



Courier

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“Chat With the County Exec” Rescheduled for Friday, April 18 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. at <http://infoweb/opa/budget>

Technical difficulties experienced during the previous online chat have been resolved. County employees are invited to participate in a rescheduled chat with County Executive **Tony Griffin** and senior managers on Friday, April 18, 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. All you need to do is click on the link at <http://infoweb/opa/budget>. The new format for the moderated chat also will

enable employees to post their questions anonymously, without being identified by their e-mail address. The topic for the chat is the proposed FY 2009 budget and the budget's impact on employees. Other discussion points may include the proposed budget cuts, tax rates and fees, and real estate assessments.

▶ Questions for the online chat may be submitted in advance by e-mail to publicaffairs@fairfaxcounty.gov.

▶ For more information, contact the Office of Public Affairs at 703-324-3187, TTY 711. ■

Four Firefighters Receive Gold Valor Award

Four members of the Fire and Rescue Department were presented with the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce's highest honor, the Gold Medal of Valor, last month at the 30th annual Valor Awards ceremony. The honorees are Lieutenant **Danny R. Urps**, Master Technician **John F. Linhart**, Master Technician **Joseph K. Swift** and Hazardous Materials Technician **William F. Ward**.

The firefighters were honored for going above and beyond the call of duty while responding to a “mayday” call by another firefighter last May.

A total of 40 valor awards were presented by the Chamber of Commerce and the Board of Supervisors during the annual event that recognizes public safety employees' “extraordinary acts of courage and resourcefulness in the line of duty.” Honorees also included members of the Herndon and Vienna police departments. ■



The Gold Valor Award winners are (left to right) William F. Ward, John F. Linhart, Danny R. Urps and Joseph K. Swift. Photo by Keith A. Dobuler.

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Employees Celebrate Outstanding Work on March 28

Whistles, noisemakers, shouts and applause filled the hallways of the Government Center on March 28 when hundreds of employees gathered in the Forum for the Employee Awards Ceremony. The event, which celebrates excellence and outstanding achievements in the county work force, was coordinated by the Department of Human Resources (DHR) and hosted by DHR Director **Peter Schroth**. The awards were presented to employees by Board of Supervisors Chairman **Gerald E. Connolly**, Mason District Supervisor **Penelope A. Gross** and County Executive **Anthony H. Griffin**.

The awardees in three categories follow:

Employee Suggestion Awards

This program provides employees the opportunity to improve county government operations by contributing practical ideas for monetary savings, greater efficiency, increased effectiveness of service to the public, safer working conditions or better employee relations.

Public Works and Environmental Services

Wastewater Treatment

Ryan Gracom, plant operator

Bryan Polick, environmental technologist II

Outstanding Performance Awards (OPA)

These awards provide recognition to employees who perform the duties and responsibilities of their positions in an outstanding manner, and whose work is generally well above expectations. An OPA may be given for consistently high performance; significant benefit to county operations; or exemplary performance on a specific project or assignment.

Cable Communications and Consumer Protection

Ellyn Kay, consumer specialist I

Ebie Hamrick, printing service customer service specialist

Circuit Court and Records

Cynthia Castillo, administrative assistant IV

Community Services Board

Alcohol and Drug Services

Margaret Kollay, substance abuse counselor II

Mental Health

Rosemary Lewis, senior clinician

Family Services

Ursula Barretta, management analyst II

Carolyn Carter, management analyst II

Christina Manning, administrative aide – Board of Supervisors

Grace Starbird, director, Area Agency on Aging

Michael Finkle, management analyst III

Ernesto Gonzales, human service worker II

Dalia Schlegel, social worker III

Keith Wong, social worker supervisor

Finance

Anh Bui, accountant II

Shakeel Yusuf, chief, finance division

Fire and Rescue

David Bryant, lieutenant

Mark Ebersole, technician

Richard Mungo, technician

Michael Runnels, captain I

James Tolson, technician

Raul Castillo, lieutenant

Renee Stilwell, communications specialist II

Nell Jarvis, budget analyst II



Awardee Ebie Hamrick is congratulated by Board of Supervisors Chairman Gerald E. Connolly and Mason District Supervisor Penelope A. Gross.



OPA winner Shakeel Yusuf.



OPA winner Lindsey Culin.

