



# Courier

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## Employees Share Favorite Spots in Fairfax County

What's your favorite spot in Fairfax County? Courier posed that question to county employees at the end of last year. The responses included several submissions for Frying Pan Park and other county parks, a section of Reston, an intersection and the airspace above the county, among many others.

Congratulations to the following employees who received the Starbucks gift cards in a random drawing of entry submissions: **Carol Bracey**, Lewinsville Adult Day Health Care, Health Department; **Lisa Feibelman**, Zoning Evaluation Division, Department of Planning and Zoning; and **Elisa Johnson**, Department of Housing and Community Development.

Here are several favorite spots, with some of the photos provided with the submissions. One of them may be your new favorite spot. Look for more spots in a February issue of Courier.

"My favorite spot is Frying Pan Park. It is a tranquil place that offers visitors a close connection with a more simple and relaxed way of life. Immediately after 9/11 when every American was in a grieving state, I accompanied a group of seriously mentally ill citizens to the farm. They, too,



*"This is what I call 'Cathedral of the Trees.' The Park Authority parkland is Fairfax Villa Park. The very tall, straight trees and the beautiful colors of the trees up so high is like a cathedral," wrote Lisa Feibelman, Department of Planning and Zoning, shown in her favorite spot with her dog, Lucky. Photo by Peter Feibelman.*

were feeling a profound sense of grief but were having more difficulty in dealing with it. Frying Pan Park provided them a source of peace and the hope that life continues to go on. At the farm I also find such enjoyment with my grandchild Crystal who just turned 3. She has been my guide, showing me all the animals and making the sounds of each. I have had to chase

after her as she has excitedly run to greet each animal friend. She loves petting the lambs and has encouraged shy tots to share in this wonderful experience. Crystal claims the farm as her own, and it is, just as it is our's. Go out to your farm and take some smaller folk; you will want to keep returning!"

**Joelle MacDonald**  
Fairfax-Falls Church Community  
Services Board

"My favorite spot in Fairfax County is unusual. It's the intersection of Middle Ridge Road and Route 50. Many pass it every day on the way to and from work, but it is a special spot to me. On one commute home at that very traffic light my husband proposed to me. He had tried other times and places but weather or circumstances or nerves made him unable. So that day in October 2003 he mustered up his courage and just asked. It took two more traffic lights for me to realize he was serious and say yes! We've been married more than three years now, but I still smile when we pass that intersection on the way home."

**Charna Weese**  
Department of Administration for  
Human Services

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Courier is available online at <http://infoweb/courier>

“My favorite spot in Fairfax County is the airspace above it whenever I ride along with the crew of the Police Department’s helicopter, Fairfax One. The sole purpose of this crew is to help the residents of Fairfax County whether it is to find a robbery suspect with the forward-looking infrared camera at night, searching for missing juveniles or senior citizens, or transporting the most critical patients. Not only are they skilled professionals, they are also my friends.”

**Ellen Kamilakis**  
Office of Emergency Management



**Master Police Officer Paul G. DeHaven flies over the area of Pope’s Head Road and the Fairfax County Parkway.** Photo by Ellen Kamilakis.

“[My favorite spot is] the first section of Reston to be built replicating an Italian coast town, Portofino. The best of all worlds! Sitting on the bench in the plaza, look around to see a beautiful lake where you can go boating, trees visible from all views, an art gallery, restaurants and coffee shops, the Reston Historic Museum, Reston Community Center, local businesses including a wonderful pharmacy with a post office and terrific lunch counter. Robert Simon of Reston fame lives there, so you know it must be wonderful! From my balcony overlooking the plaza, I watch children playing in the fountain, the farmers market and vendors on Saturdays, and outside diners enjoying their friends. From my front door, I sit with neighbors and chat or look at the foliage surrounding our neighborhood. This is what life is about – caring, sharing

neighbors, local businesses that know you. A touch of the good life...right here in Fairfax County.”

