



the BRADDOCK BEACON

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STATE FUNDS GMU BYPASS; SUPERVISOR COOK TO LEAD COMMUNITY INPUT PROCESS

Braddock District will soon receive a significant transportation improvement. In his just-released six year transportation plan, Governor Bob McDonnell agreed to provide \$15 million in funding for George Mason University's proposed "Western Bypass." The exact design of the road has yet to be determined, but in general it will begin at Braddock Road and Prestwick Drive (west of the intersection of Braddock and Route 123), travel north through or around the current athletic fields on Mason's undeveloped "western campus," turn east, cross Route 123 north of the intersection with Braddock in the vicinity of Mason Pond Drive (near the Mason Inn) and connect with Patriot Circle inside of the campus.

The intent of the bypass is to keep eastbound traffic headed toward campus from entering the intersection of Braddock

and Route 123. As a result of the bypass, a 10 to 30 percent reduction in congestion is expected at Braddock and Route 123.

Supervisor Cook is a strong supporter of the bypass and personally lobbied Transportation Secretary Sean Connaughton to fund the project. Supervisor Cook is equally committed to insuring that the community is at the table as the project is designed and constructed. During a March community information meeting hosted by Supervisor Cook, a consensus emerged that a small task force of community members should be closely involved in the project design. At the suggestion of Delegate David Bulova, Supervisor Cook agreed to pull the group together and manage the community input process.

We will keep you up to date on the project in future editions of the Beacon.



Supervisor John C. Cook

ATTENTION HOMEOWNER AND CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS:

Please continue to let us know about your successful Community Engagement efforts. Keep up the good work!

Please call (703) 425-9300 or email Ann Sharp at ann.sharp@fairfaxcounty.gov with your latest information.

ENVIRONMENTAL TOWN HALL OFFERS NEW COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY

This community engagement opportunity on Saturday, May 7, will teach thirty community members how to "cut it high and let it lie" (lawns), how to "let it rot" (composting), how to reduce use of weed killers on your lawn and much, much more. This Town Hall is a great opportunity to reflect on the true goal of the Community Engagement Initiative – getting people to work together to improve their own communities. "You don't have to move to live in a better community" is the catchphrase we have borrowed to describe the essence of community engagement. This engagement comes in many forms – social activities to get to know each other, neighborhood watch and emergency preparedness programs to protect us, human service efforts to help neighbors in need, and multi-faceted efforts in improving the physical environment in which we live.

So, come out and get the tools you will need to make your home and community more environmentally friendly. Seating is limited, so please contact us if you would like to attend. Your efforts will bring you together with your neighbors, and help preserve the wonderful environment in which we have built our homes.

EMAIL SUBSCRIPTION TO THE BRADDOCK BEACON

If you would like the Braddock Beacon and the Cook Advisory electronically, instead of through mail, please contact us at braddock@fairfaxcounty.gov and write "Beacon Subscribe" in the subject line.

BRADDOCK DISTRICT NOW ON FACEBOOK

Be sure to stay up to date on the Braddock District. See: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Burke-VA/Office-of-Braddock-Supervisor-John-C-Cook/113003565389251?ref=sgm>

THE TIME HAS COME FOR LOCAL CONTROL OF LOCAL ROADS

It's Spring, and that means the grass is already growing tall on secondary roadways in Fairfax County. VDOT intends to stick to last year's schedule of only two or three mowings, even though six are needed. Tall grass disrupts drivers' line of sight, creates safety issues, and reduces property values as our streets look cheap and in disrepair. In addition, the effects of the last two winters and limited secondary road repaving, are beginning to be seen. Our neighborhood streets are peppered with potholes full of uneven, temporary fill, curbs and storm drains are crumbling, the state has ceased funding traffic calming measures and little hope for change is in sight. The State's priorities are properly with large commuter routes, such as the Beltway and Interstate 66, but that means our neighborhood streets will continue to suffer.

A relic of a bygone era, Virginia is one of only three states where the state, not localities, owns and maintains local roads. Controlled by rural counties that do not need more road funding, the General Assembly has eliminated construction funding for secondary (local) roads and significantly reduced maintenance funding. Recent state funding initiatives are temporary fixes only, and the state funding formula based on lane-miles instead of vehicle-miles-traveled hurts Fairfax as well.