Juan Rengel, management analyst III

Deborah Stern, management analyst II

Library

Sholeh Jafari, administrative assistant III

Bonnie Kline, administrative assistant II

Nancy Makowski, librarian I

McLean Community Center

Elizabeth Katz, administrative assistant IV

Park Authority

Todd Brown, historian III

Charles (Charlie) Reed, senior survey analyst/coordinator

Planning and Zoning

Norma (Jeannie) Burton, planning technician III

Heidi Merkel, planner IV

Donna Pesto, planner IV

Public Affairs

Lindsey Culin, communications specialist I

Public Works and Environmental Services

Wastewater Collection

Uwe Freund, industrial electrician supervisor

Directors Office

Howard Guba, assistant director

Solid Waste Collection and Recycling

Christopher Kardelis, maintenance worker

Owen Kyer, maintenance worker

Ricky Marsh, heavy equipment operator

Capital Facilities

Allan Quinde, engineer II

Katayoon Shaya, engineer IV

Land Development

Ronald Smore, senior engineering inspector

Wastewater Treatment

Harold (Tom) Wright, plant maintenance supervisor



Paulette Whiteside, Systems Management for Human Services, shows her enthusiasm for winning an OPA.

Purchasing and Supply Management

Mary Jane Comly, management analyst III

Reston Community Center

Eileen Boone, park/recreation specialist III

Sheriff

Kelly Colby, deputy sheriff sergeant

Donald Fuller, deputy sheriff II

Systems Management for Human Services

Sarah Allen, regional community developer

Paulette Whiteside, administrative assistant IV

Tax Administration

Carolyn Quetsch, management analyst IV

Lesa Woods, administrative assistant III

Team Excellence Awards

Team Excellence Awards recognize the outstanding efforts of groups of employees, often from different agencies, with interdisciplinary membership. Teams may be a diverse group who come together to accomplish a specific goal and then disband or an ongoing group that has performed in an outstanding manner on a specific project.

Integrated Parcel Lifecycle System Project Development Team

Information Technology

Vickie Baitinger, programmer analyst III

Jayashree R. Kori, programmer analyst IV

Wu Yao, programmer analyst III

Hilde Kjersgard, programmer analyst II

Gregory Thomas, GIS spatial analyst IV

Madesha Basavaraju, programmer analyst IV

Chris M. Swanson, IT systems architect

Linda Boaz, programmer analyst IV

Jeanne Wright, programmer analyst IV

Enrique Quinonez, IT systems architect

Nikhil Bhushan, programmer analyst III

Sujatha Geddam, programmer analyst III

Karen Field, IT program manager II

Public Safety Communications

Pu (Chris) Gao, programmer analyst III

Systems Management for Human Services

Fatima Khaja, management analyst III

Anne Pickford Cahill, management analyst IV

Planning and Zoning

Mubarika Shah, planner III

Indrani Sistla, planner III

Public Works and Environmental Services

Debra McMahon, code specialist

Kenneth Williams, engineer III

Stephen Garnier, business analyst IV

David V. Sharp, code specialist III

Tax Administration

David Amey, supervising real estate appraiser

Diana Michalke, business analyst IV ■



The award-winning Integrated Parcel Lifecycle System Project Development Team with County Executive Anthony H. Griffin (far left), Peter Schroth at podium and Gerald E. Connolly (far right).

County Employee Appears in “John Adams” HBO Miniseries

Sam Roberts, McLean Community Center director of special events, and a part-time actor, is an extra in the seven-part miniseries “John Adams,” which airs on HBO through April.

Roberts appears in part two of the series, which originally aired on Sunday, March 16. He was cast as a South Carolina delegate to the Continental Congress and is in several scenes depicting the congressional debates and the reading of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

Roberts, a 19-year veteran of the community center, holds a bachelor’s degree in drama from the University of Montana.

“I always wanted to act and did so as a volunteer actor in local community theater groups during my Air Force career,” explained Roberts.

He got the call from Central Casting to be an extra on “John Adams,” after answering an open call three years ago for “Syriana,” produced and starring George Clooney. Although his part in that movie ended up on the cutting room floor, he did get the opportunity to meet Clooney and actor William Hurt.

“John Adams” is based on David McCullough’s Pulitzer Prize-winning biography. During the production, Roberts met actor Tom Hanks, one of the executive producers for the series. ■



Sam Roberts in costume with Tom Hanks during the production of “John Adams.”

(Below) Acting runs in the family according to Roberts, with his wife, Charlotte, and daughter Mandy (center) on the set of “Evita” at Catholic University last fall when Mandy starred as Eva Peron. Photos provided by Roberts.



Millennium Forum – The Art of Project Management

Pat Bangs, Library Millennium Forum Committee

“To be a leader of a large project, you must be adept at helping people get their second choices,” noted Russell L. Fuhrman, manager of the 7.5-mile and \$2.5 billion Woodrow Wilson Bridge replacement, at the Millennium Forum on March 28.

