



Courier

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Employees Invited to Online Chat With the County Executive

“Chat With the County Exec”
Friday, March 14
10:30-11:30 a.m.

at <http://infoweb/opa/budget>

All employees are invited to join an online chat with County Executive **Tony Griffin** on the proposed FY 2009 budget.

This is an opportunity to have a live, interactive discussion from your county computer with Griffin and other senior management staff.

All you need to do is visit <http://infoweb/opa/budget> on Friday, March 14, from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Questions for the online chat may be submitted in advance

to publicaffairs@fairfaxcounty.gov. If you miss the chat, the full transcript will be posted on Infoweb.

Chat About:

- ▶ The budget’s impact on employees.
- ▶ Proposed budget cuts.
- ▶ Tax rates and fees.
- ▶ Real estate assessments.
- ▶ Other concerns and questions.

For more information, contact the Office of Public Affairs at 703-324-3187, TTY 711, or publicaffairs@fairfaxcounty.gov. Due to the one-hour time frame and the volume of questions, it may not be possible to answer all questions.



File photo.

County Executive Tony Griffin (above) will be available to answer questions, as well as:

- ▶ **Ed Long**, deputy county executive
- ▶ **Susan Datta**, director, Department of Management and Budget
- ▶ **Kevin Greenlief**, director, Department of Tax Administration ■



You can send questions during the live, moderated discussion and read what your co-workers are asking – and the answers to the questions. Just log on to the discussion at <http://infoweb/opa/budget>. File photo.

IN THIS ISSUE

**Job Class Review
Advisory Group** p. 2
ADR Month
p. 2

Meet Joseph Bakos
p. 3
Varon Nominations
p. 3

Favorite Spots, Part II
p. 4-5
Benefits
p. 6

Briefs
p. 7
Security & Safety Matters
p. 8

Millennium Forum
p. 8

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

Job Class Review – The Employee Advisory Group

An employee advisory group has been established to assist with the Job Class Review Project. Representation includes at least two members from each of the deputy county executive areas, the Employees Advisory Council (EAC) and the senior management team.

The group's role in the project is to:

- ▶ Act as communication liaisons providing information to employees on the project status.
- ▶ Advise Segal, the consulting firm in this review, of employee concerns and perceptions.
- ▶ Respond to consultant requests for information when needed.
- ▶ Serve as a "sounding board" by providing comments on Segal's recommendations and ideas.

Advisory Group members are:

- Anita Baker**, EAC chair
- Valorie Benn**, Facilities Management
- Cheryl Bland**, Purchasing and Supply Management
- Ken Disselkoen**, Systems Management for Human Services
- Barbara Ensor**, Systems Management for Human Services
- Tonia Garcia**, Fire and Rescue
- Kevin Greenlief**, Tax Administration
- David Moyer**, Police
- Daria Parnes**, Library
- George Robertson**, Public Works and Environmental Services
- Judy Schambach**, EAC representative
- Patti Schlener**, Housing and Community Development
- Cathy Spage**, Information Technology

Segal is expected to take several months to review the input from the questionnaires (that were recently distributed to approximately half of the county's job classes) and gather additional information from the Employee Advisory Group, as well as other county employees and managers.

After a thorough analysis, final recommendations for the review are expected by early 2009.

- ▶ For details of what is included in the Job Class Review, as well as project updates and related Courier articles, go to <http://infoweb/cex/classreview>. ■

March Is Alternative Dispute Resolution Month

The Board of Supervisors recently proclaimed March as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Month. All Fairfax County employees are encouraged to learn more about dispute resolution training, coaching and mediation services available through the county's ADR Program.

Employees may request a conflict

resolution workshop for agency staff, request a mediation, attend one of the regularly scheduled trainings or learn how to become a peer mediator for your agency.

Upcoming ADR activities include:

- ▶ Informational briefing: March 26 at 1 p.m. in Government Center Conference Room 120.

- ▶ Training on how to become a mediator: April 2 - 4, 8115 Gatehouse Road, Falls Church.

- ▶ Conflict resolution skills workshop: April 24, from 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Government Center Conference Room 7.

To register for these activities or for more information, contact **Pat Baerwald** at 703-324-3348, TTY 711, or **Rea Wynder** at 703-324-3349, TTY 711. ADR information is also available at http://infoweb/cex/appeals/appeals_guide.htm.