We are not resigned to this fate, however. Decades ago, the Hampton Roads jurisdictions opted to become cities to better meet their transportation needs as an urbanizing area. Two counties – Arlington and Henrico – cut their own deals with the state to handle their own roads. A year and a half ago our County Executive recommended that Fairfax follow suit and consider negotiating with the state for a local takeover of at least some roads. County staff has interviewed each Virginia locality that owns and maintains its own roads. All reported that they are happy they do and, in fact, many expressed their disbelief that Fairfax has not yet followed suit.

Both County staff and our citizens' Transportation Advisory Commission (TAC) have identified clear benefits to the County Executive's proposal. These include, but are not limited to, enhanced influence in transportation decision-making, improved responsiveness and accountability and increased flexibility in establishing priorities and standards. Despite these advantages, some County leaders are reluctant to move forward on this issue. They argue that maintaining and improving our transportation infrastructure has long been a state function and follow the tired path of asking for money from Richmond, knowing it won't arrive.

I agree that funding is an issue and any transfer of responsibility would have to come with a transfer of at least current levels of state funding. Further enhancements to our transportation system would likely require local dollars. But remember, a local system means all our local dollars stay right here in Fairfax, instead of Fairfax dollars going to Richmond where only a fraction return. A good first step toward locally enhanced funding would be removing the Decal Fee, which generates roughly \$27 million, from the General Fund and apportioning it to transportation projects.

I do not suggest that moving towards local control of local roads is a simple issue. Much care and thought must be given to any potential change. But Fairfax County is an urbanizing suburb and it needs a 21st century system for its local roads, one where decision-making authority rests here, not in Richmond.



IMPORTANT COMMUNITY EVENTS AND UPDATES IN THE BRADDOCK DISTRICT

NVCC Wakefield Community Forum

Supervisor Cook invites you to join him for the next NVCC Wakefield Community Forum on Thursday, May 19, 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the Sprague Center. Since the last meeting, there have been changes in the County parking code, and Supervisor Cook looks forward to talking with residents about how that will allow the community directly around NVCC greater flexibility in requesting an RPPD.

Other items of interest are traffic along Wakefield Chapel Road and the continued growth of NVCC. Dana Kauffman from NVCC will be attending as will the newly hired Community Relations liaison. There will be ample time for residents to ask questions of Supervisor Cook and to bring up any new issues that may affect your communities. Supervisor Cook is looking forward to this meeting and hopes that you will make time in your schedule to be there.

High School, College Graduations Will Impact Traffic

Springtime in Fairfax County means graduations. Because George Mason University, Northern Virginia Community College and high schools from throughout the area use the Patriot Center facilities for graduation ceremonies, the Braddock District gets a lot of extra traffic throughout the months of May and June.

Northern Virginia Community College's 2011 Commencement will take place on Sunday, May 15 at 2:00 p.m. and the 44th annual George Mason University Spring Commencement is Saturday, May 21, 2011, at 10:00 a.m. in the Patriot Center. The Graduate School of Education Convocation will be held Saturday, May 21, 2011, at 2:00 p.m. in the Patriot Center.

You can find the high school graduations scheduled for the Patriot Center at the following link: http://communityrelations.gmu.edu/high_school_graduations.html. You can find a list of all Fairfax County high school graduations at <http://www.fcps.edu/news/grad.htm>. This second link is important because at the same time graduations will be taking place at the Patriot Center, ceremonies will also be taking place at Robinson Secondary School on June 16, 17 and 20. This will probably cause additional traffic headaches for those of you who live in that area, so please try to plan accordingly.

SUPERVISOR COOK IN THE COMMUNITY

On April 2nd, Supervisor Cook rode in the parade kicking off the Fairfax Little League season and then threw out the first pitch for the Annandale Little League. Afterwards, he participated in the grand opening ceremony for the new Olley Glen housing center on the grounds of Little River Glen.

On April 4th, Supervisor Cook attended a meeting hosted by the Fairfax County Park Authority on the Monticello Park Master Plan, which was held at Bonnie Brae Elementary School. Supervisor Cook opened the meeting with some welcoming remarks and explained how his community in Kings Park went through a similar process to get a redesigned and improved local park.