**Susan Donovan**  
Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board

“Hands down, my favorite spot in Fairfax County is the pool and the hot tub at the South Run ReCenter. Since I was a little kid, swimming has been one of my favorite things to do – pools, lakes, oceans – you name it. Swimming is definitely my exercise of choice; I like it because it exercises many parts of the body at once, and because you can swim all year round. The pool at South Run is a great place to swim, I’ve been going there since they opened about 20 years ago. Nothing starts my day off better than a good strenuous swim in the pool and then afterward, relaxing my stresses away in the hot tub. Follow that with a hot shower and I’m good to go all day long! “

**Joy Jordan**  
Health Department

“My favorite spot in Fairfax County is my own backyard in the Truro neighborhood of Annandale. My wooded yard backs to Truro community parkland, which is a haven for foxes, deer, owls, chipmunks and other forest creatures. I often see beautiful wild animals passing through my backyard or the adjacent parkland – I guess it is one of their favorite spots too! The woods are a peaceful oasis amid the suburban sprawl.”

**Suzanne S. Summers**  
Library

**Owls and red foxes are frequent visitors to Suzanne Summers’ favorite spot – her backyard in Annandale.**  
Photos by Suzanne Summers.

“My favorite place in Fairfax County would have to be Burke Lake Park. I have lived in the Springfield area since 1992 and Burke Lake Park is the one place that you can do anything for relaxation. My earliest memories of the park were playing disc golf there while I was in middle school. I had never heard of disc golf before and felt hitting a golf ball with clubs a bit too challenging. The park is very well maintained and the staff is very friendly, and after a game I would usually get some ice cream or another snack at the stand. When I got to high school I renewed my love for the park by finally getting the courage to run the four-and-a-half miles around its waters. There is nothing more relaxing than spending a summer afternoon jogging or walking around the lake. Burke Lake Park by far is my favorite part of the county, not just because it is especially close to me, but also because it is the most relaxing part of this busy county.”

**Charles Julian Cox**  
Fire and Rescue Department ■

Look for more favorite spots next month!



# Feedback Wanted on Countywide Training Program

The Organizational Development and Training (OD&T) Division is embarking on a new initiative to conduct follow-up evaluations after formal classroom training takes place. The purpose is to determine if the knowledge and skills taught in classes are being used by the learners (employees) in the work environment. This is especially important since there are a number of new classes and training providers starting this month.

In addition to the in-class evaluation form already being used that captures the immediate observations of class participants, OD&T will select specific courses for more in-depth evaluation.

After observing a course offering, OD&T staff will initiate the following activities 60-90 days after the course is complete:

▶ Contact a sampling of learners and conduct brief interviews (in person, over the phone or via e-mail) to identify which, if any, skills and knowledge learned in class are being used on the job. These discussions should last no longer than 10-15 minutes.

▶ Contact the supervisors of the learners to identify if they have seen a change in the behavior of their staff when they returned to the job after training. Again, the discussions should last no longer than 10-15 minutes. This is not to

check up on employees but to determine if the investment Fairfax County is making in the work force is having the intended outcome.

The results of these conversations will be compiled and analyzed so that OD&T can define which courses are providing the greatest benefit to employees and the county as a whole. Employee responses will remain anonymous and will help shape the future of Fairfax County's Employee Development and Learning Program.

▶ For more information, contact **Lynne Sawyer**, OD&T, at 703-324-3452, TTY 711. ■

# Tax Year 2008 Income Tax Withholding Changes

Last pay period (26, pay date Jan. 4, 2008) was the first pay disbursement (direct deposit or check) for tax year 2008 income tax purposes.

The Social Security (OASDI) tax rate remains at 6.2 percent and the Medicare tax rate remains at 1.45 percent (total FICA tax rate is 7.65 percent). The 2008 taxable wage base for Social Security has increased to \$102,000.

The amount of federal income taxes withheld will decrease slightly for all employees due to the increase in the annual personal exemption amount from \$3,400 to \$3,500.

The amount of Virginia income taxes withheld will decrease even less for all Virginia resident employees due to the increase in the annual personal exemption amount from \$900 to \$930.

District of Columbia income taxes will also decrease slightly due to the increase in the annual exemption from \$1,500 to \$1,675.

Maryland state income tax withholding tables have been modified per Maryland state income tax regulations due to the recent changes enacted by the Maryland



File Photo

General Assembly and will increase the amount of Maryland state income taxes withheld for Maryland resident employees.

