# FAIRLINGTON BULLETIN



FAIRLINGTON FCA

www.fca-fairlington.org

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#### MARCH 2024

# Volume 50, Number 3

# Libby Garvey to retire from county board

South Fairlington resident and longtime county leader Libby Garvey announced in late January that she would not be seeking re-election to the Arlington County board, bringing to an end almost three decades of service in elective office in Arlington.

"I still love my work, but both my head and my heart are telling me it is time that I pass the baton," Garvey said in a statement. "To continue the relay analogy, I intend to sprint to the finish and am looking forward to accomplishing a lot for Arlington in the next 11 months. This includes completing our visioning process, "Arlington 2050,"



Arlington County Board member Libby Garvey (center) joined Maureen Coffey (left) and Susan Cunningham (right) at last year's Fairlington Fourth of July parade. Coffey and Cunningham were elected to the county board in November. Photo by Guy Land.

and making our community more energy resilient."

Garvey currently serves as the county board chair. She was first elected to the county board in 2012 and has served multiple terms as chair.

Prior to her service on the county board, Garvey served 15 years on the Arlington School Board, having a major influence in shaping the expansion and construction of the new Wakefield High School building, helping ensure that the project came in on time and under budget. She served as school board chairwoman five times.

Throughout her public leadership Garvey has been a strong and effective advocate for the needs of Fairlington and has often attended FCA meetings and events.

At press time, four candidates have announced their candidacy for the Democratic nomination to replace her: Natalie Roy, J.D. Spain, Julie Farnam, and James DeVita. Roy and Spain ran unsuccessfully for the county board last year, while DeVita ran for the State Senate.

—Guy Land

## Coming up

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

#### FCA monthly meeting March 13

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

#### 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.

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

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

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#### **Fairlington Neighborhood Conservation Committee**

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

#### All Fairlington Bulletin

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#### —— DEADLINE ——

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

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

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#### Calendar

#### **Fairlington diners**

Saturday, March 2, 12 p.m. City Diner Restaurant 5616 Leesburg Pike Falls Church, VA 22041

#### FCA monthly meeting

Wednesday, March 13, 7 p.m. Fairlington Community Center 3308 S. Stafford St.

#### Fairlington book group

Tuesday, March 26, 7:30 p.m. Fairlington Community Center 3308 S, Stafford St.



**Contributors this month:** Barbara Berti, Marsha Blakeway, Kirsten Conrad, James Harlow, Guy Land, and Addy Young..

Some images in this publication may be digitally enhanced.



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The departure of Arlington County Board member Libby Garvey at the end of this year, coming on the heels of last year's retirement of two other veteran and respected county board members, will yield

significantly restructured leadership for the county as it confronts continuing challenges of housing affordability, demographic change, and office vacancy rates.

While she has occasionally been outside the consensus on the board, Garvey has contributed to board debates in a thoughtful and civil manner and during her several terms as chair, she has guided board debates respectfully and fairly.

Today's Arlington County looks much different than the county did when she first entered elective office 28 years ago as a member of the Arlington School Board. And the newer members of the county board, as well as many of those who are seeking to replace her, bring a much wider set of perspectives to the county's policy debates.

Garvey's departure is essentially the natural process by which experienced and thoughtful leaders give way to newer leadership cohorts that will bring fresh insights to today's challenges and opportunities.

Garvey has been an accessible and effective voice for Fairlington. She has helped us navigate the county's policy and regulatory decisions. She has had a frequent presence at Fairlington events.

In January, she launched a year-long effort to engage neighbors across Arlington on what the county should look like by the year 2050 and what challenges the county, and its residents, must address.

She expects this initiative to distill community feedback into two to three distinct visions of the future, which can serve as the foundation for long-term strategic planning.

The kick-off community conversation focused on broad themes that will impact Arlington by 2050, such as demographic change, climate impacts, business environment, and education challenges.

Subthemes cutting across these presentations emphasized the need for housing that can be affordable to the county's changing demographics and the importance of anticipating technological change and equipping a competitive workforce for technology-focused jobs.