On April 6th, Supervisor Cook was the featured guest at the monthly Hope Lutheran Church Senior Luncheon. Later that evening he addressed the West Springfield Civic Association at their annual meeting which was held at the West Springfield Government Center.

On April 8th, Supervisor Cook met with Denis Gulakowski, the new Burke Centre Conservancy President. That evening he attended the Kings Park Elementary School PTA annual volleyball game.

On April 11th, Supervisor Cook hosted a meeting at Braddock Hall to discuss concerns stemming from the proposed T-Mobile cell tower at the Commonwealth Swim Club.

On April 12th, Supervisor Cook attended the Southport HOA meeting here at Braddock Hall and discussed pertinent issues with the homeowners.

On April 13th, Supervisor Cook spent his lunchtime at the Eden Center in Annandale and spent time with the Vietnamese community. Later that evening he attended the Rutherford Civic Association annual meeting at Little Run Elementary School and then went to Robinson Secondary School for the monthly Braddock District Council Meeting.

On April 14th, Supervisor Cook attended the annual Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards at the Waterford Springfield.

On April 20th, Supervisor Cook stopped by the Kings Park Library to help honor all of the library volunteers.

On April 23rd, Supervisor Cook was honored and saddened to address the memorial service for Velma Mercer, a long time resident of Kings Park. Velma was an outstanding woman and will be deeply missed.

On April 30th, Supervisor Cook attended the Children's Health Festival which was sponsored by the Junior League of Northern Virginia and was held in the Kings Park Giant parking lot.

COME OUT READY TO RIDE ON MAY 28 FOR BRADDOCK BIKE DAY

Just in time for the Summer riding season, Supervisor Cook will be hosting a Bike Day in Braddock District. This event is for the whole family and will be held in the parking lot at Lake Braddock Secondary School which is located at 9200 Burke Lake Road in Burke on May 28 between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

What can you expect at Bike Day? We are pleased to have members of the Fairfax County Police Department on hand to discuss safety. They will set up cones, allowing riders to test their skill navigating through a wide range of obstacles. We also will have representatives



from the Fairfax County Department of Transportation's Bike Division. They will discuss the trail and bike path system in the County and how it can be accessed by residents. They also will have copies of the local bike route maps available. Another participating group is Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling (FABB), a local group that has been extremely successful in promoting bicycling in Northern Virginia. They are affiliated with Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) and promote safety and accessibility for bikers of all ages in the Metropolitan area. They will have informational materials available as well as tips and trick for navigating the surrounding area. Lastly, we will have a bike mechanic or two from a local bike shop to do inspections and routine tune-ups.

We hope you can come out and join us for this great event as we kick off the Summer on this Memorial Day weekend. Unfortunately, there is no rain date, so in the case of inclement weather, Bike Day will have to be cancelled. If you have any questions or want to let us know that you

will be attending, call Lindsey Smith in the Braddock Office at 703-425-9300 or email him at Lindsey.smith2@fairfaxcounty.gov.

AN UPDATE ON BRADDOCK DISTRICT LAND USE ITEMS

University Mall

On April 20, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the proposed rezoning for the University Mall which has been under consideration and review for two years. On April 26, at a public hearing before the Board of Supervisors, the Board of Supervisors agreed and approved Supervisor Cook's recommendation to approve this application by unanimous vote. The site plan for this project, 8974-SP-001-1 has now been received and is available in the Braddock Office for review at any time.

Trinity Christian School

Trinity Christian School has submitted an application (SEA-96-B-010-02) to alter operational development conditions imposed in the original Special Exception. The school seeks to expand the use of its playing fields and buildings by youth sports leagues and other non-profit organizations such as Boy and Girl Scout troops and to permit the use of its facility for Sunday worship service between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. with a maximum seating of 240.

A community information meeting **has been scheduled at the school for June 9, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.** Letters will go out to impacted neighbors and more information will be available in June. A copy of the application is available in the Braddock District office.

Song Subdivision

A **public hearing before the Planning Commission has been scheduled** for a two house subdivision (SE 2010-BR-006) proposed at 10611 Zion Road in the Kings Park West community on May 26, 2011. A staff report will be available on May 11. Register on-line to speak on this application <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning/speaker.htm> or call 703-324-2865.