There are no changes in state income tax withholding for West Virginia.

The beginning of the tax year is a good time to review your filing status (married or single) and exemptions or allowances claimed (zero or more). Your current filing status and number of exemptions/allowances is printed at the top right corner of your pay advice.

You can change your federal and/or state income tax withholding information in Online TIME (transaction 005) or by submitting a new tax withholding form to the Payroll Division in the Department of Human Resources.

▶ Current federal and state income tax withholding forms are available through your department payroll contact; Department of Human Resources, Suite 258, Government Center; or at <http://infoweb/hr/payroll/forms.htm>. ■

# Awards, Good Works and Kudos...

## Awards...

The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) was recognized at the recent U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' National Medicare Training Program Workshop in Baltimore. CSB was cited for the best "Strategic Outreach Activities" in the Eastern Regional Area for the Medicare Prescription Drug Program Outreach. CSB's Medicare Part D team includes **Mari De Leon, Leslie Myers, Joan Quarles** and **Sean Gallogly**.

## Good Works...

The e-mail below was sent to **Steve Souder**, director of the Department of Public Safety Communications (DPSC) a few weeks ago. A U.S. soldier in Afghanistan received one of the care packages sent to troops by DPSC's A Night Squad, led by **Sally Fitzpatrick**, squad supervisor.

"I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all of your members of Public Safety Communications (9-1-1 Call Center). My name is SFC Boyd. I am currently serving in Afghanistan for my second tour. Before opening your present I had been a little apprehensive. When I opened the gift, man was I pleasantly surprised. This has honestly been one of the best care packages I have received in quite a long time... I was honestly speechless. I send my deepest gratitude, to all who have so generously given of themselves to a complete stranger. The card was signed by several of your staff, and to each again I say thank you and God bless each and every one of you."

- SFC Boyd, 3rd Special Forces Group

## Awards...

The Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) presented its Champion Awards last month to several dozen employees who

were nominated for their outstanding efforts in fulfilling the mission of the agency. The agency presents the awards three times a year. Among the recent awardees were two "champions" for customer service, including an employee from another county agency.

**Scott Hagerty**, Land Development Services, Code Enforcement Branch, was cited for his response to a request for assistance from a property maintenance inspector. The nomination noted, "When Hagerty arrived, he found an elderly couple living in an unsafe structure that would have to be condemned. Knowing that the elderly pair would have to vacate the premises and might not have a place to go, Hagerty contacted the owners of the property and guardian for the couple and assisted the guardian in making arrangements for safe housing. He also returned to the site the next day (Saturday), so that the moving company could gain access to remove the elderly couple's personal belongings, preventing their belongings from being vandalized."

**Rogelio Alfaro "Panama" Aguilar**, Department of Vehicle Services, was nominated by several DPWES Solid Waste, Disposal and Resource Recovery employees based at the I-66 Transfer Station. They lauded Aguilar for his outstanding customer service to DPWES. His nomination said, "The expeditious manner in which he changes or repairs tires on our vehicles

means we are back on the highway quicker, transporting waste to its ultimate disposal location, improving efficiency. Panama's upbeat spirit and positive attitude are contagious and inspiring to all. He exemplifies customer service and is an example we all could follow."

For more information on the DPWES Champion Awards, go to <http://infoweb/dpwes/HR/championawards/>.

## Good Works...

For 10 years, the Planning Division of the Department of Planning and Zoning has held a winter auction to raise money for charitable organizations, such as the Children's Hospital Foundation, Community Members Interested (Nepal), Fred L. Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, National Brain Tumor Foundation, ALS Association, Hospice of Northern Virginia and Habitat for Humanity. Last month, the auction raised a record-breaking \$2,461, with proceeds split between the Afghan Relief Fund and the American Cancer Society.

The items up for auction ranged from desktop figurines, to wall sconces and iPod speakers. Staff also auctioned off their diverse talents, such as flower



**Jimmie Jenkins, director of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, presents champion awards to Scott Hagerty (above) and Rogelio Alfaro "Panama" Aguilar (left). Photos provided by DPWES.**

arranging, cooking/baking and interior painting. Assistant Planning Director **David B. Marshall** was the auctioneer, a position he has held for many years.

