

all FAIRLINGTON BULLETIN



www.fca-fairlington.org

MAY 2015

Volume 41, Number 5

May 13 FCA board meeting to focus on neighbor-to-neighbor services

Inside this month!

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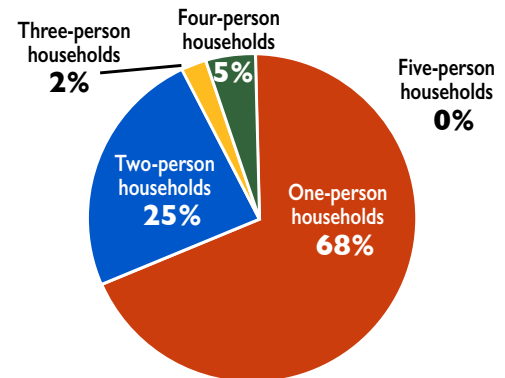
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Should the Fairlington community expand volunteer services to support neighbors who may need help with some household tasks or during times of stress? The FCA's Steering Committee on Intergenerational Strategies proposes to answer that question at the May 13 FCA meeting.

The committee's recommendations are based on results of a survey of residents, as well as information about local services and other neighborhood "village" models. A community forum in November informed Fairlington residents about these activities and sought feedback. The consensus was that now, while some neighbors have genuine needs but most do not need immediate help, the time is right for experimentation. The committee recommends a variety of pilot projects and support efforts that might be expanded as needs grow:

- The FCA should encourage individuals who need help now to join one of the existing local village organizations: Arlington Neighborhood Village (ANV) or At Home in Alexandria. These are significant community resources open to all in their jurisdictions. The FCA should sponsor a support group for those who join to share their experience and perhaps become the nucleus of a satellite village or affiliated "spoke" of ANV.
- The FCA should develop one or more Fairlington-wide experiments to promote neighbor-to-neighbor contact. A meeting space at the Fairlington Farmers Market, for example, would allow neighbors to stop and chat, learn about upcoming events and programs, and perhaps make their own arrangements for help. Other possible experiments might include an online bulletin board, perhaps as part of the FCA website, where residents could post help-wanted notices or contractor reviews.
- The FCA should publicize services open to Fairlington residents, especially seniors. A forum or lecture series could feature speakers from Arlington



In Fairlington, people living alone account for more than two-thirds of the households expecting to need some help from neighbors in the next 2-3 years.

Continued on page 5

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.

May 13 preliminary agenda:

Special presentation: Discussion of the recommendations of the intergenerational strategies working group, led by Carol Rosen and Margaret Windus.

Regular Board business:

- Approval of April minutes
- Officer reports
- Committee reports
- Unfinished business
- New business

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 Global Thinking, Alexandria, VA, www.globalthinking.com.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Police, Alexandria (non-emergency)	703-838-4444
Police, Arlington (non-emergency)	703-558-2222
Animal Warden	703-931-9241
Dominion (power outages)	888-667-3000
Fairlington Community Center	703-228-6588
Metrobus Complaints	703-228-7929
Miss Utility	811
Pothole Patrol Hotline	703-228-6485
Shirlington Library	703-228-6545
Street Light Hotline	703-228-6511
www.arlingtonva.us/departments/Environmental	
Services/dot/traffic/streetlights/index.htm	
Helicopter Noise Complaints	Bob Laser (FAA)
	bob.laser@faa.gov

Fairlington Citizens Association

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571-403-1943 • president@fca-fairlington.org

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6 PM, **10th of month** preceding publication month for commercial advertising, mini-ads, and editorial copy.

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FCA Calendar

FCA monthly meeting

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

North Fairlington yard sale

Saturday, May 2, 8 am – 12 pm
3005 S. Abingdon St.

Spring nature walk

Saturday, May 2, 11 am
3001 S. Abingdon St.

Farmers market grand opening

Sunday, May 3, 9 am – 1 pm
Back of FCC, 3308 S. Stafford St.

Fairlington Diners

Thursday, May 14, 6:30 pm
Tempo Restaurant
4231 Duke St., Alexandria

Home and garden tour

Saturday, May 16, 11 am – 3 pm
3005 S. Abingdon St.

Book Group

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

Fairlington Diners

Wednesday, May 27, 6:30 pm
Ramparts Restaurant
1700 Fern St., Alexandria



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Now that the cold winter has finally released its grip, it's time to get out and enjoy the neighborhood. FCA is helping you do that through a variety of activities this spring.

I hope you were among the hundreds that ran through North and South Fairlington in our popular 5K last month. Special kudos to Joe Reed and Joe Hartman for awesome efforts in making this so successful. Joe Reed may be a great PE teacher at Abingdon, but I'm convinced his real talent is producing ambitious events!

This month gives you more opportunities to get out and experience our community. May 2 offers great bargains at North Fairlington's community-wide yard sale. That same day, you can also learn more about Fairlington's trees and plants on our annual spring nature tour.

Fairlington has a great group of Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, and TreeStewards, plus the considerable resources of the Virginia Cooperative Extension office in the Fairlington Community Center. Anne Wilson, Emily Ferguson, and Carol Rosen—all of them either Master Gardeners or TreeStewards—are coordinating the plant tour, the highlight of which will be a visit to our newly designated Notable Tree, a white oak on Abingdon St.