The 16th Annual Northern Virginia Regional Student Mediation Conference was held at George Mason University on March 11 and 12. Board of Supervisors Chairman **Gerald E. Connolly** was a scheduled featured speaker and more than 1,500 county middle and elementary school students participated in the conference that included workshops led by the county's ADR mediators. ■



Several employees representing the county's Alternative Dispute Resolution Program were recognized by the Board of Supervisors during its Feb. 25 meeting when it proclaimed March as ADR month.

People Like Us . . .

Meet Joseph Bakos, Department of Planning and Zoning

Joseph Bakos supervises a team of inspectors with expertise in building, fire prevention, property maintenance and zoning disciplines as a part of the county's enhanced code enforcement initiative.

Bakos conducts investigations of properties operating illegal rooming houses, single family dwellings converted into apartments, overcrowding and other quality of life concerns. He also issues Notices of Violation of County Code and Ordinances and testifies in court when compliance is not voluntarily achieved.

Bakos began his career with the county with the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) in August 1978. From 1985 to 1990, he held several positions in the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services.

Since 1990, he has been the chief zoning inspector; in July 2007, he was promoted to a planner IV position.

Favorite part of my job...

... Solving problems, testifying in court and mentoring staff.

Favorite spot in Fairfax County...

... Riverbend Park is my favorite spot in

Fairfax County. The scenery in the park is beautiful.

Favorite food...

... All meals and desserts prepared by my mother and significant other.

Work colleagues would be surprised to learn...

... Of my passion for local history.

If I could be a superhero, I would be...

... U.S. Air Force pilot Lt. Lance J. Sijan, a war hero. He was awarded posthumously the Congressional Medal of Honor for his extraordinary heroism during his evasion and captivity during the Vietnam War.

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

... A forest ranger or game warden. I have a great love for the outdoors and of all of God's creatures. As a kid, I thought working in an environment where I derived great pleasure would be great fun and not really considered work.

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

... Donald D. Smith, longtime Employee Advisory Council representative,



Joseph Bakos has worked for Fairfax County since 1978. Photo provided by Bakos.

former DPZ employee, my first supervisor at DPZ and a county retiree.

Words of wisdom you would pass on to someone thinking of pursuing your career path...

... Recognize the value of routinely providing positive customer service.

► *People Like Us* is a recurring feature in *Courier* about the people who work for Fairfax County. Send your nomination for a future *People Like Us* profile to courier@fairfaxcounty.gov. Please include contact information for you and the nominee. ■

Barbara Varon Award Nominations

Nominations are being accepted for Fairfax County's Barbara Varon Volunteer Award, which recognizes a county resident whose dedication to improving the community through volunteer service honors the memory of Barbara Varon, former chair of the Fairfax County Electoral Board. Nominations must be received by June 13. The award will be presented in October by the Board of Supervisors.

To qualify for the award, nominees must:

- Live in Fairfax County.
- Demonstrate an appreciation for the diversity of the community's population.
- Exhibit patriotism.
- Show evidence of having a positive effect on the community.
- Be known for encouraging others to do the same.

Nominations should describe, in 200 words or less, the nominee's qualifications, the unique nature of the volunteerism, how and what was accomplished and the length of time served in each volunteer activity. Nominations should also include the resident's name, address and phone number. Send completed applications to:

The Barbara Varon Volunteer Award
Office of Equity Programs
12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 339
Fairfax, VA 22035-0041

For more information, contact the Office of Equity Programs at 703-324-2207, TTY 703-222-5494.

In 2007, Nancy Portee was honored with the volunteer award in recognition of her outstanding efforts with the Department of Family Services BeFriend-A-Child program. ■

Employees' Favorite Spots – Part II

At the end of last year, Courier asked employees to submit their favorite spots in Fairfax County. Several submissions were published in the Jan. 18 issue and some of the favorite spot photos by employees are featured in the photo gallery on the Courier Web page. Both can be found at <http://infoweb/courier>. Here are more of your favorite spots:

