climate change and want to be a part of the solution, please join me in forming and contributing to this new working group. Contact Carol Hamblin at chamblin24@protonmail.com

Vision: Fairlington residents are informed about actions individuals/households can take to reduce their carbon

footprint and, in this way, become a part of the climate change solution.

Mission: to identify, research, communicate, and promote actions individuals/households can take to reduce their carbon footprint to make a positive contribution to the fight against climate change.

Initially, volunteers from all Fairlington (Fairlington Villages, the six South Fairlington villages and Fairlington Court) will be recruited and organized to attend meetings, contribute ideas, do research, author articles, and devise other ways to communicate with the community. I have volunteered to coordinate formation of the working group and guide its initial activities.

As the group forms, I envision leadership being a shared role. Ongoing leadership and organization will be discussed/determined after the group has formed.

Thank you for your interest.

—Carol Hamblin

Is there really a "deer problem" in Arlington County?

The February issue of the *All Fairlington Bulletin* included an article discussing a deer survey that established a count of Arlington's white-tailed deer population. You may have heard that the results of this survey suggest that the County has a "deer problem." This, however, is far from the truth.

During the survey, 290 deer were counted, averaging 13 deer per square mile, with more deer in forested areas or stream corridors, and less deer—and even no deer—in segments of more urban density.

The survey, which was undertaken by a company that claims to specialize in "wildlife management", suggests a sustainable level of 5-15 deer per square mile. This number, often referred to as "carrying capacity," has no scientific basis (the report itself has studies citing different ranges, and the "5-15 deer per square mile" figure was not backed up with any specific citation). The fact is, determining a "healthy carrying capacity" is a political judgement that is not rooted in biology: some communities will be able to sustain different numbers of deer based on multiple factors, like type and quality of food and cover. There is no one 'magic' number that any community should have.

So then, why do some feel there are too many deer?

The FCA article suggested that some are upset by deer grazing and the resulting destruction of forest understory. It's easy to blame deer for any forestry growth woes, when the reality is that forests are affected by many factors: insect damage, disease, pollutants (like harsh fertilizers), invasive species, increased foot traffic, climate and weather extremes, over-development...and deer. In fact, a Yale Forestry School study assessing deer impact on forests concluded that deer density was not a leading factor in tree regeneration decline nor loss of plant diversity. Deer are just one of many factors - they are not the factor—and should not be made as a scapegoat for larger systemic ecological problems.

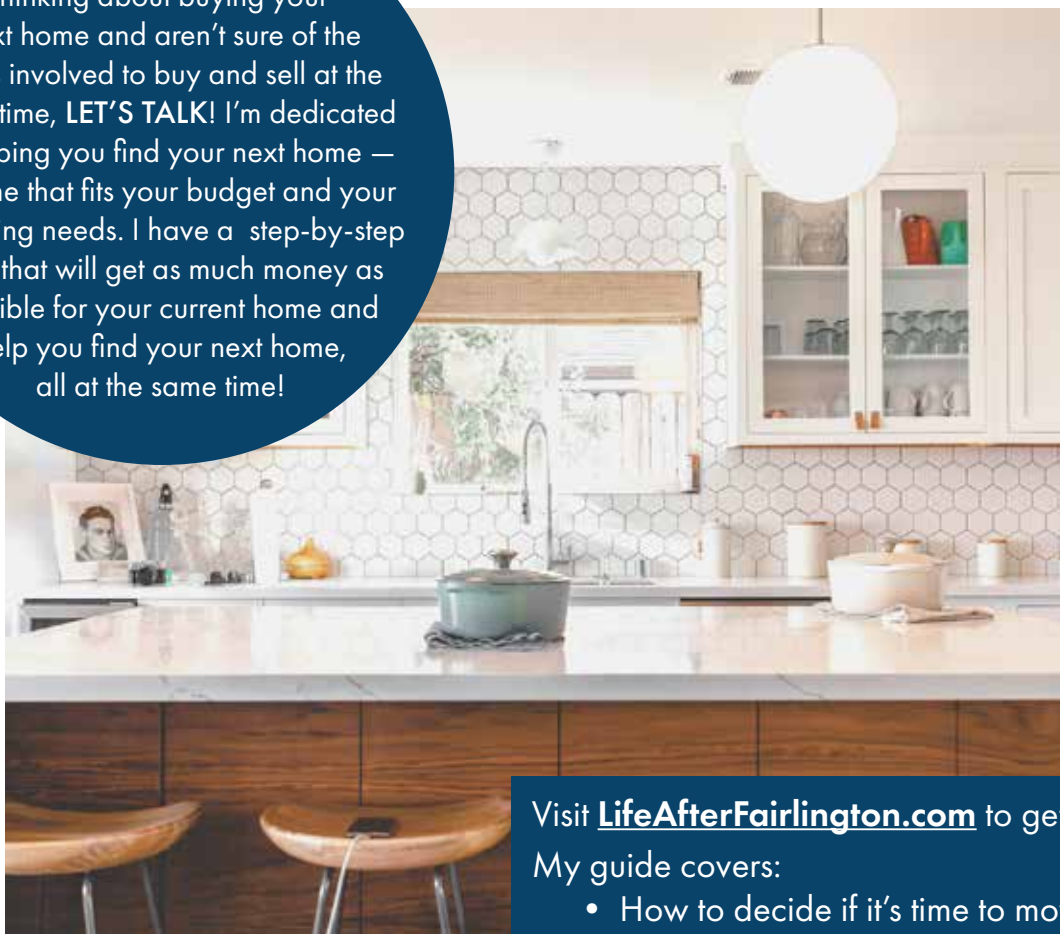
AWLA undertakes extensive work in humane wildlife management, and we know from experience that the issue is not the number of deer but rather the conflicts we