We also help satisfy your interest in plants through Bill Sullivan's monthly patio landscaping column. This spring we've augmented that with Rebecca Carpenter's "Fairlington Farmer" column, a practical guide to growing veggies on your patio.

And after you've spent a Saturday working with plants, take a walk Sunday morning over to the farmers market—yes, walk, don't drive. The market is now open every Sunday morning behind the Fairlington Community Center. After a "soft" opening in mid-April, the official grand opening is May 3. That would be an ideal time to see for yourself what the excitement is all about.

Then on May 16 take a look at some of your neighbors' interior renovations on the Historical Society's Home and Garden Tour. This is another chance to explore both North and South Fairlington.

While it's not related to FCA, on Memorial Day weekend, wave your flag from the Abingdon Street bridge as Rolling Thunder's motorcycles pass underneath. It's a moving experience.

So there's plenty to do outside in Fairlington this month. Maybe that will help make February's cold and snow a distant, if painful, memory.

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



Don't miss the Fairlington Farmers Market Grand Opening!

Plan now to attend the grand opening of the Fairlington Farmers Market, Sunday, May 3 starting at 9 am at the FCC. Be there for the official celebration of this new neighborhood institution.

Some images in this publication may be digitally enhanced.

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Fairlington.com
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Rare Buckingham

Farmers market sets May 3 grand opening

The Fairlington Farmers Market is up and running, and thanks to all the many neighbors and friends who have already come to shop, it's proving to be a great success!



On May 3 the market will continue the festivities with a grand opening featuring Arlington County officials and staff, community leaders, market sponsors, and key volunteers. The celebration will recognize the dozens of individuals and organizations that have helped make our community market a reality. They will receive a tour of the market, have an opportunity to meet the vendors, and get the chance to connect with market shoppers. We hope you'll join us in welcoming them and thanking them for their support.

Since the last *All Fairlington Bulletin*, two new vendors have signed on with the market: Mama's Donut Bites, which specializes in mini-donuts made hot and fresh to order, and District Cheese, owned and operated by Kevin Miller, our own Fairlington neighbor. May 3 will also bring our flower vendor, Good Gardener, whose flowers are happy that spring is finally here. Visit our website and follow us on Facebook and Twitter to learn more about each of our 13 vendors. Better yet, visit the market and talk to them in person. Market hours are 9 am to 1 pm every Sunday.

We are recruiting volunteers for market-day shifts and other opportunities. You can sign up at www.fairlingtonfarmersmarket.org/get-involved or email volunteer@fairlingtonfarmersmarket.org.

The market committee recognizes the sponsors that have made significant financial donations to underwrite market costs. The 2015 sponsors are Jennifir Birtwhistle with Weichert Realtors, the home remodeling company GMG Services Corporation, and For Pets' Sake, a dog and cat grooming business. We encourage you to support them.

Check out the market's Facebook page or visit the website to receive our weekly newsletter and stay current with market offerings and special events. See you at the market!

—Melissa Beene

Reminder on getting to the market

Customers who live less than half a mile from the market are encouraged to walk to the market rather than drive. If you drive, please be a good neighbor and avoid parking directly in front of the residences across from the community center. Street parking is available along S. Utah St., 32nd St., in the community center parking lot, and along Quaker Lane.

FCA board meeting, continued from page 1

and Alexandria governments, local villages, hospitals, and local vendors, for example, to describe the array of services already available.

- Fairlington condominium boards should sponsor experiments that will encourage neighbor-to-neighbor support within their own neighborhoods. For example, an association might survey members to identify households that would like a check-in call in a snow emergency or power disruption. A "To Call" list could be created of volunteers who are willing to pick up prescriptions or food when a neighbor is sick.

The committee urges the FCA and condo associations to give special attention to the needs of neighbors living alone—both young and old—in times of emergency, inconvenience, or illness. More than two-thirds of the survey respondents who expected to need help from neighbors in the next two to three years were in single-person households; only half of that group was over 55. More information on survey results and the committee's research on village models is available in the Issues area of the FCA website (www.fca-fairlington.org).

—Carol Rosen and Margaret Windus

Here's the plan...



Vice President Kent Duffy makes a point at the April FCA meeting while Board member Gretchen Fallon listens. Photo by Guy Land.

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May 16 home tour to feature renovated units



The 2015 Fairlington Home and Garden Tour, sponsored by the Fairlington Historical Society, will soon be here! This year's tour will be held on May 16 from 11 am to 3 pm.

Please join us for this wonderful popular event. In addition to showcasing the community's architecture, grounds, and the unique character of each of our

neighborhoods, this year's tour will feature a wonderful group of homes and gardens with renovated kitchens and bathrooms and beautiful décor.

If you have returned the ticket order form from last month's *All Fairlington Bulletin*, you can pick up your tickets, or purchase additional tickets, at the Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St., on Friday, May 1, from 6 – 8 pm. Tickets may also be picked up or purchased at the Fairlington Yard Sale at the North Fairlington Community Center, 3005 S. Abingdon St., on Saturday, May 2, from 8 – 11 am, or at the North Fairlington Community Center starting at 10 am on the morning of the tour.