"I do not know what this bridge is called (photo below). All I know is that it is at the edge of Tanglewood Park, dividing the serene park and the private property on the street above. Under the bridge there is a small brook that runs downhill. Occasionally one can see little insects floating lazily on top of the water as it trickles remarkably steadily down over the ugly gray stones and dirty dried up leaves. The bridge itself is made of wood and has green tints on it due to moss and who knows what else. It is sturdy and does not creak, even when my two rambunctious brothers stamp across it determinedly. This is my favorite place in Fairfax County. It is the most serene place I know. I can come to this bridge and sit on it, with my legs dangling, or underneath it with my feet almost touching the trickling water. I can think when I am on this bridge, and



Athena Tellis' favorite spot is this bridge at the edge of Tanglewood Park. Photo provided by Tellis.

not about the calculus homework I have to complete, or when I am going to read and analyze the Spanish short story. Sometimes I even come to the bridge after my bus drops me off, before heading home, just to think, to think about anything and everything."

Athena Tellis
Library

"My favorite spot in Fairfax County is Frying Pan Farm Park. We have been visiting Frying Pan Farm Park regularly for the last 25 years. When our children were younger, we used to visit the park to see the animals and inspect the old tractors. Now, we walk our two dogs on the trails at least four times a week. We enjoy seeing the deer, foxes and groundhogs in the changing seasons. The equestrian center is an added bonus. My daughter rides elsewhere, but we enjoy seeing the horses and their riders at the park. I appreciate all the improvements that have been made at the park over the years."

Nancy Flynn
Library

"My favorite place to take my children – where they can climb, jump and run – is Frying Pan Farm Park, behind the riding ring at the magic rocks. After a trip around the farm (which is also terrific!), a stop in the store to buy a popsicle and a few minutes on the jungle gym, we head off to the magic rocks where my boys can be boys! There are many, many rocks to sit on, jump on and run around and the children can pretend to be pirates on a boat or anything else their imaginations can conjure up!

Elisa Johnson
Department of Housing and
Community Development



Nancy Flynn is among many employees who enjoy Frying Pan Farm Park. Photo provided by Flynn.

"My favorite place in the county is Riverbend Park. I love to hike the trail along the Potomac that runs into Great Falls Park. It's always beautiful, no matter what the season. And it's fun to meet my fellow walkers and their companions – both two-legged and four-legged."

Mary Jane Comly
Department of Purchasing and
Supply Management



Elisa Johnson's two sons, Noah, 2, and Connor, 4, enjoy an outing at Frying Pan Farm Park with their neighbor Regan, 5. Photo provided by Johnson.

“One of my absolute favorite places in Fairfax County is Riverbend Park. My family has been enjoying it for many, many years. The boat launch makes a perfect place from where we can start paddling our canoe. The trail along the Potomac River between Riverbend and Great Falls National Park is a perfect afternoon’s walk during any season. In fact, my husband and I probably enjoy the park best in the cooler weather when we can enjoy the view of the river and the bluffs. There is probably no prettier place

to be when the leaves have turned in the fall. We always enjoy seeing so many other folks enjoying the trails, sharing a picnic or launching a boat for a fishing trip.”

Kathleen Kelmelis
Fairfax-Falls Church Community
Services Board

“My favorite spot is the Hutchison’s Mill Dam found in the Cub Run Stream Valley behind Westfield High School in Chantilly. The dam is an impressive 100 feet long and 12 feet high, made in the early 1850s of gigantic locally quarried stone, a testament to the ingenuity and hard work of the farming families that were the backbone of early Fairfax County’s political, social and economic life. Yet, the site also reflects the power of nature as the signs of man are slowly replaced with the abundance of nature. On one trip we found a nest of turtle eggs and on another we saw evidence that otters and beavers had been visiting. I bring many of my interpretive programs here so I can convey the importance of protecting waterways as the history of the county and a home for the wildlife that still thrives here. This is by far my favorite

spot for all it represents and all that it communicates about our sense of place in the world.”

Tammy Schwab
Park Authority

“My favorite spot is looking west on a clear sunlit morning to Bull Run Mountain and way beyond, from atop Mt. Murtaugh (the old West Ox Rd. landfill). If only for a moment, it just takes me out there, and makes my day a little more enjoyable.”

Ronald R. Hudson
Department of Public Works and
Environmental Services

“My favorite spot in the county is Huntley Meadow Park. This park is a rich natural island in the suburban sea of Northern Virginia. I believe it is the best wildlife watching spot in the Washington metropolitan area. It is my favorite birding spot.”