The Special Exception is required because this two acre property does not have the minimum 150 feet of required public road frontage in an R-1 zoning district. The proposal is to allow 100 feet. More information on this application will be mailed out this month to affected neighbors.

Commonwealth Swim Club

A community information meeting on the proposal to place a cell tower in the rear parking lot of the Club was held on April 11 and was well attended. Residents expressed continuing concerns about the visibility of the top of the 120 foot tower which is designed to resemble a pine tree. Ongoing concerns about the impact on property values and possible health risks were also verbalized. Staff is still reviewing the submittal and no hearing dates are yet established.

Steamboat Landing Lane Subdivision

An onsite meeting with neighbors, engineers from the firm of Charles P. Johnson Associates and the proposed contract purchaser, the Christopher Companies, was held on April 27 to discuss ongoing concerns regarding this three house "by right" subdivision. Questions were asked about sight distance for the entrance, street lights, possible egress consolidation into one driveway and mitigating the impact of construction traffic on the neighborhood. Dialogue on the best way to resolve these issues continues.

ANNANDALE'S DIALOGUES ON DIVERSITY CONCLUDE

This winter, residents and interested citizens came together for three Department of Neighborhood and Community Services sponsored Dialogues on Diversity. Discussions focused on what diversity means to each of us, the positives, the challenges it creates and some potential solutions to those challenges.

The discussion of how diversity is defined proved enlightening. While we tend to automatically think of diversity as a cultural or language issue, it encompasses much more, including: different work experiences, not just differences in nations but differences in regions within our own county. It also encompasses age, religion, disabilities, income levels, education and even leisure interests. Some of the major challenges identified as a result of these discussions by established residents and newcomers alike are: communication barriers, both verbal and non-verbal, understanding community norms, poverty, actual and perceived lack of respect due to gender, age, religious and cultural customs. Immigrants mentioned that law enforcement, taxation and health benefits are different in their countries of origin, and shared that navigating our system of services and resources is sometimes a challenge. Perhaps weighing most heavily on everyone's mind was the fear of not being accepted.

So how do we meet these challenges and try to find solutions? Some suggestions offered were as simple as welcoming a new individual or family to your neighborhood or providing information in multiple languages. Invitations to join the civic or community association and ensuring our children are involved in positive activities would also be welcome. Similar to what Supervisor Cook has been encouraging since taking office, there was also an emphasis on developing community activities to foster cohesion and providing leadership training for community leaders to learn how to ask questions and problem solve.

In keeping with the desire to encourage engagement opportunities for everyone, finding ways to embrace diversity should be something towards which we all strive.

VDOT TO REPAIR GUINEA ROAD BRIDGE: COMMUNITY MEETING PLANNED

This summer, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will undertake an emergency replacement of the existing Guinea Road bridge which spans the Long Branch stream valley. Deterioration of the two 60 inch culverts that provide support for the existing roadway has recently accelerated.

The proposed replacement bridge will have a span of 54 feet across Long Branch and will be completely built within the existing right of way. The final configuration will include two twelve foot travel lanes, an eight foot shoulder and a 5 foot sidewalk in each

direction.

VDOT expects to maintain two-way traffic on the bridge at all times during the repair at the current speed of 30 mph. VDOT hopes to solicit bids in the next four weeks and begin work in early July. The entire project is expected to take approximately four months and is estimated to cost \$2.3 million.

Supervisor Cook and VDOT will host a Community Information Meeting on this project in Braddock Hall, 9002 Burke Lake Road, to explain the scope of the project on Tuesday May 31, 2011.

COFFEE CONNECTIONS COMING SOON!

As part of his ongoing Community Engagement Initiative, Supervisor Cook is pleased to announce "Coffee Connections"!

As you may recall, this past fall Supervisor Cook hosted a Town Hall which focused on improving connections between our neighbors with disabilities and the community at large. Starting this May, in partnership with Saxby's coffee, Specially Adapted Resource Centers, and Fairfax County's Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, Disability Services Planning and Development, that connection is being strengthened through this unique program called "Coffee Connections".

"Coffee Connections" is a social opportunity for residents with disabilities to learn about events that they can be a part of within the larger community. Our first "Coffee Connections" will host a member of the Fairfax County Park Authority who will discuss opportunities related to the upcoming Braddock Night's concert series.