Continued on page 21

The All Fairlington Bulletin welcomes letters to the editor and will print them as space permits. However, the opinions expressed are those of the writers and do not represent endorsement by this publication or the FCA. In addition, the AFB reserves the right to edit letters for length or clarity, and the AFB may refuse to print letters that are not appropriate for a community newsletter.

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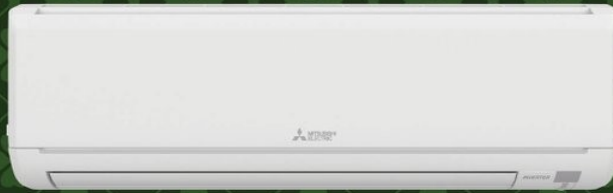
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Wakefield wrestlers take home big wins



Wakefield High School 2021-2022 Wrestling Team at the Liberty District Tournament. Photos by Stacey McGinnis.

As the high school winter sports season winds down, wrestlers at Wakefield High School, including two long-time Fairlington residents, celebrated big end-of-season victories.

Freshman wrestlers Beau Branch and Owen McGinnis enjoyed wrestling at Gunston Middle School, but after missing an entire season due to pandemic cancellations were unsure how their first high school season would turn out.

Thankfully, it seems they and their teammates were able to pick back up where they left off in 2020.

Branch, wrestling for both JV and Varsity in the 138 lb weight class brought home 2nd place at the JV Liberty District Tournament while McGinnis, in the JV 126 lb weight class placed 1st in the District.

Three other teammates, Jared Galang (132 lbs), Jaden Delgado and Ben Mitzen (both heavy-weights) also took podium spots at the JV District Tournament. They look forward to cheering on Varsity teammates Rhys Carlson (160 lb) and Temuujin Erdenetuya (124 lb) at the Virginia State Tournament at the end of February.

—Stacey McGinnis



Wakefield freshmen Owen McGinnis takes home 1st place in the 126 lb weight class.

Assessments from page 7

“The increase in property values for this year shows the attractiveness of our Arlington community, even as our community continues to face challenges brought by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic,” said County Manager Mark Schwartz.

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 from September 1, 2020, through August 31, 2021. 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.

“For the first time, the assessment of a Fairlington model broke through the \$700,000 mark.”

The difference between assessed value and market resale value can be seen in a large Dominion unit in South Fairlington that sold early last year for \$729,500 but has a 2022 assessment of \$672,400.

Real estate taxes provide almost 60 percent of total

county revenues. The county’s real estate tax base is split roughly equally between residential (54 percent) and commercial (46 percent) property assessments.

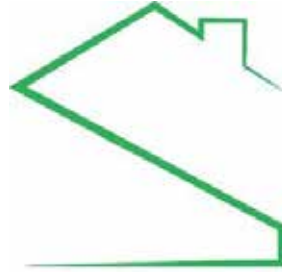
According to a county press release, the slight increase in commercial property assessments demonstrates some growth in Arlington’s business market and a rebound closer to pre-pandemic levels.