Armed with these visions of 2050, the county's leaders can map a plan for the next two decades. And they can applaud Garvey for her vision in bringing us to this place. Thank you, Libby.

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







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# Alexandria staff brief City on Alex West planning effort

Strategies to avoid housing displacement and increase the stock of affordable housing will be a key component of the emerging Alexandria West plan, city staff told the Alexandria City Council in a late January briefing on the planning work. A general virtual briefing for the community will be held on March 4 at 7 p.m. over Zoom.



The proposed Alexandria West development includes 51 acres in new proposed park space. Graphics courtesy of alexandriava.gov.

The area covered by

the planning study includes the portion of Fairlington Villages that is in Alexandria and all of Alexandria that lies west of I-395, plus a small portion near Seminary Rd. and Van Dorn St.

Staff described the January briefing as a "check in" to make sure that members of the City Council are generally comfortable with the approaches being taken in crafting the plan.

Staff pointed out the substantial community engagement that had occurred throughout the process. Staff have met with both FCA and the Fairlington Villages condo association to get recommendations on priorities for the plan.

The plan is expected to consider land use, housing affordability, transportation, community facilities, infrastructure, and sustainability.

While no major changes are projected for the land along King St. across from Fairlington, the plan is likely to permit taller buildings along that area if landowners request it.

Improved traffic safety

and mobility in West Alex will be another focus of the plan. There are three "high crash" corridors in the area: King St., Seminary Rd., and Sanger Ave. Improvements along King St. have been under discussion for a number of years.

The plan also expects to take advantage of the Alexandria Transitway, a Bus Rapid Transit route along Beauregard St.

In response to a question from Vice Chair Amy Jackson, staff said they were not aware of any current plans to convert apartments to condos in the plan area.

Continued on page 15

### Annual Home & Garden tour seeks volunteers



The last Home and Garden Tour was held in 2018. Photo by Guy Land.

The much anticipated Fairlington Home and Garden Tour is just two months away! The tour will be held on Saturday, May 11 from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

We are still looking for volunteer house sitters who will be able to help homeowners meet and greet tour-goers, assist with traffic flow in and out of the unit, and answer questions. As a thank you, volunteers will be able to go on the tour at no cost.

Please send an email to: homeandgarden@fairlington-historicalsociety.org if you're interested in signing up or have any questions. Tickets will be on sale soon.

This special event benefits the Fairlington Historical Society and happens only once every two years. Homes and gardens in both North and South Fairlington will be included.

-Barbara Berti



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Chelsea C.

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## Fairlington real estate assessments lag county average increase

The real estate assessments for most Fairlington models lagged behind the county-wide increase in residential real estate assessments for 2024, with many units experiencing no increase in assessed value.

This is the third year in a row in which assessments for most Fairlington models did not keep pace with the general increase in residential real estate assessments across the county.

A spot check of 20 different Fairlington models revealed that over half of them showed no increase in assessments. Only eight had increased assessments, with the increases ranging from 2.58 percent to 4.37 percent.

Overall, the total assessed value of all residential and commercial property in Arlington increased 2.5 percent in calendar year 2024, compared to 3.7 percent growth in 2023. Residential property values increased 3.2 percent while commercial property values increased 1.6 percent. New construction contributed to 1.7 percent of the 2.5 percent tax base growth.

2024 real estate assessments, selected Fairlington units*					
Unit type	Sq. feet	2023	2024	change	
Arlington	2145	714,700	714,700	0.00	
Ashlawn	1470	503,100	503,100	0.00	
Barcroft	1490	462,300	482,500	4.37	
Braddock	711	317,300	325,300	2.52	
Bradford	1009	376,200	391,300	4.01	
Clarendon I North	1500	550,900	550,900	0.00	
Clarendon I South	1500	569,300	594,100	4.36	
Clarendon II North	1383	516,900	516,900	0.00	
Dominion I North	1800	675,400	675,400	0.00	
Dominion I South	1830	662,700	691,500	4.35	
Dominion II	1689	598,400	598,400	0.00	
Edgewood North	1400	470,000	490,100	4.28	
Edgewood South	1400	487,700	500,300	2.58	
Georgetown	922	426,900	426,900	0.00	
Monticello	1712	520,400	520,400	0.00	
Mt Vernon	1860	542,200	542,200	0.00	
Richmond	1031	391,700	391,700	0.00	
Sherwood	1257	445,800	445,800	0.00	
Staunton	1121	384,200	384,200	0.00	

Source: Arlington County real estate assessments

\*Units of the same type may have different assessments.

https://propertysearch.arlingtonva.us/



The large Arlington model has the highest assessed value in Fairlington.