*By Sandi M. Smith,  
Department of Planning and Zoning*

## Good Works..

Residents at properties owned by the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) have benefited from the U. S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots drive for more than 20 years. Initially, contact was established by property managers in the Department of Housing and Community Development's (HCD) Housing Management Division. Managers now submit a toy request each November to Toys for Tots with the number of children arranged by age and sex. Staff from HCD's Property Improvement and Maintenance Division pick up the toys and distribute them to several properties.

This year, the properties included Murraygate Village Apartments (Lee District); Woodley Hills Estates (Mount

Vernon District); West Glade Apartments (Hunter Mill District); Kingsley Park and Briarcliff II (Providence District); and Water's Edge (Springfield District). Each property manager hosted an event featuring Santa's Toy Store at their properties allowing children, by age, to come in and select their gift.

"A lot of work goes into coordinating the program," said **Laura Nabili**, housing services specialist and coordinator for the Toys for Tots events at FCRHA-owned properties. "But it is extremely rewarding to see the excitement and surprise on the children's faces when they enter Santa's Toy Room and to know that in some small way we are assisting the Marines in their mission."

More than 600 children at FCRHA-owned properties received gifts from Toys for Tots for the 2007 holiday season.

Toys for Tots was founded in 1947 by Col. William L. Hendricks, USMCR (Ret.), when he and his wife realized that no organization existed to distribute toys to needy children at Christmas.

*By Kristina Norvell,  
Department of Housing and  
Community Development*

## Kudos ...

At its regular meeting on Monday, Jan. 7, the Board of Supervisors recognized **James Martin** for 25 years of safe service to Fairfax County. Martin, Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, is a heavy equipment operator at the I-66 Transfer Station. He has logged more than 1.65 million miles with an unblemished driving record. Martin is the first agency employee to reach the 25-year safe operator status. ■



**Board of Supervisors Chairman Gerald E. Connolly with James Martin at the Board of Supervisors presentation.**



**(above) Department of Housing and Community Development staff with Toys for Tots donations include (left to right) Rick Doucet, Willie Woodson, Judy Niles, Kenise English-Brown and Angela Jordon.**

**(right) Kenise English-Brown and Angela Jordan unload a truck full of toys.**



*Photos provided by Department of Housing and Community Development.*

## Focus on Benefits

# EZ REIMBURSE Card Not Valid at Most Grocery Stores

As noted in the Dec. 7 Courier, the Medical Spending Account EZ REIMBURSE card cannot be used at grocery or discount retail stores that have not implemented the Inventory Information Approval System (IIAS). This became effective Jan. 1.

To date, Wal-Mart, Sam's Club and Walgreens have implemented the IIAS. However, as of early January, local grocery stores such as Giant and Safeway do not have the IIAS in place.

If employees with the EZ REIMBURSE card purchase prescriptions or over-the-counter items at a retailer that has not implemented the IIAS, you will have to use another form of payment (cash, check

or credit card) and then fax or mail the reimbursement claim to Fringe Benefits Management Company (FBMC). The reimbursement claim form is available at [http://infoweb/hr/benefits/FBMC\\_Claim\\_form.pdf](http://infoweb/hr/benefits/FBMC_Claim_form.pdf).

The Department of Human Resources will continue to monitor the grocery and discount retail stores that implement the IIAS and will provide updates to the list on an ongoing basis. Participants can also call FBMC at 800-342-8017, TTY 711, or log on to [www.myfbmc.com](http://www.myfbmc.com) and click on "Resources," then "Drugstore Listing" to check on the status of grocery and discount retail store implementation of the IIAS. ■

### HR Central

HR Central has benefit information.

▶ Call 703-324-4900

TTY 703-222-7314

▶ Visit <http://infoweb/hr/benefits>

# Taxable Income for Life Insurance More Than \$50,000

In the section of employees' pay advice titled "taxable income added," there is a descriptive field named "life insurance over \$50,000." If the pay advice shows a dollar amount next to this line, taxable income is being added to the earnings.