Leadership is an art, according to Fuhrman. It involves centralized policy and guidance and decentralized execution, as well as skill in negotiating compromises.

The bridge project involves three “owners” – one federal and two state agencies, as well as five designers and 15 major contractors. “It’s the interfaces that kill you – when two parties have to cooperate with each other,” he explained.

Fuhrman outlined five areas key to a successful project: management, leadership, technical expertise, mass

communication and dealing with political and special interest organizations.

Technical expertise for a project manager becomes less important at senior levels. More important is knowing what he or she doesn’t know and overcoming the “not invented here” mentality – the resistance to new ideas. When a contractor on the project suggested a new road construction design that would speed up the project and be more efficient for drivers, Fuhrman had to negotiate with many stakeholders who felt the change in plan would cause problems.

Fuhrman also described his “asymmetrical” approach to media relations. He pointed to stories about the eagles George and Martha and the contest to find someone with the worst commute on the old bridge to blow it up as examples of media coverage that helped highlight a project that was on time and under budget.

“It’s a clash of two cultures,” Fuhrman

said in explaining the challenges of large government projects. “The public side, which is process driven, and the private sector that values the bottom line.”

▶ Fuhrman’s PowerPoint presentation is available online at <http://infoweb/mfs>.

▶ To borrow videotapes or DVDs of Fuhrman’s presentation, contact the Employee Lending Library for Video Instructional Services at 703-324-8318, TTY 711, or John.Kiefman@fairfaxcounty.gov.

The next forum is scheduled for May 28 when Neal Petersen, the first black man to race a yacht solo around the world, presents “No Barriers, Only Solutions.” ■

Mears Named Director of Retirement Administration Agency

The Board of Supervisors appointed **Robert L. Mears** as director of the Retirement Administration Agency, effective May 5.

The Retirement Administration Agency manages three separate defined benefit retirement systems: county employees, police officers and uniformed.

Mears has served as the director of the Department of Finance since 1999. He is also treasurer and Investment Committee chairman of the Fairfax County Employees' Retirement System; treasurer of the Fairfax County Police Officers Retirement System; and treasurer of the Uniformed Retirement System. In 2002, Mears was the recipient of the county's Managerial Excellence Award.

From 1989 to 1999, Mears served as the director of finance of the Fairfax

County Public Schools (FCPS). During his tenure with FCPS, Mears served as vice chairman and Investment Committee chairman of the Fairfax County Employees' Retirement System and treasurer of the Educational Employees' Supplementary Retirement System. He joined the FCPS staff in 1986 as budget coordinator following five years of service with Fairfax County government as a management analyst.

Mears is a graduate of the College of William and Mary and holds a master's degree in public administration from the University of Northern Colorado.

► For more information on the Retirement Administration Agency, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/retbrd. ■



Robert Mears is new director of Retirement Administration Agency. File photo.

"We're Counting on You" 2008 Virginia School Census Fast Facts

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) and school systems across the state are encouraging residents to complete the school census that is now underway. The information gathered with each census helps to measure the current population and to chart future population trends and helps school systems make projections for future needs. The data includes information on preschoolers, toddlers and infants as well as homeschooled and privately schooled children who currently, or who may in the future, use Fairfax County Public Schools services.

Here are some facts provided by FCPS:

- The 2008 Virginia School Census began March 1 and concludes July 15.
- The commonwealth of Virginia requires each school division to conduct a census every three years.
- FCPS needs to count every person

residing in Fairfax County who will reach his or her first birthday but not his or her 20th birthday by Dec. 31.

► For the 2008 Virginia School Census, each child counted will bring approximately \$3,000 back to Fairfax County Public Schools in tax dollars.



► All households in Fairfax County are mailed a census form.

► There are four ways to respond to the 2008 Virginia School Census:

- 1) Respond online at www.fcps.edu/census.
- 2) Mail in the form.
- 3) Respond via fax to the 2008 Virginia

School Census office.

4) Respond via an interactive voice response system.

► Children attending private schools and those home-schooled are counted in the 2008 Virginia School Census.

► All data collected are kept confidential.

► Data gathered help projections for future school needs.

► Translation assistance is available in Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Korean, Spanish, Urdu and Vietnamese.

► For more information, go to www.fcps.edu. ■

Focus on Benefits

Frequently Asked Questions: County Dental Program

Employees responding to the 2007 benefits survey were generally satisfied with the county's dental program (see March 28 Courier). However, some expressed concern with dental provider access and the county plan's design and level of coverage.

The following questions and answers address these areas of concern and clarify some common misconceptions about the county's dental program.

How does the county's dental program with Delta Dental work?

The county's plan with Delta Dental provides three plans in one and is designed to offer competitive benefits with maximum flexibility in choosing a dentist.

