

Courier

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Meet Bethany Timmes

People Like Us...

This month, Courier begins a new feature called "People Like Us." It's an opportunity to learn more about some of the interesting people with interesting jobs who are people like us - Fairfax County employees. Know someone that you think fits this description? Look for information on page 2.

First up is **Bethany M. Timmes**, accreditation project coordinator for the Park Authority, a position she has held for six months. Find out why this product of a military family is mermaid material.

What I do:

...I work with Park Authority staff and leadership to ensure we'll meet the 155 Standards for Agency Accreditation by CAPRA (Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies). I help get all the folks in the Park Authority involved and excited about the opportunity to change our organizational culture.

I began working for the county:

...in September 1997 as a limited term, front desk employee at Wakefield RE-Center (now Audrey Moore RECenter); became assistant manager and a merit employee at the RECenter in April 2003.

Favorite part of my job:

...is that moment an employee "gets it"; the very real and positive implications for their job and for the agency by becoming an accredited organization.

Favorite spot in Fairfax County:

...Running around Burke Lake, but the



Cross County Trail is becoming a close contender with so many trail options!

Favorite food:

...anything ethnic, spicy and vegetarian!

Work colleagues might be surprised to learn:

...that I test as an introvert.

If I could be a superhero or cartoon character, I would be:

...the Little Mermaid, because she never let anything stop her, plus she got to live underwater and was a princess!

When I was a child, I thought I would grow up to be:

...a soldier.

Who has had the biggest influence in your career with the county:

...if I had to pick just one, it would be **Bill Hellwig**, the manager at Audrey Moore RECenter. He always made me believe that I could accomplish anything and then he insisted I live up to that potential.

Words of wisdom:

...never lose your passion! Avoid negativity and its practitioners. Always try to make things better!

People, from page 1

If you know a county government employee that you think should be considered for the "People Like Us" feature, please send an e-mail to courier@fairfaxcounty.gov. Include your name and contact information with the other information noted in the box below. Or fill out and cut out the box and send by internal or regular mail to:

Courier, Office of Public Affairs
Suite 551, Government Center
12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA 22035

People Like Us

Name:

Agency:

E-mail and Phone Number:

Name of county government employee you recommend be featured:

Briefly explain why you think they should be featured:

Police Are All-Terrain in Reston

The 55 miles of trails in the Reston District have become more accessible to officers from the Reston District Police Station.

The station has a new four-wheel drive Kubota utility vehicle that assists officers in navigating the trails, many of them in remote locations that are difficult to get to especially in bad weather.

The Kubota utility vehicle is fully equipped with official police markings and will be used to have a visible presence on the trails, as well as at special events, according to Capt. **Deborah Burnett**, the station commander.

The vehicle can go up to approximately 25

miles per hour and is heated so it can be used during the cold weather months.

"Last year we borrowed a similar vehicle from Animal Control and decided it would be a very effective tool for us to have in Reston," explained Burnett.

The Kubota will be used primarily by the station's selective enforcement team officers (formerly known as the bike team). However, all of the approximately 108 Reston District Station officers will be trained to use the vehicle. ■



The Reston District's new utility vehicle can traverse Reston's 55 miles of trails.
(Photo provided by Police Department)

Learn more about the Police Department at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/

Upcoming EAC Elections

The terms of five representatives to the Employees Advisory Council (EAC) will expire May 31. An election is planned for April, with a nominating period in March.

The members whose terms are expiring are: **Timothy Field** (Group 1), **Matthew Vaughan** (Group 6), **Randy Creller** (Group 7), and **Dori DeSpain** (Group 8). These elections will be for three-year terms from June 1, 2007 to May 31, 2010. **Karen Conchar** (Group 3) has resigned effective May 31 and an election will be held to fill the remainder of her term which expires May 31, 2008.

Only merit or benefit-eligible exempt employees in those groups may nominate and vote in this election. Nominating forms are available from department payroll contacts or the Department of Human Resources.

The nomination period for EAC candidates runs until close of business Friday, March 16.

Employees should give careful consideration in nominating worthy candidates. Those

deciding to run for office should take careful consideration of the expectations in being part of a team of EAC representatives. Those elected represent employees by acting as a liaison between management and employees. Additionally, they are part of a team of the EAC representatives that work together in advocating for a better workplace. Nominators should follow the instructions on the petition carefully. Only merit or benefit-eligible exempt employees are eligible to sign the petition, and they must be in the same group as the nominee.