According to Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations, the value of group term life insurance more than \$50,000 is

taxable income. This additional taxable income is subject to Social Security and Medicare taxes and is reported on the W-2 Form as "other compensation."

Beginning Jan. 1, some employees may see a higher amount in this field because the entire premium for supplemental (optional) life is now taken as a pre-tax deduction. This change results in very minimal or no

impact on net pay.

Employees could also see a higher amount in the "taxable income added" field due to a change in the group term life coverage amount, or because they moved into a higher age band on the IRS table, or into a higher age band with a higher premium rate. ■

## 2007 Onthank Nominations Now Being Accepted

Nominations for the 2007 A. Heath Onthank Memorial Award are being accepted through Feb. 28. The award, named for A. Heath Onthank, the first chairman of the Civil Service Commission, recognizes accomplishments of outstanding worth in advancing and improving public service in Fairfax County government during 2007. Recipients will be recognized at a Board of Supervisors meeting in June and will receive a plaque and a \$2,000 award.

The award is open to merit employees of Fairfax County government and to unified scale and food service employees

of the Fairfax County Public Schools. Nominees must have completed their initial probationary period. Nominations may be made by fellow employees or residents.

Nomination forms are available from members of the Board of Supervisors, department heads and the Department of Human Resources. The form also is available at <http://infoweb/hr/relate/forms/onthankaward.doc>.

For further information, contact **Betty Marshall** at 703-324 3308, TTY 703-222-7314, or [betty.marshall@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:betty.marshall@fairfaxcounty.gov). ■

## Briefs

### Courier's New Online Look

The Courier Web page has a new look and new enhancements, including photo galleries. Take a look at <http://infoweb/courier>. Send your feedback on the new Web page to [courier@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:courier@fairfaxcounty.gov).

### New Library Opening

The grand opening of the City of Fairfax Regional Library will take place on Saturday, Jan. 26 at 10 a.m. The new library is located at 10360 North Street in Fairfax. A small book procession will start at 9:30 a.m., weather permitting, from the library's old location (3915 Chain Bridge Road) for arrival at the new building by 10 a.m. After a brief ceremony, tours and activities will be offered throughout the day. For more information, call **Mary Mulrenan**, 703-324-8319, TTY 703-324-8365.

### Volunteer Service Award

Volunteer Fairfax is calling all individuals, nonprofits and businesses to nominate volunteers who have provided outstanding service in 2007 to the Fairfax County community for a Fairfax County Volunteer Service Award. Established in 1993, the award honors individuals, groups and organizations that have given outstanding volunteer service through a broad range of activities and programs.

The deadline for nominations is Feb. 22. For more information, visit [www.volunteerfairfax.org](http://www.volunteerfairfax.org) or contact **Erin Caplin** at 703-246-3470, TTY 711, or [ecaplin@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:ecaplin@volunteerfairfax.org).

### Cafeteria Prices Increase Jan. 22

The cafeterias at the Government Center, Judicial and Massey buildings will have a moderate price increase effective Jan. 22. These facilities are served by Guest Services. No other food vendor will be affected at this time. For more information and weekly menus, visit <http://infoweb/FMD/food>.

### Employee Communications Board's Reports are Online

Two new reports from the Employee Communication Board are available online at <http://infoweb/opa/commboard.htm>.

Employees are encouraged to read the 2007 Annual Report on the State of Communications and the Internal Communication Plan – Best Practices Report.

The Employee Communication Board is charged with reporting on the state of internal county communications, and the 2007 Annual Report reflects the observations and work of the board over the past year. The board's main accomplishment during calendar year 2007 was the review and analysis of agency internal communication plans. The Employee Communication Board used information from the plans to compile a list of best county communication practices.

Following the completion of the 2006 countywide employee survey, County Executive **Anthony H. Griffin** had asked all county agencies to develop an internal communication plan to encourage strong internal communications. County employees can provide feedback on the reports to [employeecom@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:employeecom@fairfaxcounty.gov). Agencies are encouraged to incorporate some of the best practices into their own agency internal communication plans.