The county continues to struggle with decreased office property values due to high vacancy rates and changing demand for office space, driven in part by more work-from-home options in response to COVID-19.

County leaders note that while property values have shown steady growth over the past couple of years, the county board still faces difficult choices in crafting the 2023 budget. Budget demands include funding for schools, as well as the county’s commitment to affordable housing and addressing infrastructure needs.

Assessment notices were mailed to owners in mid-January. The county board will hold a virtual public hearing on real estate tax rates March 31, 2022 at 7 pm. The board will adopt the tax rate on April 23.

—Guy Land



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Preventative maintenance work to be performed on Fairlington trees

The Arlington County forestry program received additional funding to provide preventive maintenance, to reduce risk from dead, dying, diseased, or damaged limbs or whole trees. Arlington County has more than 19,500 street trees, and this program hopes to address these issues on a subset of our highest value trees.

Fairlington has more than 1,200 street trees, with large mature trees being a key feature of the streets of this neighborhood. We are aiming to work on the areas with the highest value street trees in Fairlington with this fiscal year's funding. The maintenance work already began in February of this year at the intersection of 36th St. S and S. Taylor St. and aims to be completed by the end of the fiscal year on June 30. The planning shifts between North and South Fairlington, to give equal treatment to each area.



Photos from Fairlington in the 1940s show a bare, treeless community. Photos courtesy National Archives.

Trees were originally planted in Fairlington with a long term vision in mind. Today residents benefit from the hard work and sacrifices of keeping young saplings alive during the early days of Fairlington in the 1950s and 60s and lay the groundwork for a beautiful tree-lined community in the future.

The county is seeking to address issues in trees to prolong their health, and reduce risk from branches or other tree parts that may fall. In order of importance, they will prioritize pruning or treatment of dead, diseased, dying, damaged branches or other parts of the tree; removal of dead or high risk street trees, structural pruning of trees to help the long-term structural health and growth of medium-aged, usually smaller trees; vision clearance issues, and branches blocking sidewalks or touching buildings. The work will be mostly performed by our contractor, Greentree.



Forestry staff will inform homeowners associations of upcoming maintenance, to be communicated to residents. No-parking signs will be put up before maintenance, where needed.

Work in one area typically does not last longer than a couple of days, depending on the extent of the work required. The no-parking signs will state how long the crews will be there. The signs will say "preventive pruning" or something similar, to alert you of the work to come.

For more information, visit the website at <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Sustainability-and-Environment/Trees/Preventive-Maintenance-Pilot-Program>.

Contact Vincent Verweij, Urban Forest Manager, at vverweij@arlingtonva.us with questions about this program.

If you have an immediate tree risk issue that needs to be assessed, please use the Report-a-Problem tool at <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Topics/Report-Problem>

—Vincent Verweij

Letters to the Editor, from page 17

have with them. The County's focus should, therefore, be on managing deer conflicts, not deer numbers. We support Arlington County adopting a practical, humane, and sustainable deer management plan. As the County's animal resource center, AWLA will continue to work with anyone in the community to create humane deer management solutions that keep our citizens, ecosystem, and wildlife healthy and safe.

—Sam Wolbert, President & CEO, and Jennifer Toussaint, Chief of Animal Control, Animal Welfare League of Arlington.

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eight years ago, Kanninen discussed some new developments. Amazon will support the building of a permanent home for Arlington Community High School (ACHS) as part of its PenPlace development in Pentagon City.

ACHS serves adult learners and is currently housed in the Career Center building. The new facility is expected to be completed in time for the 2026-27 school year. This will allow for more green space at the Career Center campus when it undergoes its renovation and expansion.

Kanninen said she looked forward to being able to return to “the Abingdon model” of expanding and renovating older schools to make them equipped for 21st century learning.

Education budget

The past two years of the pandemic were very hard on APS’ budget. However, Kanninen was relieved to see that the county is now on better financial footing, in part from federal pandemic aid as well as from strong state revenues. This rosier economic outlook will allow APS to fully fund a compensation plan across all APS employees, including market competitive salaries for teachers, bus drivers, and clerical staff.