Names should be both signed and printed so petitions can be verified. A 100-word statement from the candidate should be attached to the petition. It will be printed on the ballot.

For more information, contact **Margaret Savage** at 703-324-3357, TTY 703-222-7314, or margaret.savage@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Learn more about the EAC online at www.fceac.org. ■



Public Hearing on Proposed Revisions to the Code of Ethics

A public hearing will be held March 19 on proposed revisions to the Code of Ethics (Chapter 16 of the Personnel Regulations). At the direction of the county executive, the revised language was developed by the county's first Master of Public Administration (MPA) Cohort group at George Mason University. The current Code of Ethics was developed in 1963. Revisions will update language to better reflect the county's Core Purpose and Vision Elements.

To ensure that the Code of Ethics becomes an integral part of the county workplace, the following actions are being proposed to accompany its adoption:

- ♦ Incorporate the revised code into orientation training for all new employees,
- ♦ Share a copy with all employees, members of Boards, Authorities and Commissions, and elected officials,
- ♦ Incorporate mandatory ethics training as

part of the county's employee training and development program,

- ♦ Implement a review and oversight mechanism to be administratively supported by the Internal Audit Office,
- ♦ Provide ongoing ethics advice through Courier and Infoweb, and
- ♦ Develop and maintain an ethics resource library.

The public hearing will be held Monday, March 19 at 7:30 p.m., in Conference Rooms 9/10 in the Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax.

Call the Civil Service Commission at 703-324-2930, TTY 711, if you wish to place your name on the list of speakers. For a copy of the text of the proposed Code of Ethics, go to <http://infoweb/csc/> or contact the Civil Service Commission at 703-324-2930, TTY 711. ■

For weather delay
information call:
703-324-7669
703-246-7669
TTY 711

The New Digital Citizen

How does a government organization serve citizens who use the Internet in different ways and with a wide variety of devices? Lee Rainie, director of the Pew Internet and American Life Project, discussed Internet use and demographics with county employees at the Jan. 24 Millennium Forum.

Contrary to popular belief, Gen-Xers (ages 30-49), rather than people in their 20s, are more likely to use new digital devices to get information from government. Rainie said, "They have families and are building careers. Their reasons for being engaged with

government are a lot more substantial."

Statistics on how people use government Web sites show that 60 percent look for general information, 41 percent research official documents, and, surprisingly, according to Rainie,

34 percent seek recreational or tourist information.

"People think of government Web sites as dispassionate, independent, non-commercial recommenders of stuff that is going on in their local areas," Rainie said.

Nationally, 83 million U.S. residents use government Web sites; 38 million have sent e-mail to government officials to try to change policies and 29 million have researched or ap-

plied for government benefits online.

But not everybody is Web savvy, Rainie admits, and that creates a problem for government agencies. Fewer than one-third of seniors ages 65 or older use the Internet. "I feel badly for people like you [county employees], because this just adds complexity to your lives ... You can't just move all your information and communications from the telephone to the Internet or from field offices to the Internet. You have to offer those services in addition to great Web sites and highly functional activities online."

For example, Rainie reports that more people prefer to contact government agencies by phone or in person to deal with certain matters, rather than using the Internet. However, "citizens expect that the information they need can be accessed through a combination of channels and will be consistent, no matter which channel they use."

To borrow a videotape or DVD of Rainie's presentation, call ELLVIS at 703-324-8318, TTY 703-324-8365, or e-mail john.kiefman@fairfaxcounty.gov. Rainie's PowerPoint slides are at <http://infoweb/mfs>.

At the March 28 Millennium Forum, Tamara Draut will present "Why Getting Ahead Has Gotten Harder." For details, visit <http://infoweb/mfs>. ■

by Patricia Bangs, Library

Millennium Forum Planning Committee



Lee Rainie speaks at the Millennium Forum.

Program Graduates 42 Student Leaders



Fairfax County student Selam Asihel receives her certificate from (left to right) Jack Dale, Gerald E. Connolly and Anthony H. Griffin at the awards ceremony. (Photo by Bill Yake)

The 42 graduates of the county's Youth Leadership Program were honored at the program's annual ceremony held on Jan. 24 at the Government Center.

Speakers at the event included Chairman of the Board of Supervisors **Gerald E. Connolly**, County

Executive **Anthony H. Griffin** and School Superintendent **Jack Dale**. The three county officials challenged the students to continue their interest in local government and community affairs.