If you'd like to help with the tour, we are still seeking more home sitters to guide tour participants through our featured homes. Shifts last just 2 ½ hours, so home sitters can tour the other homes. If interested in volunteering, please email us at FairlingtonTour2015@gmail.com.

FINS registration begins May 1



Build your child's confidence and comfort in the water while reviewing some basic water safety and stroke skills with FINS (Fairlingtonians Interested in Neighborhood Swimming). The FINS program is a regular summer fixture in Fairlington

and is a fun way for kids to strengthen swim skills. It also encourages camaraderie and good sportsmanship.

FINS runs for three weeks from July 13 to 31, and consists of four 40-minute lessons Monday through Thursday and one fun group swim meet each Friday. The program rotates weekly between three different condominium association pools in South Fairlington. Lessons are meant to supplement, not replace, swimming instruction programs; lifeguard-certified instructors encourage young kids to enjoy swimming, take turns in lap lanes, and play water games safely.



Important pool safety and capability concepts, like treading water, front and back floating, lap lane protocols, straight-leg kicking, and swimming with faces submerged are taught; proper stroke techniques are introduced to stronger and older swimmers.

The cost for the three-week summer session and end-of-season party is \$60 per child. The program is open to children five to ten years of age (rising kindergarten through graduating fifth grade). To request a registration form for the July 2015 program or to ask additional questions, email fairlingtonfins.swim@gmail.com. Registration for returning participants and age-related siblings will be May 1 to 15. Registration for new participants will be May 16 to 30. If the number of registrations exceeds open slots, participants will be selected by a random lottery in June.

—Jeni Hornback and Melania Saraniero, FINS Co-Coordiators

Find bargains at North Fairlington yard sale, May 2



Andi Dies, Patti Covington, and Nancy Kozlowski visit at last spring's North Fairlington yard sale. Photo by Guy Land.

Whether you're looking to find gently used children's clothing or gardening tools, or you are ready to do some spring cleaning of your own, don't miss the North Fairlington Spring Yard Sale, Saturday, May 2, 8 am to noon, at the Fairlington Villages

Community Center parking lot at 3005 S. Abingdon St. Spaces are \$10 each and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Residents of both North and South Fairlington are invited to participate and sell their wares. For more information, email activities@fairlingtonvillages.com.



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Gateway developer details new changes in store for proposed King Street project in Alexandria

At the April FCA meeting, Abramson Properties, developer of the proposed Alexandria Gateway project, presented changes to their plans for a mixed-use development at 4600 King St. in Alexandria. Plans provide for a multi-story apartment building, grocery store, commercial office space, and retail and restaurant space. Recent changes include the addition of the parcel of land at the corner of King and Beauregard Streets, and replacing plans for a hotel facility with commercial office space.

Danny Abramson, co-owner of Abramson Properties, briefed local residents on the developer's plans to downsize some of the original concepts from earlier designs that originally included a 14-story apartment building and a hotel. While Abramson said that they have not yet determined the final number of floors for the apartment building, "It will be substantially less than 14 stories." Designs for the new building, he remarked, will be "more modest."

Abramson also stated that plans for a 144-room hotel were scrapped after a market study revealed that a hotel at that location could not be supported. New designs now replace the hotel with a five-story office building. Rising construction costs were also cited as one of the reasons to downsize the scale of the plans.



FCA Treasurer Ed Hilz talks with Danny Abramson, co-owner of Abramson Properties, about the proposed development at Beauregard and King Streets. Photo by Gretchen Fallon.

Last year the City of Alexandria staff expressed concern that the developer's initial designs excluded the existing small strip of businesses on the corner that currently include a deli and check cashing store. The city wanted to see a more integrated and cohesive design that



Fairlington Glen President Jay Yianilos and Vice President Susan Hunchar visit at the April FCA meeting. Photo by Gretchen Fallon.

included that parcel. Progress on the project was put on hold until early January when Abramson and the owner of the corner property were able to work out an agreement to include that land in the design. Abramson said that the new design will use this land for additional retail and parking facilities.

In addition, a Harris Teeter grocery store has signed on to the project with plans for a 62,000 square foot store, one of the largest in its urban models. The grocery store will be located below the apartment building and will include a three-story underground parking facility.

Drawings reflecting the new design changes were not on display at the meeting, as Abramson noted they are still conducting studies and meeting with the city to work on finalizing plans. But, he said, the idea is to create an urban center with green space, pedestrian walkways, restaurants, residences, and businesses, in "sort of a Shirlington style."

Abramson is working closely with the city's planning commission in developing the new design. According to Pat Escher, Principal Planner with the City of Alexandria, the city wants to take a fresh look at the plans and come back to the public with a quality plan that meets with the public's approval.

Abramson expects to submit final plans to the city's planning and zoning commission sometime this fall, at which time the drawings will be posted on the city's website and the project will be open for public review and comment. If approved, the plan then moves to Alexandria's City

Continued on page 13



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Historic white oak in Fairlington recognized as notable



Newly designated notable white oak on Abingdon St.
Photo by B. Berti.