This new program will begin on June 10 and will be hosted in the Kings Park Library. We already have a dozen people waiting to participate.

Supervisor Cook would especially like to thank Braddock District residents Donna Goldbranson and Mark O'Meara for their generous support. For more information please contact Evan Braff at 703.324.5650 or Ann Sharp in the Braddock Office at 703-425-9300.

DRIVING THROUGH BRADDOCK

HOT Lanes Ramp Closure for Braddock Road Imminent

Fluor-Lane, contractor for the HOT Lanes project, has now confirmed that they are preparing to close the Braddock Road westbound ramp to I-495 south and activate a new left turn traffic signal on or about May 16, 2011. Please see the online version of this article for an attached PDF with more information.

Additionally, Friday night, May 13 at 9:00 p.m. until 11:00 a.m. Saturday, May 14, crews will close the CD ramp of I-495 north to Braddock Road west. Motorists will be directed to Exit 52A, Little River Turnpike west, follow signage to I-495 south back to Braddock Road west. The exit from Braddock Road east to I-495 north will also be closed and motorists will be directed to continue heading east to Backlick Road, turn left onto Backlick Road and follow signage to Little River Turnpike west, to I-495 north.

Leesville Boulevard Sound Wall Update

For over a year, the HOT Lanes project team has been working on the redesign of the two existing sound walls south of Heming Avenue on either side of the Beltway. The original plan was to move a fairly sizeable portion of the existing sound walls back, in order to make room for the widened Beltway. However, upon further study, it appears that the existing wall foundations impact the clearance needed for the beltway roadbed and that at least a portion of both walls will need to be completely replaced.

New designs are being engineered, and it will be at least a few months before those plans can be internally analyzed and approved, delaying construction. Representatives from the project have agreed to update plans, provide an updated fact sheet and distribute it to the community. It is still a project goal to replace the walls as soon as possible and minimize the impact on the affected neighbors. We will present new information as it is made available.

Seeking Public Comment

For Burke Centre residents: How can we improve walking and bicycling to school in the Burke Centre Community? Send your comments by May 21st to Braddock@fairfaxcounty.gov.

DISABLED FAIRFAX VETERANS ELIGIBLE FOR TAX RELIEF

Thanks to legislation passed by the state legislature on April 6, certain veterans with disabilities and their surviving spouses are now exempt from local real estate taxes on their principal residence. Find out more: http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dta/realestatetax_disabledveterans.htm

Additionally, the Board of Supervisors adopted a lower personal property (car) tax rate for qualified veterans with disabilities. This lower personal property rate applies to the 2011 Personal Property (car) Tax bills that will be mailed to residents this summer. It is not applicable to prior tax years. An application for the Personal Property (car) Tax relief will be available online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dta.

For more information on tax relief for veterans with disabilities, contact the Department of Tax Administration by email at dtadav@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-222-8234 (TTY 703-222-7594).

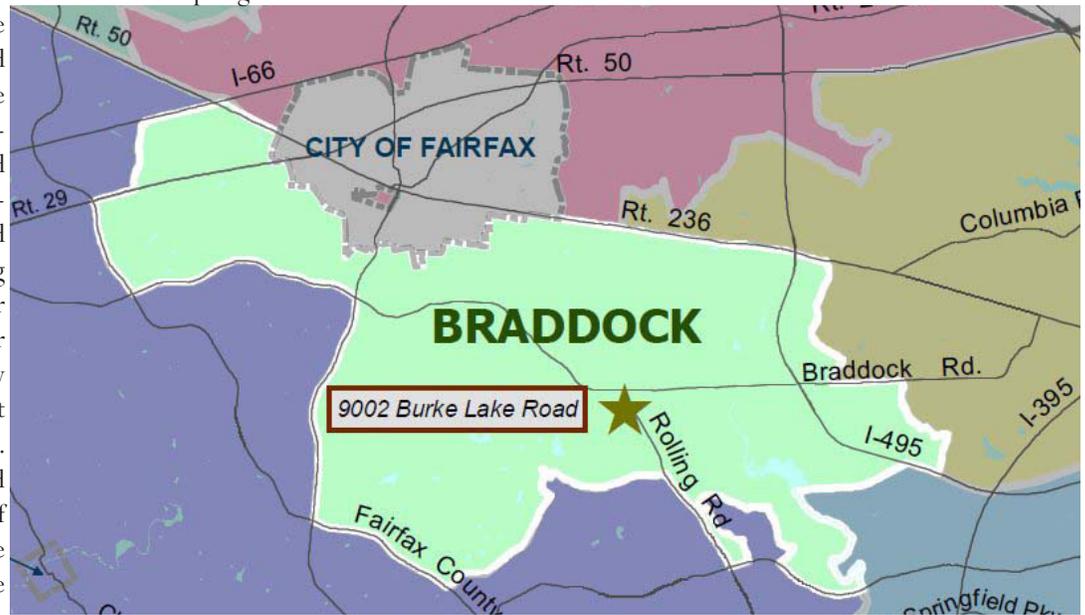
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ADOPTS 2011 REDISTRICTING PLAN