Kanninen acknowledged that Arlington had slipped in several years, but now was in a position to better recruit and retain staff. This is particularly significant given teacher shortages nationally as well as vacancies across all positions in the school district. Better funding made her “optimistic that it will give us some opportunities”, like added resources for special education funding.

At the conclusion of her presentation, Kanninen fielded questions from board members as well as residents.

One board member asked about the school board’s decision to remove School Resource Officers in schools and about Kanninen’s response to parents who might have safety concerns. Kanninen answered that, according to incidents reported, there has not been an uptick in comparison to previous years.

She added that she has some discomfort about police in a school setting. For example, having police intervene in a school fight would automatically escalate the disciplinary response or punishment given that APS does not have the authority to tell ACPD what to do. Instead APS is focused on expanding support for students.



School board chair Barbara Kanninen speaks to FCA on school board issues via Zoom on February 9.

Kanninen also mentioned that staff teach students to intervene on behalf of others. She provided the example of Wakefield High School’s promotion to be an “upstander” rather than a bystander.

Other questions focused on the pandemic learning gap and plans from the school board to make up for it. Kanninen expressed optimism that schools would help students catch up, adding that APS is a statewide leader in literacy curriculum after falling behind.

“We are getting back to phonics” with a strong instructional foundation. She concluded by stating that APS is “better suited than any district in the state to get our students caught up.”

Another resident asked for clarification on teacher coordination between elementary, middle, and high schools, as she noticed some instruction gaps. Kanninen thanked the resident and said that she would bring it up with Superintendent Dúran.

Masks made it on the agenda as one resident asked about KN95 masks and their availability for staff and students. Kanninen said that currently the only plan in place is to provide one mask per student or staff member, noting cost and supply chain issues.

Kanninen has served as Fairlington’s civic association liaison several times, extending back to Abingdon’s expansion and renovation in 2014. She noted working with FCA repeatedly was a “fortunate fluke” which she really enjoys. Kanninen was quick to point out that while Arlington’s overall birth rate and enrollment projections are on the decline, she noted that Fairlington is the exception; “This is where the kids live.”

—Jennifer Davies



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FAIRLINGTON *pet profiles*

Oakley—The Perfect Lap Lab

Oakley is a 7 year old lab mix that lives in South Fairlington with his Mom and Dad. He was rescued from a kill shelter by Lu's Labs in Alexandria. Oakley weighs 82 pounds and thinks he's a lap dog. He is smart, sweet, and very gentle. He is exceptionally well-behaved and almost human in understanding and expression.

His parents gave him a DNA test which shows he's 25 percent labrador, half pit bull and the balance chow chow, and border collie. Labradors are known as 'water dogs'. Oakley hates water. He is however, a devoted hiker, car passenger and all time snuggler. He has lived in Fairlington for almost 4 years. Here is his story:

When you were at the shelter, did you know this could be the end? What gave you hope you could have a new life?

Luckily, I wasn't at the shelter for very long! I was only there for a few days before Lu's Labs came and sprung me and brought me to my first foster home. I was immediately shown lots of love and knew I was in good hands. I stayed in Louisiana for a couple of months since I had heartworm, but they helped me with medicine right away. Then I took a really really, really long ride (I love rides) to my second foster home in Maryland. I was only in town for less than a week before mom and dad came to meet me and take me home.

How did you get to Fairlington?

When mom and dad adopted me, they brought me to their home in Falls Church. We ended up moving out a little over a year later, something about "rent getting too expensive" and "Oakley doesn't help with rent so we need something cheaper." I went to Grandparent Camp™ for a weekend and when mom and dad picked me up, they brought me to the new house in Fairlington. I've lived here for the past three years, and mom and dad recently got something called a "mortgage" which means I get to stay here forever!



Oakley patiently sits and poses for his portrait. Photo by Alyssa Warnecke.

What do you like best about living here?

By far the best thing is landscaping day during the week. I don't even have to search for sticks to carry, they're taken off the trees and put in piles all around the neighborhood for me! Other contenders for the top spot on my Fairlington Favorites list, in no particular order, include the ducks in the pool enclosure, my Aunt Kelly and Uncle Ryan who live next door, the abundance of squirrels and chipmunks to chase, all of my dog friends like Griffin and Millie, and the multitude of sniffing spots.