In Fairlington, neighbors come and neighbors go, but one constant is the stately and beautiful trees that line our streets. One in particular, a white oak located at 3059 S. Abingdon St. in Fairlington Villages, has been around perhaps the longest of all. On March 27, Arlington County's Beautification Committee approved this tree to be among the county's notable trees.

The tree's recent recognition is thanks to the work of Fairlington resident, Tree Steward, and Master Naturalist Emily Ferguson, who researched the history of this tree and submitted the nomination to the county's Notable Tree Program in 2014. Notable trees are selected on the basis of their size and/or age, their species, historical interest, or significance to the neighborhood.

While the exact age of the tree is not known, Ferguson speculates that the tree "may have been a tiny sapling as early as 1861, when civil war defenses were built to protect the road to Washington."

They do know that the tree was planted long before Fairlington was built, as "the wide-spreading shape of the tree indicates that it did not grow up between the Fairlington buildings," Ferguson notes in the tree's nomination documents. Trees that grow in a forest or in a more confined space often grow straight up as they reach to

the top of the canopy for sunlight.

If the white oak wasn't around during the time of Fort Reynolds and Battery Garésche, then, according to Ferguson, it likely was a witness to when the land was used as a horse farm and later rented to share croppers before being developed by the National Defense Homes Corporation during World War II. The majestic oak has survived many harsh winters, both the "Snowmageddon" and the microburst of 2010, and the "Derecho" in June 2012, and it still stands proud.

—Janis Johnston

Meet your new notable tree on May 2

Fairlington's spring nature walk will focus on trees in North Fairlington, especially the newly honored, notably magnificent oak at 3059 S. Abingdon St. Emily Ferguson, who was instrumental in winning recognition for this tree, will lead the walk with Master Gardener Carol Rosen. If the official county Notable Tree recognition plaque is available by that time, the walk will officially unveil it.

The walk will also visit other legacy trees in the area and consider the special care they receive, as well as some problems they pose for nearby buildings and turf. Participants will get a copy of the new tree canopy map of Fairlington/Shirlington and learn about efforts underway to plant new succession trees to keep Fairlington green as our legacy trees age.

Join us on Saturday, May 2, from 11 am to about noon. The walk begins in front of the Fairlington Villages management office at 3001 S. Abingdon St.

County tree fund helps maintain Fairlington canopy

Fairlington's tree canopy is being replenished, thanks to trees provided by Arlington's Tree Canopy Fund. Administered by Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment and the Arlington County Urban Forestry Commission, the fund provides grants to individuals and community groups to plant and maintain trees on private property.

Last fall Fairlington received 19 trees through the fund—17 of those in Fairlington Villages and two in Fairlington Arbor. This continues a recent tradition of Fairlington's canopy being improved by trees provided through the fund.

Mark Johnson, Operations Manager for Fairlington Villages, notes the importance of the fund. "The tree canopy program is vital to helping us restore the tree canopy in Fairlington. Without the program, we would not be able to replace most of these trees without significantly increasing our annual tree budget."

According to Johnson, these trees were 75 percent of the total number of trees that the condo association planted last year.

—Guy Land

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Council for final approval. After that, the site plan review process could take another six to eight months or more, after which the developer then needs to apply for a building permit. If there are no further delays, construction could begin as early as mid-2016 and is expected to last through 2018.

Residents' concerns at the meeting were predominantly about the increased traffic at the intersection and the potential disruption construction may cause in the area. Abramson explained that the main entrance to the development will be off of Beauregard St. Vehicle traffic from King St. will be limited to eastbound traffic only turning right into the development or exiting right onto eastbound King St. A new median strip planned for King St. at that location will block any traffic turning west onto King. Drivers wanting to travel west on King will need to exit the Gateway complex from Beauregard.

Changes to King Street intersection

In preparation for the new development on the corner, the City of Alexandria has approved a plan to make improvements to the intersection of King and Beauregard Streets that include improving the sidewalks along

King St. with a 10-foot wide, multi-use path for bikes and pedestrian traffic. According to Bob Garbacz of the Alexandria Department of Transportation, King St. is keeping the same two lanes, but the city is "building in better pedestrian amenities."

...the idea is to create an urban center with green space, pedestrian walkways, restaurants, residences, and businesses, in "sort of a Shirlington style."

The plan also calls for creating additional left turn lanes off King Street going in the east and west directions, and eliminating the right turn slip lane going west on King. In addition to the new median strip, the city will install improved pedestrian signals at the intersections.

Work on these improvements was scheduled to start this spring, however, as reported in the December issue of the *All Fairlington Bulletin*, the relocation of utility lines at this location has delayed this project. Garbacz noted that work on the utilities won't begin until sometime this summer. According to earlier reports, the project is expected to take up to two years to complete.

—Janis Johnston

Small changes planned for Alexandria traffic patterns

Most Fairlington residents have already seen the improvements the City of Alexandria has made to the intersection of S. Taylor and King Streets, with new stop lights controlling the traffic along the service road. Thanks in part to the contribution made by Safeway as part of their building permit, the intersection now has improved pedestrian signals and proper stop and go signals exiting the Bradlee Shopping Center and at the service road parallel to King St.