The annual program, sponsored by the Department of Management and Budget in partnership with Fairfax County Public Schools, introduces top high school students to county government through a series of informational sessions and a summer internship with a county agency. ■

Consumer Protection Week, Feb. 4-10

Helpful Tips From Consumer Affairs

When you buy a product or service that brings disappointment instead of satisfaction, do you write it off as a bad experience, or do you take action?

The Consumer Affairs (CA) branch of the Department of Cable Communications and Consumer Protection can provide you with tools to resolve most problems that consumers encounter.

Through voluntary mediation, CA's Chief **Susan Jones** and a staff of eight investigators and four administrative assistants, favorably resolved 77 percent of the 2,668 complaints investigated during FY 2006. Staff efforts recovered about \$1.4 million for residents.

CA encourages you to consider the following tips so your next purchase will bring you satisfaction, not disappointment.

- ♦ Don't be pressured to make an immediate decision.
- ♦ Don't give your credit card, Social Security number or other personal identifying information to unknown callers or e-mail inquiries.
- ♦ Don't pay for a "free" gift.
- ♦ Research a company before you do business, and get all details, guarantees and prom-



Consumer Affairs partnered with other federal, state, and local government agencies to provide education and information to consumers during National Consumer Protection Week, Feb. 4-10. Consumer Affairs staff with the information booth that was in the Government Center lobby are (back, left to right) Wil Slaughter, Prescott Barbash, Susan Jones, branch chief; Roy Seger, Bronwyn Orsino, Cal Wagner, Alton Drew, (front, left to right) Christine Norris, Heidi Baggett, Vee Johnson, Elynn Kay and Terry Klein. (Photo by Jeremy Lasich)

ises in writing before you agree to buy.

Contact Consumer Affairs for mediation, investigation, education and information at 703-222-8435, TTY 711 or www.fairfaxcounty.gov/consumer. ■

Special "Thank You" to County Attorneys

Jim Zook, director, Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) and representatives from the DPZ Employee Training Committee presented thank you cards and tokens of appreciation on Feb. 6 to the Land Use Section of the Office of the County Attorney for conducting a series of training sessions last year.

More than 100 DPZ and other county staff who work in the area of land use, zoning and planning and development attended each session. The training sessions focused on land-use law issues, such as the statutory framework for planning, zoning and subdivision ordinances, regulatory takings, proffers, the role of the Board of Zoning Appeals and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. ■



Staff from the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) and Office of the County Attorney (OCA) at the "thank you" presentation are (left to right) Meghan Van Dam, DPZ; Beth Teare, OCA; Paul Emerick, OCA; Katrina Newton, DPZ; Hayden Coddling, OCA; Clara Quintero-Johnson, DPZ; Scott Wynn, OCA; Bette Crane, OCA; John Foster, OCA; David Bobzien, county attorney; Jim Zook, director, DPZ; Cynthia Bailey, OCA; Pam Pelto, OCA; Jan Brodie, OCA and St. Clair Williams, DPZ.

Focus on Benefits



**HR Central
has benefit
information.
703-324-4900,
TTY 703-222-7314**

The New "Leave" Year Began Feb. 2

The new leave year began in pay period 2 on Feb. 2. Personnel regulations allow employees with less than 10 years of service to carry 240 hours of annual leave from one leave year to the next. Employees with 10 or more years of service may carry up to 320 hours of annual leave to the new leave year. No employee may carry more than 240 hours of compensatory leave from one leave year to the next.

At the end of pay period 1, a payroll program reduced the annual and compensatory leave balances of those employees who were over the authorized maximum. Excess annual leave was converted to sick leave and added

to employees' existing sick leave balances. Compensatory leave over the maximum was forfeited.

Your current leave balances are displayed on your pay advice each pay period. You may also view your current leave balances in online TIME by entering transaction 13. Press the F6 key to see detailed information on the amount of leave earned and used, as well as your current balances.

If you have questions concerning your leave balances, contact **Cynthia Mosley** at 703-324-3344, TTY 711, or cynthia.mosley@fairfax-county.gov. ■

Flexible Spending Account Deadlines

Employees who participated in medical spending accounts and/or dependent care accounts in 2006 should keep two approaching March deadlines in mind:

March 15 Deadline for Incurring Expenses Reimbursable From 2006

Due to a new grace period introduced this year, employees who participated in the medical spending account and/or the dependent care account in 2006 have until March 15 to incur eligible expenses that can be reimbursed from their 2006 accounts.

2007 medical spending account participants who are using the EZ Reimburse® Mastercard for eligible expenses should be aware that their 2007 card transactions will not be deducted from their 2006 accounts, as previously indicated. Participants should

review their 2006 account balances and make sure they incur sufficient eligible expenses by March 15 to exhaust their 2006 accounts.