What advice would you give to someone thinking of adopting a dog?

My best piece of advice is to keep an open mind. You've already made the greatest decision to adopt, and maybe the dog that's best for you checks different boxes than what you initially had in mind. Take me, for example: My mom and dad didn't think they wanted a heartworm-positive dog (or a black lab), but they didn't find out I had heartworm until they had already met me and fallen in love with me. After that, it wasn't such a big deal to them. In addition to keeping an open mind, patience is key. There were eight other families who wanted to meet me before mom and dad, but we just weren't the best fit. I am so thankful for my adoption team at Lu's Labs for taking such care with making sure my humans were perfect for me.

You are a big dog and a big snuggler who loves to be held and cuddled. Do you do this for you, or to make people feel better?

Don't tell mom and dad but I 100 percent do this for the pets I get, not for anyone else. My secret is that I make them think I'm comforting them, when in reality if they stop petting me I remind them constantly with my paws and nose that I require nonstop attention.

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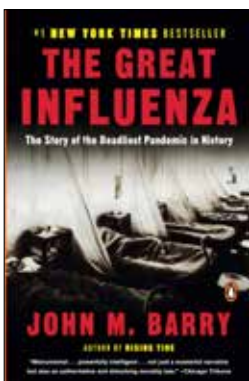
Fairlington Diners

The Fairlington Diners generally gather monthly for relaxed dinners nearby. We focus on having a good meal and an opportunity to chat with neighbors. In February, we visited one of our favorites, Shirlington THAI. Here's what's planned for March:

Tuesday, March 15 at 6:30 p.m., Taverna Cretekou, 818 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, <https://taverna-cretekou.com/>, (703) 548-8688. This will be a new restaurant for us, although it's been in business since 1973 and is recognized as one of the top Greek restaurants in the area by Zagat's. Please call Carol at 703-379-6840 if you plan to attend, no later than 6 p.m. on Monday, March 14, so she can make a reservation. Leave a voice-mail 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



Please join the Fairlington Book Group on Tuesday, March 22, to discuss *The Great Influenza: The Story of the Deadliest Pandemic in History*.

The book, written by John M. Barry and published in 2006, is “a sobering account of the 1918 flu epidemic, compelling and timely”.
—*Boston Globe*

We will meet either on Zoom or in the FCC (3308 S. Stafford St.) at 7:30 p.m. Masks are required at all times inside the FCC. Please call Carol at 703-379-6840 to be added to our email list in order to receive details about our meeting location a few days in advance.

Fairlington Moms' Club

The Fairlington Moms' Club is a group where moms can meet friends, form a support network, and create opportunities for children. The Club organizes several community service projects, routine playdates, craft days, family parties, and moms' nights out. We have a great listserv for sharing advice and connecting with other Fairlington families, as well as our own classifieds listserv. We welcome all Fairlington moms! Please email fairlingtonmomsclub@gmail.com for further information.

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Abingdon Elementary would love your support to create a successful, sustainable community garden. It is our goal to enrich students' and families' knowledge of environmental sustainability and to be good stewards of our Earth, while providing first hand experience in learning about our food supply and our pollinators. To sign up, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/2p82y7rv>.

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Landmark Overlook

Plans are well advanced for the redevelopment of the property across Duke Street from the former Landmark Mall, known as Landmark Overlook. With the primary entrance on Stevenson Ave., the 8-acre property has been the site of the Big Lots store.

The Alexandria Planning Commission approved the development special use permit for this in December, and the City Council was scheduled to consider it in February.

The proposal will demolish all the existing structures on the property and shift from a predominantly commercial use to one that is primarily residential. All of the existing leases on the site will have expired by the end of March, freeing the site for a complete overhaul.

The new development will feature three components: a condo townhouse development of 88 units in a “2 over 2 stacked” style (2 two-level condo units joined, with one on top of the other); a multifamily rental project with 362 units spread across two connected buildings, and a commercial component at the corner of the lot that faces Duke St. and S. Walker St.

Although no decisions have been made yet on the commercial part, the developer hopes that it will include a hotel and a medical office building, to take advantage of the new development on the former Landmark Mall site.

The apartment project is expected to include at least 6 affordable units, with the developer making an additional cash contribution to the city’s affordable housing fund.

At completion the project will have over two acres of public open space.