Countywide, for 2024, approximately 70 percent of residential property owners saw their assessed value increase while the rest remained unchanged or declined. Residential properties include condominiums, townhouses, and detached homes.

The county released the 2024 assessments in mid-January.

As it did last year, the Barcroft model led the way with an increase of 4.7 percent. Barcroft units are common in the apartment buildings in North Fairlington. Generally Barcrofts were assessed at \$482,500.

Fairlington's largest model, the Arlington, continued to lead the field in assessments, with a South Fairlington unit assessed at \$736,000. These rare units have 2145 square feet.

The large Dominion, with 1830 square feet, had the next highest assessments. A Dominion in South Fairlington was assessed at \$713,800, while another one came in at \$691,500.

The popular Clarendon I units, with 1500 square feet, generally showed no increase in assessments, with an assessed value of \$550,900.

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, 2022, through August 31, 2023.

Continued on page 15

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

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

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# Wakefield track team wins district championship



Wakefield girls and boys Liberty District Champions 2024. Photo by Betty Young.

The Wakefield high school coed indoor track teams both won the Liberty District Championships on February 2, capping a record-breaking performance.

Overall, Wakefield won five of the six relays at districts and set school records in four.

The five relay teams all move on to regional competition, with the girls 4×800m team currently ranked 6th in Virginia.

Several Fairlington residents took part in this exciting win. Senior Justin Diller competed in three events at districts (300m, high jump, and long jump) to finish off his last indoor track season after four years on the team.

Grace Armitage competed in triple jump, high jump, long jump, the 55m hurdles, 4x200m, and 300m. She

broke the school-record in the 55m hurdles and will be going to Regionals in all of her events.

Senior Addy Young will be going to regionals in the 4x800, 1600m, and 1000m, with season's bests in all her events. Indoor track regionals will be held on February 14 and 15 where many Wakefield athletes are hoping to move on to States!

—Addy Young



The teams take a victory lap with their new trophies. Photo by Zain Duffy.

### Letter to the Editor

Hello,

We are seeing that Fairlington will be significantly impacted by Alexandria's more vehicles / more vehicle trips diet (everything from the Lindsay Auto Group's major expansion along Quaker Lane to major in-fill redevelopment along King Street).

Arlington neighborhoods along Quaker Lane and King Street are low density residential and commercial and have not changed in many decades.

It is NOT ACCEPTABLE for our historic Fairlington neighborhoods to become de facto public open space

for Alexandria residents who live in recently in-filled formerly low-density neighborhoods in Alexandria.

Charles D. South Fairlington, Arlington VA

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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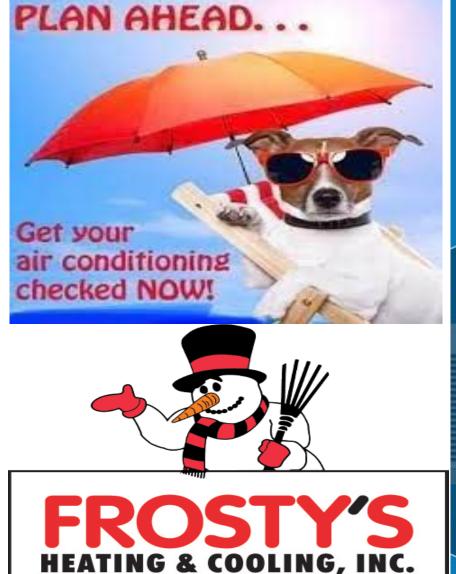
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# For the love of

# NATURE



# Working with Audubon At Home to build native gardens

Gardening in the winter usually involves thinking about what you want to do outside as soon as the weather starts getting warmer. One of the ways to plan what to do is to think about how to make your garden more attractive to local birds and other wildlife with the help of the Audubon At Home (AAH) Wildlife Sanctuary program.