At its April 26 meeting, the Board of Supervisors adopted a redistricting plan that will now be submitted to the U.S. Attorney General for preclearance. Under state law, however, redistricting goes into effect immediately and does not wait for the fall elections.

The plan maintains nine supervisor districts, but it shifts seven voting precincts. The changes for the Braddock District are as follows: Bristow precinct will move into the Mason District, while Eagle View and Monument precincts will move from Springfield into the Braddock District. From the dais, Supervisor Cook expressed his concerns about splitting the Ravensworth Bristow community (comprising the Bristow and Heritage precincts) across two supervisor districts. Since the Board first proposed the plan during its April 12 meeting, Supervisor Cook met with a number of other Supervisors in the hopes that they could develop an alternative that left Bristow in Braddock District. Unfortunately, each proposed change put the population of Braddock and/or Mason outside of accepted norms, so the change

could not be avoided. Supervisor Cook will, of course, continue to represent half of that community and to work with our Mason Supervisor, Penny Gross, on Annandale issues.

Everyone in the Braddock Office would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new members of the Braddock District. We look forward to serving the residents of Eagle View and Monument precincts and encourage you to contact the office with your questions and concerns.



NEWS ROUNDUP FROM THE FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

On Monday, April 4, Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) held a public information meeting at Bonnie Brae Elementary School to solicit community input on the master planning process for Monticello Park. A potential use - proposed by residents of Kings Park West - is an off leash dog area, as Braddock does not have one. In August 2008, the Kings Park West Civic Association established a Special Dog Park Committee to find a suitable off leash dog area within or near KPW. With the assistance of the FCPA, a three mile radius of KPW was investigated, with Monticello Park being identified as a potential site. Further information regarding the site can be found at the FCPA website: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/plandev/monticello.htm>. If you are a dog owner and interested in supporting the off leash dog area, or if you have any ideas on potential uses for the space, please contact Kiel Stone at kiel.stone@fairfaxcounty.gov.

FCPA has been commended by the General Assembly in Richmond – resolved by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring – for its National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management. Fairfax County residents can take pride in knowing they have the best park system in the nation – beating out stiff competition from Charlotte, NC, New York City, and Miami-Dade.

During the past three years, FCPA has seen a reduction of about 40 percent in General Fund transfers from the Board of Supervi-

sors. In the past, General Fund transfers made up some 60 percent of FCPA's budget while 40 percent came from user fee revenue – charges FCPA levies for use of FCPA facilities. Today, that ratio has flipped. Recently, the Park Authority Board (PAB) took two votes to raise fees and I voted for neither - primarily because the increases were not applied uniformly across the entire spectrum of patrons that use park facilities. Over the course of this next year, I hope to address the inequity of this approach - along with other board members - so that all of FCPA's fees reflect a fair price for a fair value for all patrons.

One last issue to address right now as the Spring season gets into gear with many of you starting to plant your yards and gardens is the need to be aware of invasive plant species, and not plant them. I must admit, before joining the PAB, I was very skeptical about the amount of harm invasive plant species could cause to the ecosystem. Now I am a firm convert. Before you plant that Bradford Pear or Chinese Wisteria, know what you are really doing and the impact of your actions on area wildlife. The FCPA website has information on invasive species and alternative plantings so that you can actively support our Northern Virginia eco-system. Be a convert! Our area wildlife needs your support.

This article was provided by Tony Vellucci, the Braddock District Representative on the Park Authority.