ParcView affordable housing

Wesley Housing, a developer and manager of affordable housing in Northern Virginia, plans to renovate and expand the number of affordable apartment units on the site of ParcView apartments at 5380 Holmes Run Parkway in Alexandria, a couple of blocks from Van Dorn St. and near the new West End Alexandria development.

The proposal, which the Alexandria City Council approved at its February meeting, calls for 227 new affordable units and the renovation of 146 existing units, significantly increasing the number of affordable housing units available in Alexandria’s West End.



The existing apartments at ParcView will be renovated once two new affordable housing buildings are constructed. Photo by Guy Land.

new construction is done. The renovation is projected to be completed in 2027.

—Guy Land

Shirlington small business “The Cookery” closes

A popular Shirlington small business, The Cookery: A Culinary Marketplace, closed its doors in late January after 10 years in business.

Unlike many small business closures in the past year, the decision to close was not due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The store owner, Cary Kelly, opted not to renew the lease and to go into semi-retirement because of rising cost of rent, according to an interview with ARLnow.

Shirlington shopping center, owned by Federal Realty Investment Trust, has not indicated when or whether the vacant space will be occupied by a new tenant.

—Regina Bethencourt

Wesley Housing is also developing 81 units of affordable housing on the site of the parking lot adjacent to Fairlington Presbyterian Church on King Street. FCA supported that project.

The plan envisions a mix of 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom units around an open central courtyard, with ground-level commercial space, as well as space for a daycare center.

Construction is expected to begin in 2023 and take 26-30 months to complete. Renovation of the existing building will start once the

new construction is done. The renovation is projected to be completed in 2027.



The Cookery storefront. Photo courtesy Shirlington Civic Association.

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DOWN TO EARTH *patio gardening*



Re-awakening your patio in spring

Come March (if snow doesn't fall), the Fairlington patio becomes an outdoor room to your home. Last year, March had three rain days and no snow. Still facing a pandemic and weathering three cold winter months, everyone is now ready to re-discover what they have out back. The garden looks messy and the tarp still covers the grill, table, and chairs.

Since the condo conversion over 50 years ago, Fairlington homeowners have created many designs in a patio with limited space. The average concrete pad is 10 feet by 12 feet and four inches thick. Most are intact. A few have surface cracks. Very few have cracked to the base. Side beds are narrow, maybe 16-to-20 inches wide. The bed at the back fence is four-to-five feet wide.

There are platform decks with a step, brick patios, and flagstone patios. Sheds reach the top of the fence or just below (to follow the rules). Sheds discreetly hide bicycles, garden tools, and bags of soil.

Then there is the A/C compressor, disguised with woodwork or small plantings. In some cases, the compressor is outside the patio fence. There usually are a couple window wells—one beneath the dining room window and another beneath the kitchen window. The iron grates covering the wells are decorative; the clear plastic ones (usually cracked), not so much.

The perimeter beds (with soil) house an array of plants, from ground



Patios, like this one pictured from several years ago, are occasionally featured on the Fairlington Home and Garden Tour. Photo by Guy Land.

cover to shrubs to dwarf trees. Ah, then there are the large trees (holly, elm, magnolia, crape myrtle, and mulberry) inside the patio—planted by residents unaware of height restrictions or mature size of the tree.

Over the years, wood fences have been replaced. (I used to do this for Fairlington Commons before starting my own business.) Fences with the six-by-six-inch gate posts are the sturdiest. Hanging baskets and strung lights are common features on fence panels. The prettiest fence decorations I've seen are colorful art in the form of salamanders, turtles and dragonflies that are hung on the fence.

Trellises housing flowering or evergreen vines typically stand at the fence but a new trend is a trellis with folding sections that stands in the middle of the garden. The

aforementioned art can be hung on the trellis's metal. I've seen one iron arbor trellis over a back door. Covered with an evergreen vine, this arbor frames the door in decorative fashion.

Even if the original concrete pad exists without a brick or flagstone makeover, residents mask it with a table, chairs, as well as decorative pots. These containers house ground cover, annuals, pansies, and ornamental cabbage.

A new trend is herb gardening. What I prefer is a cedarwood box-shaped container, maybe two feet high, that contains the plants. Herbs can be leggy, feeble and not so decorative. So, an attractive wood frame adds a stylish touch.

—Bill Sullivan
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