In addition, small changes are underway for traffic patterns impacting the King St., Quaker Ln., and Braddock Rd. intersection. While the City of Alexandria has tabled any major improvement plans for the intersection due to budget restrictions, Bob Garbacz



Alexandria Transportation Division Chief Bob Garbacz talks with Fairlington Glen resident Alan Bow about the intersection of Quaker Lane and S. 36th St. Photo by Guy Land.

of the Alexandria Department of Transportation, announced that access to the service road that runs by the gas station and the Safeway store will be restricted. The city will be closing off the entrance onto the service road from Quaker Ln. and drivers will either have to access the service road from King St. and S. Taylor St. or enter off of Braddock Road.

Concern continues to focus on the safety at the intersection of S. 36th St. and Quaker Ln.

While it appears that there is an impasse between the city and some Fairlington residents on what to do to create a safer experience for drivers turning left onto Quaker Ln., Garbacz invited residents to create a working group to address solutions to the problem.

Fairlington 5K: A true community event

Sunny skies and mild temps helped draw a large and enthusiastic crowd to this year's Fairlington 5K. More than 600 runners, scores of encouraging spectators, and dozens of sponsors made the race a huge success. And once runners had completed the course, they could enjoy the activities of Abingdon Elementary's spring festival. The event was jointly sponsored by the FCA and Abingdon Elementary.

Proceeds from the race will be donated to Abingdon Elementary and to A Cure for Ellie, the foundation for Ellie McGinn. A resident of South Fairlington and a student at Abingdon, Ellie has been diagnosed with a mitochondrial disease for which there currently is no cure. But that didn't stop her from triumphantly crossing the finish line.

Reflecting the fact that it is a community-wide event, the race course ran through North and South Fairlington. Last year's winner, Hans Samaniego, took the top spot again this year. Hans is a North Fairlington resident.

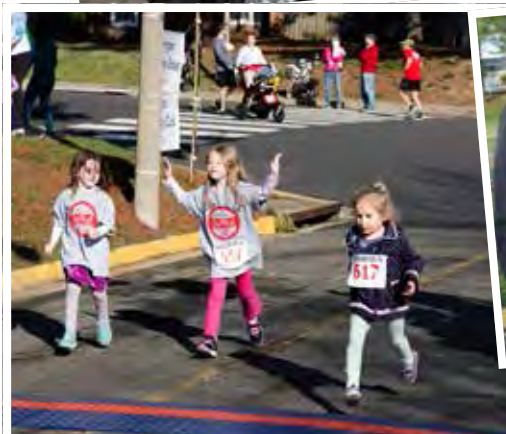
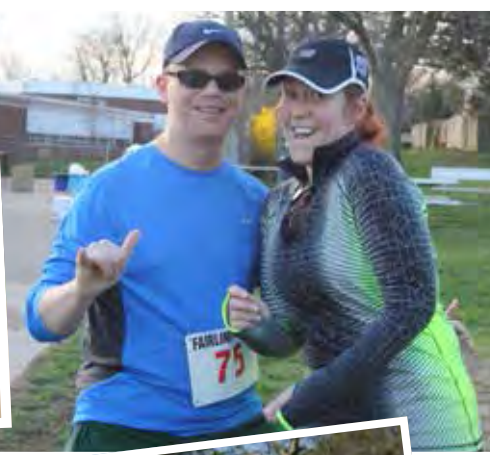
No doubt attracted by the sound of the word "race," one of the runners was a greyhound, proving that the Fairlington 5K is truly an event for all of Fairlington's residents.

The race was coordinated by Abingdon physical education teacher Joe Reed (who lives in South Fairlington) and FCA Board member Joe Hartman (who lives in Fairlington Court). Key assistance was also provided by the Abingdon Elementary PTA and Principal Joanne Uyeda.

The number of sponsors this year was significantly greater than last year. A list of major sponsors will appear in the June issue of the *All Fairlington Bulletin*.

—Guy Land





Photos by Guy Land, Gretchen Fallon, Mark Jones, Kendra Best, and Suzanna Smith.

Kitchen Remodeling
Bathroom Remodeling
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— Rick Micker, Former Fairlington Condo VP

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Silent auction raises big bucks

The 5K's first-ever silent auction raised over \$5,000 to benefit Abingdon Elementary and A Cure for Ellie. The auction featured a wide range of choices, from Nats tickets to gift baskets to an American Girl doll to dinner with Arlington County Board members. The highest item auctioned off was "principal for a day," with the successful bidder paying over \$250 for the chance to be in charge of Abingdon for a day.

"We had a great, steady crowd throughout the night," said 5K coordinator Joe Reed. "This was our first one,

and I think next year will be bigger and better, just like the 5K race itself."

Special thanks for overall auction coordination to Joe Reed and to Abingdon teachers Kim Kerby and Erin Sonn and the McGinn family, who helped organize the logistics of the auction. And thanks to Fairlington residents, who know a good deal when they see one!