FARMERS' MARKETS REOPEN THIS MONTH

Fairfax County's farmers' markets reopen this month. These bustling markets provide thousands of residents the timeless pleasures of open-air food shopping. You can mingle amongst gorgeous bins of local produce, sample delicious breads and yogurts, buy fresh cut flowers for the dinner table and meet your neighbors.

Fairfax County farmers markets allow only local producers. All products are produced within 125 miles of Fairfax County. In Braddock District, residents have the option of the Wakefield Farmers Market (Wednesdays, 2-6), Annandale (Thursdays, 8-noon) and Burke (Saturdays 8-noon). You can find the schedule of the Farmers' Market closest to your home here: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/wp-farm-mkt.htm>. For other information about the markets, call 703-642-0128, TTY 703-803-3354.

Gardeners take note: Most markets offer plant clinics staffed by Fairfax County Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners. Residents can bring plant or insect samples for pest identification or disease diagnosis.

FREE COUNTY SERVICES FOR CAREGIVERS

When caregiving is new or when it becomes particularly stressful, it often helps to talk to someone to sort out your options. Fairfax County offers a one-time caregiver counseling session with professional care managers over the phone or in the office.

For more information, call Fairfax County's Aging, Disability and Caregiver Resources line at 703-324-7948, TTY 711, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The county also matches volunteers with family caregivers who could use a break. Trained volunteers provide six hours of service a month. Call 703-324-7948, TTY 711, to request a respite volunteer or e-mail Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov.

INVASIVE PLANT REMOVAL DAY MAY 7

Fairfax County Park Authority will mark its Fourth Annual Invasive Plant Removal Day on May 7. Volunteers will remove non-native plants from eight local parks, and will be led by Volunteer site leaders from the Invasive Management Area (IMA) program. This is a wonderful opportunity for civic groups, faith organizations, families, and local businesses looking to make a positive difference in their communities, and a good place for students and scouts to earn service hours. Register by calling 703-324-8681.

Braddock area parks include: Annandale Park, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Pohick Stream Valley, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Rutherford Park, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Woodglen Lake, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Over 300 invasive plant species have been reported in Fairfax County. Invasive species are nonnative species that cause ecological or economic harm. They mature quickly, generate many offspring, and are tolerant of many habitats. These characteristics allow them to out-compete native species for the same resources. Reduced populations of native plants can result in fewer native birds and wildlife.

VOLUNTEER: FAIRFAX CASA HOLDING INFORMATION SESSION

Fairfax Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) will be holding an information session for prospective volunteer advocates on May 21.

A new case of child abuse or neglect enters the Fairfax County Domestic & Juvenile Relations Court System once every 38 hours. These children need caring advocates to help ensure they grow up in safe and permanent homes. Fairfax CASA trains volunteers to advocate for a child's best interests in the Court.

If you seek a volunteer role with real purpose that can create real change, please attend Fairfax CASA's upcoming information session at the City of Fairfax Regional Library on Saturday, May 21, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

For reservations or information, contact Elisa Kosarin at (703) 273-3526, ext. 22, ekosarin@casafairfax.org, or visit www.casafairfax.org

MAY IS LYME DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH IN FAIRFAX

During its April 26 meeting, the Board of Supervisors designated the month of May, 2011 as Lyme Disease Awareness Month in Fairfax County. As warm weather arrives and people spend more time outdoors, it becomes more important to acknowledge the impact of Lyme disease in our community.

Lyme disease is transmitted to people by the bite of an infected deer tick. There are many steps that residents can take to minimize or prevent tick bites:

- Use a DEET-based insect repellent
- Wear long, loose-fitting, light-colored clothes
- Avoid tick-infected areas such as tall grass and dense vegetation
- Control ticks around your home
- Check for ticks after outdoor activity

- Promptly remove attached ticks using fine-tipped tweezers and bring the tick to the Health Department for identification

In an effort to minimize the public health impact of Lyme disease, Fairfax County has implemented a comprehensive approach which includes tracking of human cases; tick surveillance; public education; outreach to healthcare providers to promote early diagnosis and treatment; and deer management.

To learn more about Lyme disease prevention, visit: http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/westnile/wnvpdf/ticks_brochure_full.pdf or <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/westnile/>