

Mason Matters!

Spring 2005

Mason District Supervisor Penny Gross

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A Message From Supervisor Gross

Special Interest Articles:

- **Fairfax County Explores Ways to Attain Affordable Housing**
- **Land Use News**
- **Spotlight by Starlight Summer Concert Schedule**
- **Emergency Preparedness Clinics Offered**

LOOK FOR **MASON MATTERS!** THE TELEVISION SHOW
on Cable Channel 16
EVERY THURSDAY AT 7:30 P.M.
EVERY FRIDAY & SUNDAY AT 6:30 P.M.

Dear Mason District Neighbor:

The recent early taste of Spring provided a welcome respite from our grim winter weather, and also reminded us that budget time is approaching in Fairfax County. Traditionally, the County Executive presents a proposed budget to the Board of Supervisors in February. The Board spends March and most of April examining the proposals, holding public hearings, making changes and recommendations and, finally, adopting the revised budget in late April. Important dates to remember in this year's budget cycle include: February 28 – County Executive Griffin presents his proposed budget; March 29 – Mason District Spring Town Meeting on the proposed budget; April 4, 5, and 6 – budget public hearings; April 18 – Board mark-up of the budget; April 25 – Board adoption of revised budget. All of the meetings listed, except the Mason District Spring Town Meeting, are held in the Board Auditorium at the Fairfax County Government Center, and are televised live on Channel 16.



Much of the revenue that supports delivery of needed services to county residents is derived from the real estate property tax – on your house and on mine. It's no secret that home values continue to rise dramatically, and Fairfax County is an attractive place for newcomers, young families, empty nesters, and retirees to live, work, and play, despite housing costs. The challenge for the County Executive and the Board of Supervisors is to provide resources for needed services to a broad population, while keeping the tax rate as low as possible. Last year, the General Assembly authorized Fairfax County to increase both the cigarette tax and the recordation tax, and the Board promised to put any additional revenue derived from those two taxes into a "lock box" to provide specific tax relief this year. The Board also has committed to further reductions in the tax rate, the fourth consecutive year for tax rate reductions.

Programs and services, revenue and tax cuts will be on the agenda at the Mason District Spring Town Meeting about the budget, which will be held on Tuesday, March 29, at the George Mason Regional Library, 7001 Little River Turnpike in Annandale, from 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. County Executive Anthony H. Griffin and Chief Financial Officer Edward Long will discuss the budget proposals, followed by a question and answer session. I hope you will be able to attend this informative meeting.

In this newsletter, you also will find a schedule for "Spotlight by Starlight," the free summer concert series at Mason District Park that begins on June 5 with a grand celebration of the rebuilt amphitheatre destroyed by fire last fall. The concerts provide wonderful family entertainment, and I look forward to seeing you there. The 26th Annual Mason District Park Festival will be held on Saturday, September 24. Look for additional information in this newsletter.

It is a privilege to represent you and all of Mason District on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Please do not hesitate to contact my office on any county-related issue of importance to you.

Fairfax County Explores Ways to Attain Affordable Housing

**By Ambassador Josiah Beeman
Mason District Representative
Community Services Board**

Fairfax County residents face a crisis in finding affordable housing. The price of real estate, the increase in rents, and the loss of rental housing to condo conversions are some of the factors making the problem increasingly difficult to resolve.

The Community Services Board, on which I represent Mason District, has a special set of problems in the housing arena. Since we oversee mental health, mental retardation, and substance abuse issues, we need barrier-free housing for people who have disabilities to access their residences, as well as access to special equipment. We also need residences for small groups of people who have other mental illnesses, and who require special care for an extended time.

I also serve on the Fairfax County Council on Homelessness (representing the Community Services Board). Fifty-eight percent of the approximately 2,000 homeless persons in this county are families! Last winter, two individuals died of hypothermia. Some homeless individuals are mentally ill; some are just down on their luck. Many of them work, but cannot find housing they can afford on their limited incomes. We need a housing supply that is affordable to address the needs of these people in our community.