### Winter Weather Information

Employees are reminded that information about county inclement weather information is available several ways:

▶ The county's Web site, [www.fairfaxcounty.gov](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov), will feature an announcement during weather emergencies with a link to more detailed information.

▶ Employees can call 703-246-SNOW (7669), 703-324-SNOW (7669), 1-877-669-3391 (1-87-SNOW FFX1) or the Fairfax County Government Emergency Information Line, 703-817-7771, (all TTY 711) for the latest emergency closing information.

▶ An emergency announcement will be featured on Fairfax County Government Channel 16.

▶ The Office of Public Affairs also provides information to local radio and television stations. Employees may watch or listen to local news media announcements (which also report on Fairfax City and Fairfax County Public Schools), but employees should rely on the official government sources listed above for the county's official operating status.

▶ Emergency Alert Network (EAN) messages are sent to employees who are registered with EAN about the county's status. Be sure to verify or update your EAN registration at <http://infoweb/emergency/ean>.

▶ The county's weather-related emergency closing guide is online at [http://infoweb/opa/guide\\_for\\_agencies.htm](http://infoweb/opa/guide_for_agencies.htm).

There has been a recent change in the emergency administrative leave policy. That information can be found on page 1 of the Oct. 26 Courier available online at <http://infoweb/courier> or by talking to your supervisor.

## Security & Safety Matters

Snow shoveling seems like a routine activity following winter storms. However, shoveling snow and ice also can be dangerous. According to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, more than 31,000 people were treated for injuries related to shoveling or removing ice/snow during 2006. Types of injuries include sprains and strains, particularly in the back and shoulders. Here are some tips on how to stay safe and healthy:

- ▶ Speak with your doctor before shoveling. Shoveling can raise the heart rate and blood pressure dramatically. If you have a medical condition or do not exercise regularly, consider hiring someone to remove the snow.

- ▶ Warm-up your muscles. Before beginning this physical workout, warm-up for 10 minutes with light exercises.

- ▶ Dress appropriately. Light, layered,

water-repellent clothing works well. Wear an appropriate hat, as well as mittens or gloves and warm socks. Wear shoes or boots with slip-resistant soles.

- ▶ Pace yourself. Snow shoveling is an aerobic activity. Take frequent breaks and prevent dehydration by drinking plenty of fluids. If you experience chest pains, shortness of breath or other signs of a heart attack, stop and seek emergency care.

- ▶ Use a shovel that is comfortable for your height and strength. Do not use a shovel that is too heavy or too long for you.

- ▶ Try to push the snow instead of lifting it. If you must lift, do it properly. Squat with your legs apart, knees bent, and back straight. Lift with your legs; do not bend at the waist. Scoop small amounts of snow into the shovel and walk

to where you want to dump it. Never remove deep snow all at once. Do it in pieces.

- ▶ Do not throw the snow over your shoulder or to the side. This requires a twisting motion that stresses your back.

- ▶ Do not work to the point of exhaustion.

- ▶ For safety-related questions, contact **Robert Johnson**, safety analyst, Department of Finance, Risk Management Division, at 703-324-3040, TTY 711, or [robert.johnson@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:robert.johnson@fairfaxcounty.gov). ■

## Millennium Forum on Jan. 30

Frank Benest is the featured speaker for the Millennium Forum "Transforming Government from the Inside Out: Three Challenges of 21st Century Leadership." The presentation is Jan. 30, 10:30 a.m. – noon in the Government Center Board Auditorium. The free event is open to all employees.

As city manager of Palo Alto, Calif., Benest has gained a national reputation for innovative leadership. Among his many initiatives, he developed the CityWorks campaign to expand community facilities; led efforts to increase the city's entrepreneurial services; formed an office of bureaucracy busting; and established direct communications with residents through a weekly online memo to the council, community and other programs.

Benest is the author of "Commit to Learn: Transforming Government From the Inside Out" and several other books.



**Frank Benest is the featured speaker.**

*Photo provided by Library.*

The next presentation in the series is March 26 featuring Russell L. Fuhrman, executive project manager for the Woodrow Wilson Bridge replacement.

For more information on the Millennium Forum series, visit <http://infoweb/mfs>. ■

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