Victoria Batista
Department of Tax Administration

“When I stand at the lookout view of the Potomac at Great Falls in Virginia, I imagine the wilderness and a place far away from the hustle and bustle of a major metropolitan area. The scenery makes me feel peaceful and enlightened and thankful to be a part of such a beautiful planet.”

Carol Bracey
Health Department



Carol Bracey provided this photo of her favorite spot – Great Falls.

Focus on Benefits

It Can Pay to Check Your Medical Bills

Under the county's Duplicate Billing/Overpayment Award Program, county employees and retirees enrolled in the CareFirst or CIGNA plans can earn financial rewards for detecting health plan overpayments of doctor, hospital or other medical bills. This program is designed to encourage employees and retirees to review their medical bills paid by the county's health plans.

Employees participating in the CareFirst BlueChoice POS, CareFirst BluePreferred PPO or CIGNA Open Access Plus plans who detect errors of \$50 or more in their health plan's payment of their or their dependents' medical bills will receive a financial reward of half the amount saved, up to \$1,000. The remaining savings will be returned to the plan and used to pay other claims.

Medical audits have revealed that a surprising number of hospital bills contain errors, typically duplicate billing or charges for services not received, which health plans sometimes do not catch when making payments. As an employee, you can play a valuable role, helping to identify these errors by carefully examining your medical bills and



File photo

explanation of benefit (EOB) statements from your health plan.

Here are some steps you can take:

- ▶ Always request a copy of a hospital bill for yourself and/or your dependents, even if it is 100 percent covered by your health plan. Note the medical diagnosis and check for charges for tests, X-rays or medications that you did not receive or that were not appropriate for your situation.

- ▶ Look for repetitive postings of identical services, especially on the same day, that may have been paid by your health plan in error. The computer may have billed more than once for the same service. Also check different charges for

HR Central

HR Central has benefit information.

- ▶ Call 703-324-4900
TTY 703-222-7314
- ▶ Visit <http://infoweb/hr/benefits>

identical tests or services – they may have been posted in error.

- ▶ Pay particular attention to the type of X-rays received. Make sure you actually had the radiology tests for which your health plan paid.

- ▶ As with hospital bills, occasionally a doctor's office may bill your health insurance plan twice for the same service. Be sure to review each EOB and report any instance where services were billed and paid more than once. Also review each EOB for services that you or your dependents have not actually received.

- ▶ To get more information on the Duplicate Billing/Overpayment Award Program, contact **Sharon Boelcskev** at 703-324-3432, TTY 703-222-7314. ■

More Local Stores Now Accepting Flexible Spending EZ REIMBURSE Card

The following local stores have now implemented the Inventory Information Approval System (IIAS) and join Walgreens, Wal-Mart and Sam's Club in accepting the medical spending account EZ REIMBURSE card for payment of eligible medical expenses:

- ▶ Giant
- ▶ Safeway
- ▶ CVS Pharmacy
- ▶ Target

When using the EZ REIMBURSE card for eligible medical expenses at these stores, you typically will not be required to submit documentation substantiating these expenses.

However, it is strongly recommended that participants keep all EZ REIMBURSE Card receipts in the event documentation is required. ■

Briefs

Substance Abuse Awareness Week Survey for Employees and Community Partners

The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board is preparing for the 27th Annual Substance Abuse Awareness Week (SAAW) and Conference, scheduled for Oct. 31. A particular focus will be on skill-building for employees who through their jobs may interact with residents involved with alcohol and drug abuse.

In order to provide substantive training at the conference, employees are asked to take a short needs assessment survey at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/prevention/saawsurvey.doc. You are encouraged to share the survey link with community partners, such as nonprofit and faith-based organizations, who also attend the conference.

SAAW 2008 will raise community awareness of substance abuse and build community capacity and connections to better address this public health concern.

For more information about the conference or survey, contact **Christina Foley** at 703-934-5476, TTY 711.

Employees' Child Care Center Automates Registration and Billing

County employees who wish to enroll their children in the Employees' Child Care Center (ECCC) can now fill out and submit applications at <http://Infoweb/ofc>.