There are non-profit developers who are willing to build such housing, but land is so expensive here they cannot afford it. One option being discussed is to lease county-owned land to these developers at a low cost so they can afford to build on it. That would help provide suitable housing at no out-of-pocket cost to taxpayers.

There are other proposals to establish a trust fund with one or two cents of the present tax rate that could be used as a revolving loan or grant fund to help developers build affordable housing and to preserve existing housing.

Clerks, police officers, secretaries, firefighters, and teachers find it difficult to find affordable housing here. The housing needs of middle-income folks must be addressed too! The Board of Supervisors is exploring a variety of solutions toward resolving it.



When you set your clocks ahead one hour on April 3 to return to daylight savings time, change the batteries in smoke alarms throughout your home.



Mason District Supervisor Penny Gross welcomes attendees to the First Annual Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' Animal Services Awards on February 25. Supervisor Gross also received the 2004 Animal Services Award for Outstanding Elected Official of the Year at the event.

Land Use News



By now you may have had the chance to enjoy the streetscape revitalization projects in Annandale and Bailey's Crossroads. Both projects are now complete, pending some minor landscaping and signage modifications. The projects greatly improve the aesthetics of both business districts and offer safer pedestrian features. If you are interested in on-going revitalization in Mason District, please contact Supervisor Gross at 703-256-7717.

➤ Your opportunity to participate in the Area Plans Review Process (APR) is approaching fast. Initial meetings of the citizen task force will begin in early April and will be held at the Mason District Governmental Center. Although the official nomination period is scheduled to begin in September, the task force will get an early start to review the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan for all of Mason District. Please call the Supervisor's Office at 703-256-7717 for additional information about the APR process or task force meetings.

➤ Fairfax County currently is updating its Comprehensive Transportation Plan and will host several informational meetings throughout the county to gather public comment. If you are interested in planning for future transportation improvements, please call the Fairfax County Department of Transportation at 703-324-1100.

➤ You may not know it, but as a resident of Mason District your property may be part of the Cameron Run Watershed. Fairfax County currently is working on watershed plans and your input is important. Please contact the Office of Supervisor Gross if you would like to be informed about ways to become involved in this important project.

Spotlight by Starlight Summer Concert Schedule

Spotlight by Starlight is a free summer concert series presented by the Friends of Mason District Park. All performances are at the amphitheatre on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday beginning at 7:30 pm. Performances for children on Saturday (not listed below) begin at 10 a.m. Shows are cancelled in the event of rain.

JUNE

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| 5 - City of Fairfax Concert Band | 19 - National Concert Band |
| 8 - Blue Sky 5 (Jazz) | 22 - Capital Focus Jazz Band |
| 10 - Kalinka Dance Ensemble | 24 - King Wilkie (Bluegrass) |
| 12 - The United States Air Force Band
"High Flight" (Pop) | 26 - Alban Chorale |
| 15 - Herb Smith Band (Blues) | 29 - Cephas & Wiggins |
| 17 - The Tone Rangers & Tonic and Gin | |

JULY

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| 1 - Mariachi Los Amigos | 20 - Not So Modern Jazz Quartet |
| 3 - The Fabulettes
(Girl Group Sound of the 60s) | 22 - The United States Navy Band "Country Current" |
| 6 - Brooks Tegler Band (Jazz) | 24 - Annandale Orchestra |
| 8 - The United States Air Force Band
"Silver Wings" (Country Western) | 27 - Tom Principato Band |
| 10 - Fairfax Symphony "Summer Band" | 29 - Sri Lankan Dance & Music |
| 13 - BG & the Mojo Hands (Blues) | 31 - The Chromatics (A Capella Pop & Rock) |
| 15 - Ruthie & the Wranglers (Country) | |
| 17 - Fairfax Symphony "Summer Band" | |

AUGUST

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| 3 - WCM Trad Jazz Ensemble | 19 - Takoma Mandoleers (Folk) |
| 5 - HOALOHA (Polynesian) | 21 - Hexagon (Satirical Revue) |
| 7 - Washington Balalaika Orchestra | 24 - Richard Walton Band |
| 10 - Deanna Bogart Band (Blues) | 26 - Arte Flamenco (Flamenco Dance and Music) |
| 12 - The Chu Shan Chinese Opera
Institute of Washington, D.C. | 28 - King Teddy (Swing) |
| 14 - The Mt. Vernon Community Band | 31 - Razz'm Jazz'm (Jazz) |
| 17 - Dixie Power Trio (Jazz) | |

Programs may be subject to change.