—Guy Land



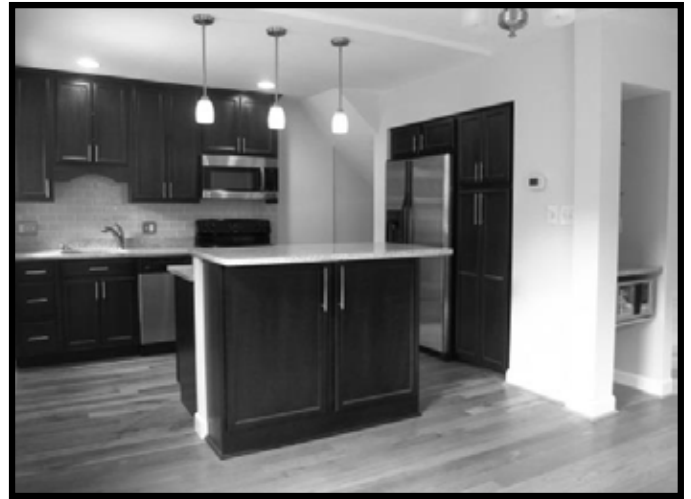
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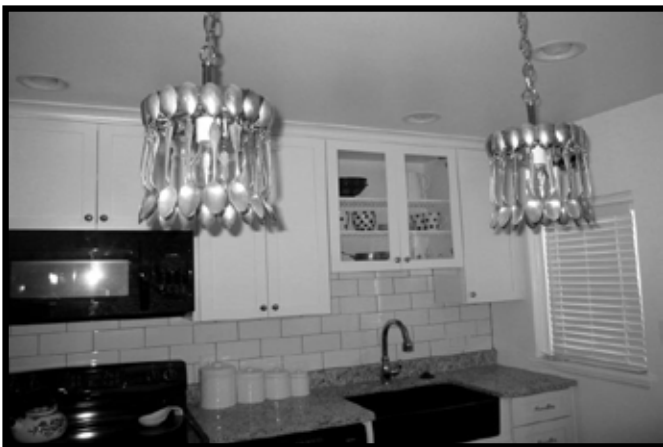
Fairlington Home & Garden Tour

Saturday, May 16, 2015 from 11:00 - 3:00

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The Fairlington Farmer: What to do now for a summer full of veggies

In the last Fairlington Farmer, we covered preliminary veggie garden prep. Now we're ready to plant! Follow these simple tips now and you'll have a bountiful harvest all summer:

1. **WHEN:** Plants are seasonal—early-season (spinach, peas), main-season (tomatoes, peppers), and late-season (pumpkins, yams)—so a few simple tools help us know what to plant when: Mother Earth News' Garden Planner lists planting and harvesting dates, and the USDA Plant Hardiness Map shows climate zones across the country. (FYI, Fairlington is in Zone 7b.) Our last frost date was early April, so now is the time to plant those main-season veggies!
2. **WHAT:** Rather than telling you what to plant, I'd ask: What do you like to eat? Love melons? Plant them! Hate beans? Don't plant them! It's that simple. A few other considerations: Do you want a continual harvest (peppers, squash), or a single harvest (carrots, garlic)? Have space to grow vertically? Choose vining plants (beans, cucumbers). No in-ground space? Choose container plants (cherry tomatoes, herbs). Read plant descriptions for specifics and choose what's right for your space.
3. **WHERE:** Our gardening space is limited in Fairlington, but I think our capacity for growth is limited only by our imaginations, so I tuck veggies in wherever I can. (The formal name for this is "intensive gardening.") Because our soil is dense with clay, containers and raised beds are great options. Containers are mobile, inexpensive, and easy—you just need good soil (I use organic Gardener's Gold Potting Soil), and a good container (at least 18" diameter and depth, with drainage holes). Raised beds work well as borders to our patios, because the fences provide wind and erosion protection as well as support for trellises. I recommend either cedar or stone to build raised beds, and they can be installed in a weekend. Just be sure your space gets at least eight hours of direct sunlight if you want lots of veggies.
4. **HOW:** Amend the soil by tilling with a cultivator or hoe, and mix in compost and soil builder. This is an important step, because organic matter creates a more nutrient-rich and appropriately-textured soil. (I use organic Bumper Crop Soil Builder and Lobster Compost.)



Melons growing in my little Fairlington Farm last summer. Photo by Rebecca Carpenter.

Place your seeds or seedlings into small holes according to the label instructions, then fill in the holes and give a good watering. Your plants may wilt at first, but this is normal—they'll perk up with some water. Install any trellises or support they'll need later. Stagger your planting over the course of a month—this succession planting will extend your harvest so you're not inundated with 100 tomatoes on a single day!

Now your hard work is done! Just monitor the rain, and supplement

with morning watering (veggies need about an inch of water per week). And keep a garden record—it will help you repeat the successes (and hopefully avoid the mistakes) from season to season. Spend time in your garden, watch your veggies grow, enjoy the process, and remember: Gardening is cheaper than therapy, and you get tomatoes.

—Rebecca Carpenter, Master Gardener
www.SproutKitchenGardens.com
Rebecca@SproutKitchenGardens.com

Do you want to become a Master Gardener?