The goal of AAH is to promote citizen participation in creating and conserving regional wildlife natural habitats and biodiversity

to create more areas of safe habitat for birds and other wildlife.

When you sign up on the AAH website, the program will contact you to schedule AAH Ambassadors- specially trained Master Gardeners or Master Naturalists—to come to your home to give you information to get you started. They do not charge for their home visits, and they provide a wealth of information and experience.

The AAH programs ask participants to take the Healthy Yard Pledge. Becoming a certified Wildlife Sanctuary includes foregoing the use of pesticides and fertilizers and reducing hazards for wildlife.

A visit includes observations and recommendations on the spot and is followed with an email message to the homeowner that makes suggestions for possible native plants, shrubs, and trees to add to the property.

In response to the AAH visit, Marsha Blakeway—a Master Gardener intern—began adding more native plants from local native plant sales to her flower beds around the edge of the patio: butterfly weed, swamp milkweed, purple coneflower, bee balm, and black-eyed susans.

She reported, "I noticed a definite increase in pollina-



A yard helped by the AAH program. Photo courtesy of mgnv.org.

tors—all kinds of bees, dragonflies, little wasps and butterflies toward the end of summer. I was very happy to see goldfinches eating the seeds of the coneflowers and hummingbirds coming to the coral honeysuckle growing on the garden wall!"

One goal of the AAH program is to encourage property owners and property managers to work toward having 70 percent of the property populated with native plants, shrubs, and trees.

Because it is often harder for renters to make big landscaping changes than it is for property owners, Marsha also received advice on how to work with the owner or the home owners association (HOA).

AAH Ambassador visits can be requested by going to the AAH website and signing up. It may take a while for an Ambassador to come—they are in high demand. As of April 2023, AAH has certified 988 properties on 8,542 acres in our region. In the meanwhile, you can also review other information on the AAH website; observe your property closely to find out what wildlife is already coming to visit; and plan for ways to add natives that attract wildlife to your garden.

Another great information resource is the Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia Website. There you will find more info on The Audubon At Home program, on native species (and harmful invasive species) and where you can go to see native plants in demonstration gardens in the area.

Best wishes for your gardening!

—Kirsten Conrad and Marsha Blakeway



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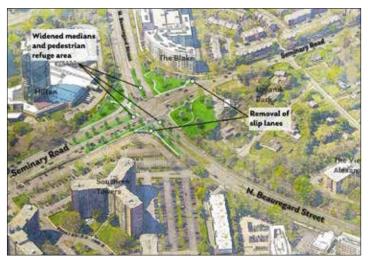


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#### Alexandria from page 5

Mayor Justin Wilson noted the significant presence of Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) in West Alex as a land use resource and suggested working with the state to explore options for "live/education" housing on the NOVA property. "I hope we will engage in more advanced conversations about what opportunities we might have both for them to use that property for them to grow what they are doing and for us to us achieve other community needs and amenities" he said.



The draft plan for West Alex includes potential changes to the intersection of N. Beauregard St. and Seminary Rd.

In discussing housing, staff indicated that they were focusing on both the condition of apartments and the desire to avoid tenant displacement. The proposed plan is expected to look at tools to retain affordability and stability in the housing market.

To foster additional affordable housing in West Alex, staff suggest more efficient use of parking lots and commercial space.

In looking at projected demographics in the area, staff stated that they do not see a need for additional schools to serve West Alex.

The final version of the plan is slated to come before the City Council for approval in September.

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

—Guy Land

#### Fairlington from page 7

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 example, in January a recently renovated Clarendon II in North Fairlington sold for \$601,100, but the 2024 assessment is \$516,900.