Participants can check their account balances, review lists of eligible expenses and find out which expenses may require additional documentation by logging on to the FBMC Web site at www.myFMBC.com. The user ID is the participant's social security number. Participants logging on for the first time or who have forgotten their passwords should click on "Need Help?" next to the employee login section at the top right corner of the FBMC home page.

March 31 Deadline for Submitting 2006 Account Reimbursement Requests

Although the deadline for incurring expenses has been extended, the deadline for submitting reimbursement requests to FBMC is still March 31. If participants don't incur enough expenses to exhaust the amounts in either of the flexible spending accounts by March 15 and submit the associated reimbursement requests to FBMC by March 31, they will forfeit the remaining balances.

If you have questions about your flexible spending account/s, call FBMC at 1-800-342-8017. ■

Submitting Reimbursement Requests

When preparing to submit reimbursement requests to FBMC, participants should keep in mind:

- Medical spending account participants can be reimbursed for eligible medical expenses for themselves and any eligible tax dependents.
- The flexible spending account reimbursement request form is available at http://infoweb/hr/benefits/FBMC_Claim_form.pdf.
- Reimbursement requests can be submitted to FBMC by fax at 1-800-524-7751 or by mail to Fringe Benefits Management Company, P.O. Box 1800, Tallahassee, FL 32302-1800.
- An explanation of benefits (EOB) from your health carrier showing the amount paid by the plan and the patient responsibility is sufficient documentation to substantiate your medical spending account claim.
- Some types of medical services require a letter of medical need. A list of eligible expenses and details on services requiring additional documentation is available on the FBMC Web site.
- Participants can contact FBMC Customer Service at 1-800-342-8017 from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday through Friday, (and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays in February, March and April).

Enjoying Winter Fun Injury-Free

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reported more than 88,000 hockey and skating related injuries, 91,000 injuries from sledding and more than 302,000 injuries from snow boarding and skiing during 2003. Injuries from these winter sports include sprains and strains, dislocations and fractures. Here are some tips to enjoy the winter safely:

Get Ready: Dress appropriately before going outdoors and choose clothing based on your activities and the predicted air temperature/wind speed. For warmth and protection, wear several layers of light, loose and water/wind-resistant clothing. Wear appropriate hat, gloves and waterproof, insulated boots. Sunscreen, sunglasses and lip

balms are always recommended.

Weather: Pay close attention to the forecast. Look for changing patterns or warnings about upcoming storms and severe drops in temperature. Wet areas will re-freeze quickly and walking or driving may become dangerous.

Equipment: Check to make sure equipment such as sleds, skis, or skates are in good working order. Wear appropriate protective gear, such as goggles, helmets and gloves.

Sledding: Make sure the sledding area is free of trees, posts, and fences and that the slope ends in an open space and not a street, parking lot or pond. Always sled facing forward and never sled near traffic.

Skating: Never attempt to walk or skate on ice that has not been

approved. Ice that looks and seems strong may not be able to hold your weight. In this area, it is safest to skate at a rink facility. Ice skates should fit comfortably and provide ankle support.

Skiing and Snowboarding: Take a lesson (or several) from a qualified instructor. Always stay in control and be aware of your level of ability and others around you. Don't ski alone. If you're tired, stop and rest, as fatigue is a risk factor for injuries.

Please contact **Robert Johnson**, safety analyst, Risk Management Division, Department of Finance, at 703-324-3043, TTY 711 or *robert.johnson@fairfaxcounty.gov*, if you have any safety-related questions. ■

"Every Child Is Worth Fighting For..."

More than 300 representatives from county agencies, the school system and community groups attended a daylong training on youth violence and gang prevention at the Fair Oaks Marriott on Friday, Feb. 9.

Presented by the Fairfax County Coordinating Council on Gang Prevention, the training was an opportunity to provide those involved in ending youth and gang violence with valuable information on best practices from across the country.

Gerald E. Connolly, chairman of the Board of Supervisors, kicked off the day with opening remarks and applauded the audience for all their hard work and efforts toward gang prevention. "Every child is worth fighting for," he explained. "We can't afford to give up on even one of our kids."



Chairman Connolly provides his opening remarks (top). The county's Gang Prevention Coordinator, Robert Bermingham Jr., welcomes the group.

Col. **David M. Rohrer**, chief of the Police Department, also was a featured speaker, as well as several nationally known experts on the topics of youth and violence. ■

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