You too can become a master of your own garden—and classes are held right here at the Fairlington Community Center.

Offered by the Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE), Arlington County Office, in partnership with the City of Alexandria, the VCE Master Gardener program trains participants in practical gardening and landscaping techniques that preserve and sustain the environment.

For more information about training or becoming a Master Gardener, please contact the Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Horticulture Help Desk at 703-228-6414; via email mgarlalex@gmail.com; or visit them at 3308 S. Stafford St., Arlington.

More information about the 2015 program will be available this spring.



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neighborhood news

Fairlington Diners

The Fairlington Diners 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 April, we made our first visit to Idylwood Grill, enjoying an excellent meal—we think we'll be back!

Here's what's planned for May:

Thursday, May 14, 6:30 pm, Tempo Restaurant, 4231 Duke St., Alexandria, www.temprestaurant.com. Nestled in the West End, Tempo is one of Alexandria's best-kept secrets. This elegant, but unpretentious, neighborhood restaurant is where the locals dine. Tempo's menu displays a blend of northern Italian and French cuisine, featuring fresh seafood.

Wednesday, May 27, 6:30 pm, Ramparts Restaurant, 1700 Fern St., Alexandria, 703-998-6616, www.rampartstavern.com. This is a local favorite that we visit frequently. For a change, we'll visit on Wednesday, which is wings night, with a wide variety of sauces offered. 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 an email to carol_dabbs@yahoo.com.

Book Group

Join the Fairlington Book Group in May to discuss *Profiles in Courage* by John F. Kennedy.

Written by the then-junior senator from Massachusetts, *Profiles in Courage* went on to win the Pulitzer Prize for Biography in 1957. The book presents historical profiles of eight US Senators, including John Quincy Adams, Sam Houston, and Robert A. Taft, who "defied the opinions of their party and constituents to do what they felt was right and suffered severe criticism and losses in popularity because of their actions" (per Wikipedia).

The Book Group welcomes first-time visitors and drop-

ins. No commitments required! If you're into biographies, join us in May, no strings attached.

We are meeting on Tuesday, May 26, at 7:30 pm in the Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St. We hope you'll join us.

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 the coordinators, Danielle Bloom and Monica Ekman, at fairlington.babysitting@gmail.com to request more information and an application.

MOMS Club of Arlington-Fairlington

Members (and their children) of the MOMS Club of Arlington-Fairlington VA© chapter of the International MOMS Club participate in fun activities, service projects, Parents' Night Out, meetings with interesting speakers, and group activities such as our walking, dinner, and book clubs. Our weekly age-specific playgroups start as young as birth and go up to 3+ years old.

The MOMS Club meets monthly for general meetings. Please contact fairlingtonmomsclub@gmail.com for meeting and membership information. Parents and parents-to-be are welcome to join us, and children are always welcome. For more information about the club visit www.fairlingtonmomsclub.com. Annual dues of \$25 support our club activities and charitable projects.

Card players welcome

Join your Fairlington neighbors for a friendly game of Canasta. No previous experience is necessary to enjoy this card game. We are happy to teach you. The group meets Tuesday mornings at a local church hall near Fairlington. Call Carol Ann at 703-931-8533.



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SOLs: How Abingdon prepares students for standardized testing

“Standards of Learning,” or SOLs, have garnered national attention lately—alongside Common Core and No Child Left Behind (NCLB)—as part of a growing discussion on how to measure and assess progress in our public schools. SOLs in Virginia reflect the critical benchmark objectives and corresponding standardized assessments in reading, math, and content from third grade on. SOLs indicate what teachers are supposed to teach, but not how to teach it. While SOL tests are standardized across the state, pedagogy varies from school to school, depending on resources, professional development, and each school’s focus.

There has been much press lately spotlighting criticism of standardized testing. Some assert that SOLs are not the most effective way to gauge a school’s success, teacher accountability, or authentic student learning. Many also decry testing, highlighting that the preparation for and administration of the exams usurp valuable instructional time, and that tests aren’t developmentally appropriate for all learners, particularly students with limited English proficiency or cognitive disabilities.

A recent *Time* magazine article by Haley Sweetland Edwards featured Mr. Tosiello’s science class at Abingdon. In the article, Edwards points to the current discussions in Congress to revise or repeal NCLB in favor of more authentic and individualized assessments, while lifting sanctions for failing schools. She says, “At stake in this decision is



Face painting was a popular activity at the Abingdon Spring Festival. Photo by Guy Land.

not only the future of standardized testing and federal accountability measures in the country, but also how American classrooms will look and feel in the next decade.”

At Abingdon, teachers take the standards and craft masterful lessons that engage students’ multiple intelligences (e.g., linguistic, mathematical, spatial, kinesthetic, etc.) Through arts and technology integration, our teachers empower students with knowledge, critical thinking, problem solving skills, and authentic learning experiences so they will become enlightened citizens of the 21st century.

SOL testing time comes around each spring in late May and early June. Instead of “teaching to the test,” Abingdon teachers are confident that if they’ve taught the content well, students will naturally succeed on the assessments. Of course, there is some test-specific instruction that

goes on to make sure students are comfortable with the process of taking these online tests. The Virginia Department of Education offers released practice tests, which teachers guide students through. Luckily, our students are so tech savvy that navigating an online test is second nature for them.