You will receive a call from an ECCC registrar within three business days to discuss your child's application. Once your child is enrolled in ECCC, you will receive a monthly invoice through Outlook. For more information and reasonable ADA accommodations, contact **Patricia Ludwig**, Department of Family Services/Office for Children, at 703-324-8215, TTY 711.

Department of Family Services Presented with \$1,500 Donation for Children in Foster Care



Photo provided by the Department of Family Services.

Members of Phi Eta Mu (above), a fraternity founded in 1923 at the University of Puerto Rico, presented the Department of Family Services (DFS) on Feb. 29 with a generous donation of \$1,500 in gift cards to help purchase back-to-school clothes and supplies for county children in foster care.

Pictured with the fraternity members are Rosa Suau (far right) and Claudia McDowell (far left) with Fairfax County's foster care and adoption program, and Dana Paige, DFS director (fifth from right).

Phi Eta Mu has an active professional chapter in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Members at the Pennino Building presentation came from as far away as Puerto Rico, Florida, Illinois and North Carolina.

The posters advertise, in Spanish, the need for foster and adoptive families, with the words, "Donde comen tres, comen cuatro," a Spanish proverb that means, "Where three eat, four can eat."

Call for Nominations by March 21: Employee Recycling Committee Award

The Employee Recycling Committee Award (ERICA) honors individuals or groups within county government who demonstrate an exceptional commitment to recycling in the workplace by sponsoring special projects, events and incentives to get others in the workplace to recycle. If you know of an individual or group that meets this standard, nominate them for the ERICA award. All nominees will receive a special recycled glass award.

The award deadline is Friday, March 21. For a nomination form, go to <http://infoweb/dpwes/msw/ericanomination.htm>. For more information, e-mail erc@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Cheer for Outstanding Co-workers On March 28!

Mark your calendar – the Department of Human Resources is hosting the Outstanding Performance Awards on Friday, March 28, at 10 a.m. in the Government Center Forum.

Security & Safety Matters

With warmer weather and longer days approaching, people have more time to spend on long-neglected projects such as spring cleaning and yard work. Here are some tips to stay safe this season:

► Indoors

Many people initiate a spring cleaning this time of the year. It is important to recognize hazards and other dangers associated with spring cleaning:

Chemical safety: Always read the label on any cleaning product containers and look for recommended precautions. This could include protective eyeglasses or gloves. Labels will often recommend products be used with adequate ventilation. Never mix chemicals – an unexpected reaction may occur.

Storage: Remove all fire hazards, such as piles of rags, newspapers and magazines. Never store items near the furnace or hot water heater.

► Outdoors

Before starting yard work, remember many chores may seem easy, but they involve muscles you probably haven't used in a while. Stretch your muscles before you begin to work and build up slowly so you don't overdo it.

Clothing: Always wear appropriate protective clothing for the task, such as gloves, long pants, eye protection and sturdy footwear. This is especially critical when handling pesticides and fertilizers. Always wash hands and clothing after handling these materials.

Equipment: Inspect all equipment, tools and electrical cords prior to use for signs of damage and repair/replace as necessary. Never use damaged tools or equipment.

Ladders: Read the manufacturer's instructions as they contain weight and height limits as well as the proper use

of their product. Inspect the ladder before using it to make sure there are no damages.

Know your limits: Consider trained professionals for repairs around the house and always use licensed contractors.

► For questions about safety-related issues, contact **Robert Johnson**, safety analyst, Department of Finance, Risk Management Division, at 703-324-3040, TTY 711, or robert.johnson@fairfaxcounty.gov. ■

Millennium Forum Is March 26

Russ Fuhrman is the featured speaker for the Millennium Forum "Lessons From the Bridge: Mega Project Management in an Urban Environment." The presentation is March 26, 10:30 a.m. – noon, in the Government Center Board Auditorium. The free event is open to all employees.

Fuhrman is the executive project manager of the ambitious 7.5-mile Woodrow Wilson Bridge replacement. He and his team manage the \$2.5 billion program that includes all aspects in the bridge's construction from planning, design and construction management to public and community affairs. Fuhrman recently was awarded the Golden Beaver Award for Engineering for his leadership on this and other projects.

The next presentation in the Millennium Forum series is May 28 featuring keynote speaker Neal Petersen



Russ Fuhrman. Photo provided by the Library.

presenting "No Barriers, Only Solutions."

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

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