"The increase in residential property values for this year shows the continued attractiveness of our Arlington community, even as we adapt to changing realities," said county Manager Mark Schwartz. "The investment we make in our community from real estate tax revenue helps us to fund the county's high-quality programs and public services for our residents, visitors, and businesses."

Real estate taxes provide almost 60 percent of total county revenues. The county's real estate tax base is split between residential (55 percent) and commercial (45 percent) property assessments.

Commercial property values increased by 1.6 percent from the previous year. Existing office property values decreased by 11 percent due to continued pressure of office vacancy rates and changing demand for office space, but they were partially offset by new construction.

The apartment sector experienced strong growth, up almost 9.5 percent, boosted by significant new construction. General commercial (malls, retail stores, gas stations, commercial condos) property values showed slight declines in value, decreasing 2.4 percent, while hotel/motel properties increased 1.7 percent as their business has returned to pre-pandemic levels.

According to a county press release, Arlington is facing challenges in the FY 2025 budget due to the growth in expenses outpacing the growth in revenue. The commercial office market's high vacancy rate continues to impact revenue, while expense pressures include increasing costs for goods and services, higher interest rates, and wage growth.

The county board will hold a public hearing on real estate tax rates on April 4, 2024 at 7 p.m. The board will adopt the tax rate on April 20.

Appeals of residential assessments must be filed by March 1.

—Guy Land



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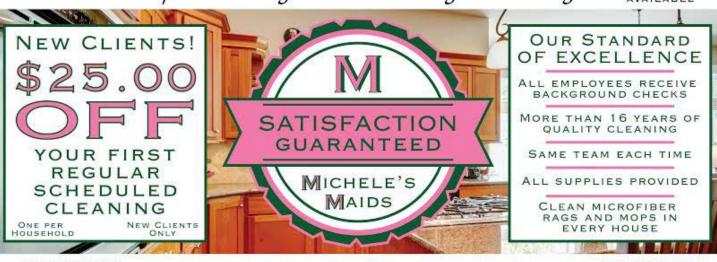
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# ABING School news



## A spring full of reading at Abingdon Elementary

We have had a busy and fun winter at Abingdon Elementary. This month we packed the cafeteria with families and neighbors for our first-ever BINGO night, skated under the stars at our Pentagon Row Winter Wonderland, and stuffed the library with books and fun items for our much-anticipated book fair week.

We'll cap off the month of March with a well-earned spring break and April 19th's popular Multicultural Night before finishing out the school year. Thanks to everyone who has supported our events and celebrations.



Families Gather for BINGO night. Photos courtesy of Maggie Bush.

# Thank you community sponsors! Local businesses have been instrumental in

Local businesses have been instrumental in supporting Abingdon families—and bringing serious fun—this school year.



Abingdon students enjoy a snow day by sledding down the hill behind the school.

We gratefully acknowledge our recent community sponsors including Duck Donuts, the Chrissy and Lisa Team, Ramparts, UnWined, Jeni's Ice Cream, Taco Bamba, Nighthawk Pizza and more. Our Spirit Night fundraiser at Taco Bamba generated more than \$400 to support Abingdon families.

Community sponsors' support directly benefits staff and students at our school, providing grant funding for classroom furniture and supplies, ensuring staff are recognized for their efforts and ensuring our

students have the resources they need to thrive.

—James Harlow

Did you know that Abingdon has welcomed refugee families for decades? According to newspaper reports at the time, more than 25 South Asian refugee children enrolled at Abingdon at the end of the Vietnam war. Thus began our long legacy of bringing together families from around the globe.