Fairfax County Citizen Corps Council Offers Emergency Preparedness Clinics to Community Groups

Do you have an emergency supply kit for your home, car, or office? Do you have at least three days supply of food and water for each family member and your pets?

Do you have a communication plan so you can stay in contact with your loved ones in the event of an emergency? Do you know about the different kinds of emergencies for which you should be prepared? Would you like some guidance?

The Fairfax County Citizen Corps Council coordinates and promotes the county's Citizen Corps and affiliate emergency preparedness training programs. The Citizen Corps sponsors Emergency Preparedness Clinics in collaboration with the American Red Cross to show you how to put together an emergency kit, to develop a communication plan, and to encourage you to get training through the county's free Citizen Corps and affiliate training programs.

Please call Volunteer Fairfax at 703-246-3460 and tell them you would like to schedule an Emergency Preparedness Clinic for your club, PTA, or association. For more information about the programs and to sign up, visit their Web site at www.fairfaxcountycitizencorps.org. The Fairfax County Citizen Corps Council is part of the national and state Citizen Corps program, whose mission is to provide assistance to residents who want to become better prepared for all emergencies.



Coming Attractions

- The Bailey's Crossroads Community Shelter, 3525 Moncure Avenue, will host its Annual Open House on Sunday, April 17, 3 - 6 p.m. Learn about homeless programs; enjoy performances by community groups; win a door prize.
- The Friends of the George Mason Regional Library will host its ever-popular, semi-annual book sale on April 28, 5 - 9 p.m.; April 29, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; April 30, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; and May 1, 12 - 5 p.m. The book sale will be at the library, 7001 Little River Turnpike in Annandale.
- The 24th Annual Celebrate Fairfax, our community's largest festival, will be held June 10-12 at the Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway in Fairfax. Enjoy concerts, a frisbee dog show, a laser show, fireworks, and much more. Free parking and shuttle buses are available for easy access. For more information call 703-324-3247.
- The 26th Annual Mason District Park Festival will be held on Saturday, September 24, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the park, 6621 Columbia Pike in Annandale. Enjoy a fun-filled day, with children's rides, live entertainment, and lots of food. Rain date is Sunday, September 25, same hours. For more information, call 703-256-7717.



Community Notes

- AARP volunteers are available to assist all residents with their tax forms on Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 12 noon; Monday and Thursday evenings from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. until April 15 at the Mason District Governmental Center, 6507 Columbia Pike in Annandale. Residents also may file tax forms electronically. Tax forms are available at all Fairfax County Public Libraries. Copiers and the various schedules for the federal tax forms also are available at all public libraries.
- The Annandale Christian Community for Action (ACCA) needs volunteers to deliver food from the ACCA Food Pantry to needy families once a month. For more information or to volunteer, contact Ann Marie Hicks at 703-256-7749.
- The Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District has seedlings to make your landscape bird-friendly and visually appealing year-round. Each package has 14 seedlings and sells for \$16.95. April 8 is the last day to place pre-paid orders. Trees will be available for pickup on April 15-16. For more information, or to get an order form, call 703-324-1460, send an e-mail to conservationdistrict@fairfaxcounty.gov, or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nvswcd/seedlingsale.htm.

Mason District's Spring Town Meeting

Tuesday, March 29 at 7 P.M.

George Mason Regional Library
7001 Little River Turnpike, Annandale

Join your neighbors and friends to talk about the FY2006 Fairfax County Budget. Joining Supervisor Gross as guest panelists are County Executive Anthony Griffin and Chief Financial Officer Edward Long.

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