Unlike the county's previous dental HMO plan, members pay a percentage of the dentist's charges and there is a \$2,000 annual limit on the benefits the plan will pay for each member.

The Premier Plan, which offers the largest dental provider network, is the centerpiece of the program and provides coverage comparable to the plans offered by other local jurisdictions. This plan is complemented by a preferred provider network option that has a smaller provider network and a higher level of benefits and an out-of-network option providing a lower level of coverage.

More details on the dental plan are available at <http://infoweb/hr/benefits/dental2008.htm>.

How does the county's dental plan compare to the dental plans of other local jurisdictions?

The county's dental plan compares favorably with the benefit plans of other local jurisdictions and Virginia employers. The county's \$2,000 annual benefit



File photo.

limit is the highest provided by a local jurisdiction and is higher than 90 percent of other Virginia employers. The level of benefits under the Premier Plan is the same as the coverage provided by most other local jurisdictions and the Preferred Provider Plan offers a higher level of coverage than most other jurisdiction plans.

How many dentists participate in the Delta Dental network?

More than 3,100 of approximately 3,700 Virginia licensed dentists participate in Delta Dental's Premier Plan network and more than 1,200 participate in the high-end Preferred Provider network. To find a dentist that participates in Delta Dental's network, go to www.deltadentalva.com and click on the link under "Subscriber Connection."

What coverage does the Delta Dental Plan provide for composite (white) fillings? Aren't composite fillings preferred by the American Dental Association (ADA)?

The Delta Dental plan covers composite fillings for the front six teeth, both upper and lower, at a rate of 90

HR Central

HR Central has benefit information.

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

percent, if you see a Preferred Provider Plan dentist. Coverage is 80 percent if you see a Premier Provider Plan dentist or an out-of-network dentist. For composite fillings in back teeth, the plan will pay dentists the same amount it pays for amalgam (silver) fillings and the patient must pay the difference. On average, composite fillings cost about 26 percent more than amalgam fillings.

Although some organizations have raised concerns related to amalgam fillings and some dentists prefer composite fillings, the ADA continues to recognize amalgam fillings as a safe, durable and cost-effective treatment.

In fact, with more than 150 years of use, the ADA cites amalgam as the most thoroughly researched and tested filling material. In addition to being less expensive, amalgam fillings tend to last longer and are more resistant to breakage and wear than composite fillings.

▶ If you have questions about the county's dental plan or need help finding a network dentist, call Delta Dental at 800-237-6060, TTY 711. ■

Briefs

9th Annual Tim Harmon 5k Run/Walk is June 14

Employees are encouraged to start training now for the Ninth Annual Tim Harmon 5k Run/Walk on June 14 at 8:30 a.m. at the Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Sponsored by the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board Alcohol and Drug Services, the event honors Tim Harmon, a county employee who died of Hepatitis C in 1999.

The purpose of the event is to raise awareness of substance abuse and Hepatitis C. Individual registrations received by June 1 are \$18; registrations received June 2 to race day are \$21.

The Police Department and Fire and Rescue Department are again challenging each other in the race. There will be live entertainment by the Sock Monkeys, T-shirts for all registrants and more than 100 awards given out.

► For race information visit www.timharmon5k.org, call 703-934-8756, TTY 711 or e-mail peggy.cook@fairfaxcounty.gov. To register online, visit www.RacePacket.com.

Animal Shelter Announces New Hours – Change in Operations Begins April 12

The Animal Shelter will host new hours beginning Saturday, April 12. The new shelter hours will be:

Tuesday – Friday: noon – 7 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

The change in hours reflects an analysis of the number of visitors to the shelter during the hours it is currently open to the public.

This change also is in response to requests from residents who said they would benefit from the shelter being open later on weekday evenings.

The shelter will provide all services during the hours it is open to the public,

including facilitating animal adoptions and visitations, returning animals to their guardians, accepting surrenders and strays and allowing residents to obtain dog licenses.

► The county's Animal Shelter is located at 4500 West Ox Road, Fairfax. The phone number is 703-830-1100, TTY 711.

► For animal-related issues requiring the assistance of an animal control officer, residents can call non-emergency police dispatch at 703-691-2131, TTY 711.

eCollections 2008 Conference

The Department of Finance (DOF) is presenting the first eCollections Conference on Thursday, May 1, 8 a.m. to noon in the Government Center Board Auditorium and Conference Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. This half-day event provides a forum for agency managers and staff to learn more about the different products and services available in the areas of electronic collections and banking.

Managers and line staff from all revenue collecting departments as well as budget analysts working with those departments are encouraged to attend.