Abingdon School Dates

March 15—NO SCHOOL

March 25-29—SPRING BREAK





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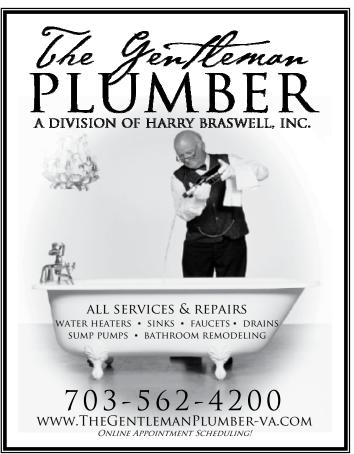
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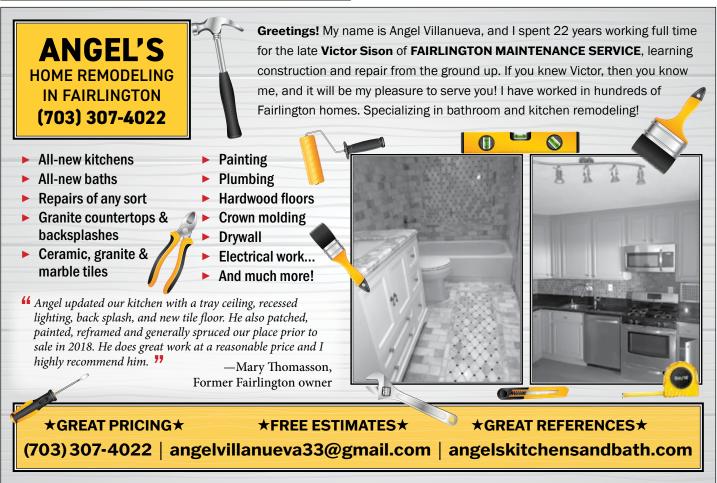












# neighborhood news

#### **Fairlington Diners**

The Fairlington Diners generally gather monthly for relaxed dinners nearby. We focus on having a good meal and an opportunity to chat with neighbors. In February, we enjoyed the weekend lunch specials at Duangrat's, one of our favorite Thai restaurants.

Here's what's planned for March:

Saturday, March 2, at 12 p.m., City Diner Restaurant, 5616 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041, Phone: 703-671-4108, https://citydiner-restaurant.com/. There's all-day breakfast and a varied menu of lunch and dinner fare. Parking is both in front of and behind the restaurant, on the right if headed west on Rt. 7.

Please call Carol at 703-379-6840 not later than 24 hours in advance if you plan to attend, and leave a voicemail if you don't reach her--include your name and how to contact you the day of the event, in case plans change.

If you want to receive a copy of these notices early in the previous month, send your email address to carol\_dabbs at yahoo.com.

### **Book Group**



Join the Fairlington Book Group in March to discuss *This Time Next Year We'll Be Laughing: a memoir*, by Jacqueline Winspear. We will meet Tuesday, March 26, at 7:30 p.m. in the Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St.

This memoir is the author's "personal account of her English childhood, including the harrowing stories and trauma of the second world war

on her grandparents and parents, and her young life living on farms around Kent." —Book Riot

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

#### Fairlington Moms' Club

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

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

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

#### Spring garden kickoff!

On Saturday, March 9, 10 a.m. -1 p.m. join Arlington Urban Agriculture for Plot Against Hunger's 2024 Spring Garden Kickoff! They will have terrific speakers on gardens and food pantries, seed and seedling giveaways, and garden tips. Plus a chance for gardeners to meet and mingle, information on how to participate in the Plot program, and more! This event is FREE to the public.

It will be held at Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy St., Arlington, VA.

Email Arlington Friends of Urban Agriculture: info@ arlingtonurbanag.org with any questions.

More information and registration: https://arlingtonurbanag.org/2024-spring-garden-kickoff/.

### Semi-annual free clothing swap

The 8th Semi-Annual Fairlington Free Clothing Swap is coming up on Saturday, April 13 from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. in the North Fairlington Community Center parking lot. (3005 S. Abingdon St.).

You do not need to donate to shop, but all donations of clothes, shoes and accessories for all ages and genders are welcome.

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## IS THERE A FIRE HAZARD IN YOUR LAUNDRY ROOM? Dryer vent

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



Enhance your community by volunteering for FCA activities.

#### **MINI-ADS INSTRUCTIONS**

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

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

Email: fca.fairlington.ads@gmail.com

**Mailing Address:** FCA-AFB, PO Box 6182, Arlington, VA 22206-0182. **Drop Box Location:** Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St.

Cost: 75 cents per word.

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