While we await the fate of standardized testing, Abingdon’s talented staff will continue to teach using instructional best practices and look forward to our students succeeding on the upcoming SOLs.

—Erin Sonn

May calendar

May 4-8: Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week

May 19: PTA meeting

May 25: Memorial Day holiday (no school)

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DOWN TO EARTH patio gardening



Time to spring into bloom

The winds have calmed. The sun is out. You're in a T-shirt, staring at a patio garden neglected by months of snow, sleet, and chilly temperatures. How do you transform this dormant clutter into a viable, colorful landscape?

The project may depend on when you want the transformation. Different plants arrive at the local nurseries at various times, depending on when the growers ship them to the east coast from Oregon, North Carolina, and points south. Aside from the River Birch, Birch trees, for instance, aren't sent to nurseries below the Mason-Dixon Line since the climate here is too hot.

March (if weather permits) and April are good "prep" months. By May 1, a nursery's inventory is complete. And the annual flowers (impatiens, begonia, marigold, and vinca) usually are in by the third week in April.

Let's get moving...

If you have a shady area, consider a **carolina jessamine** vine, evergreen with bugle-shaped yellow flowers dotting the flimsy leaders. It is attached to a wooden trellis (at the nursery) but comes with a sizeable root ball for a planting hole. Situate the plant in a shady corner at the fence. In time, the leaders will extend and can be threaded between the fence slats. Vines are espaliered and take up little garden space—key for Fairlington patios, which are tiny unless you live in an Arlington or Dominion unit.



Carolina Jessamine.

A popular plant of the last 8-to-10 years is the **azalea 'encore.'** Why? Because for decades, gardeners would say, "I love the azalea, but it blooms for two weeks in April and then is just green leaves the rest of the year." So botanists developed this hybrid which blooms intermittently from April into December. I once saw an 'encore' in full bloom on December 10 in a Fairlington patio. The 'encore' takes sun and some shade and is roundish in shape. So, anywhere you have open space would accommodate this plant.

Phlox is a colorful perennial ground cover. It's dazzling with pastel pink and lavender flowers in early spring and summer—just the tonic after four blustery months of indoor living. It is mounded and only six inches wide with a similar height. This plant needs sun.

Like yellow? Have an open corner? Then plant a **forsythia**. It will grow six feet tall with a similar spread. It has a wild habit but in March/April, its meandering branches are filled with lemon-yellow flowers. Come May, kelly-green leaves emerge and cling to the knobby, beige-colored branches until late November.

If you want to keep matters simple, plant **liriope**, a flowering ground cover perennial. Liriope had a very rough winter here, with its leaves becoming brown and unsightly. But the new plants at the nursery are lush green and its habit isn't thick and cluttered. Stick these in the ground in a sunny or shady area. They are the perfect accent or border plant in a landscape. And in late July through August, it bears purple or white flowers on thin stems above the foliage.

—Bill Sullivan
www.sullivanlandscaping.net

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Doing the King Street hustle

Earlier this year, a few Fairlington residents noted having some difficulty crossing King St. on foot at the zebra-stripe crosswalks at S. Taylor St. and at S. Wakefield St. Pedestrians were concerned primarily about the time allowed by the signal lights to get across King—"Not enough!" was the consensus. FCA board members who tested the walk across King at both spots reported being able to make it—sometimes just barely, but always with a wary eye on the lineup of cars stopped at the red light. There's "no dilly dallying," said one. Another worried about pedestrians who might be pushing a stroller, burdened by grocery bags, or just not fleet of foot.

Also, two of the four walk signals at S. Wakefield lacked the helpful seconds-remaining countdown feature. An ancillary issue involved the crosswalk pavement markings—a few residents asked that the zebra stripes be repainted to make them more visible.

To address the walkers' concerns, FCA Treasurer Ed Hilz contacted Bob Garbacz, chief of Alexandria's transportation division. Garbacz referred the inquiry to his staff, asking whether it would be possible to adjust the walk signals to allow more time for pedestrians to safely cross King. (To remind, King St. lies in the City of Alexandria, as does Quaker Ln., the other southern boundary street

for Fairlington.

A city traffic engineer examined the pedestrian signals for the two intersections and agreed to adjust the time. Additionally, two of the walk signals at King/Wakefield were replaced to provide a countdown display. Now, all King St. walk signals at S. Taylor and at S. Wakefield have the countdown feature, and the walk signal time has been increased: at S. Wakefield, to 23 seconds (four for the white graphic and 19 for the countdown), and at S. Taylor, to 25 seconds (four for the white graphic and 21 for the countdown). Two more seconds were allotted to the S. Taylor crossing because the one at S. Wakefield has a mid-street, median landing spot with an additional signal push button.

Additionally, the city's director of traffic operations reported that the two intersections had been restriped within the last 18 months. To check the wear patterns, the city's pavement markings supervisor went out to the intersections, examined the condition of the markings, and found that they compared very favorably with other nearby crossings on King and with other pavement markings city-wide.

—Gretchen Fallon



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