Self-registration is available through the Employee Learning Center through April 18. Instructions for self-registration can be found at: <http://s70lms01/stc/ffxlms>.

► Questions regarding registration should be directed to your agency's training coordinator.

► For questions about the conference, contact **Franklin Fout** at 703-324-2959, TTY 711 or **Ngan Nguyen** at 703-324-2809, TTY 711. For reasonable ADA accommodations, contact **Terry Ty** at 703-324-3140, TTY 711.

Earth Day Expo at Government Center – April 25

Mark your calendars for the fifth annual Earth Day Expo in the north atrium of the Government Center (outside the cafeteria on the first floor) on Friday, April 25. The Expo runs from 11 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Take advantage of this opportunity to learn about the work of county agencies involved in environmental issues.

► More information is available at <http://infoweb/dpwes/msw/erc.htm>. For reasonable ADA accommodations, call 703-324-5451, TTY 711.

Microsoft Office Communicator

Most county employees have access on their computer to a communication tool called Microsoft Office Communicator. Similar to instant messaging, this tool should be used for brief informal messages between co-workers with real-time (instant) delivery. Office Communicator features a contacts list with the names of people you collaborate with frequently. Using this tool, you can see the online status of the people in your contacts list. When co-workers are away from their workstation for an extended time, Communicator changes their online status to "away." When they are in a meeting, Communicator interfaces with their Outlook calendar and their online status becomes "In a meeting." The online status can also be set manually to indicate you are "busy." The contact list can change, as duties and projects come and go, and the people you contact also change. Employees should note that once your Office Communicator "chats" are closed, there is no record of the communication, unlike Outlook e-mail, which can be saved, archived or deleted.

► For more information about Office Communicator, call 703-324-HELP (4357), TTY 711, or e-mail ITservicedesk@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Security & Safety Matters

Theft from vehicles can occur anywhere, including places where there are large concentrations of vehicles, such as shopping facilities, churches, sporting and recreation events, and restaurants; or a single vehicle parked on a residential street. Here are some tips that can keep you from being a victim of theft:

- ▶ Do not leave anything in your vehicle in plain sight that you would not want taken.
- ▶ Always lock your doors even if you plan to be away from your vehicle for only a minute, such as running in to pay for gas.
- ▶ Park in well-lighted areas.

▶ When shopping, always make sure to place purchases in the trunk and out of sight before going to the next shopping area to park.

▶ Try to maintain a “clutter free” vehicle.

▶ If you can't park your vehicle in your garage at night and have to leave it parked in the driveway or on the street in front of the house, make sure to remove the garage door opener. This is a key to your home!

▶ Consider replacing standard license plate screws with theft deterrent screws available at auto parts stores.

▶ Remove your GPS and holder, and

keep it out of sight when not in use. Also clean your windshield to remove the round mark that is left when the GPS holder is removed. Thieves are targeting vehicles having that mark on the windshield.

Even the smallest most insignificant items left in plain view could result in a window being smashed, which causes a great deal of expense and mess. If you eliminate the opportunity, you will more than likely eliminate the crime.

▶ To report suspicious activity call your building's security staff. For more information or training opportunities call 703-324-1373, TTY 711. ■

EAC News

The Employees Advisory Council (EAC) has two current representatives that will continue into a new three-year term through May 31, 2011. The nominations were unopposed for representatives **Judy Schambach**, Group 3 (Department of Public Works and Environmental Services and Facilities Management Division) and **Steven Baker**, Group 4 (Park Authority, Community and Recreation Services, McLean Community Center, Reston Community Center, Vehicle Services, Purchasing and Supply Management).

In addition, two new representatives who were also unopposed will join the EAC on June 1. **Sandra Witt**, Group 11 (Public Safety Civilians - Fire and Rescue, Police, Sheriff and Department of Public Safety Communication) will serve a three-year term and **Victoria Collado**, Group 9 (Sheriff's Office, Circuit Court and Records, Juvenile Court, Commonwealth Attorney's Office, and 19th General District Court) will serve a one-year term.

▶ Look for more information in Courier next month. For information about the EAC, visit www.fceac.org. ■

Mark Your Calendar: ART Conference is April 25

The Administrative Resource Team (ART) is presenting the 2008 Administrative Professional Development Conference, “Our Evolving Role: Leadership at Every Level” at the Government Center on April 25 from 7:45 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.

The conference will address strategies for thriving in today's workplace where “one size fits all” is no longer what the job requires.

Don't miss this opportunity to sharpen your skills and network with colleagues.

▶ Online registration opens on April 16 and closes when workshops are full. For more information, go to <http://infoweb/hr/ART>. ■



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