

Courier

Inside this issue...

- ◆ People Like Us - 3
- ◆ All Fairfax Reads - 3
- ◆ Retirement Funds Profile - 4
- ◆ Bike to Work - 5
- ◆ Celebrate Fairfax! - 5
- ◆ Deferred Compensation - 6
- ◆ Briefs - 7
- ◆ Security & Safety Matters - 8
- ◆ Your Favorite Book - 8

When viewing Courier online, use the marked links to get directly to stories, e-mail addresses and Web pages.

The Kids Come to Work!

If you happened to visit the Government Center on April 26, you may have assumed that the average age of county employees had dramatically decreased – by several decades. Hundreds of children with mom, dad, grandparent or other family member in tow converged at the Government Center to participate in the annual Bring Our Kids to Work Day event for county employees.

Hosted by the Office of the County Executive and coordinated by **Cathy Maynard**, it was an opportunity to showcase career opportunities with the county and for kids to find out what the adults in their lives are doing all day while they are at school.

The event kicked off with a welcome from Library Director **Edwin S. Clay III**, who introduced keynote speaker Marylou Tousignant, deputy editor for The Wash-



Eamann Ghesemy (center) and Yanic Custode (right) get instructions on planting flower seeds in a yogurt cup from Cindy Brown, Park Authority.

ington Post's KidsPost page. Tousignant provided the audience with an overview of what goes into creating KidsPost.

Seventeen county agencies provided fun, interactive booths and workshops, with plenty of giveaways and goodies. Several agencies, including Transportation, Vehicle Services, Police and Fire and Rescue showcased the county's fleet of big trucks, buses and emergency vehicles, giving kids the chance to sit behind the wheel. The Police Department's helicopter was another big hit, landing and taking off on the field outside the Fitness Center.

According to Sarah Dillow, 9, she enjoyed seeing the Police Department dogs, meeting friendly people and spending some quality time with her dad, **Frank Dillow**, Department of Purchasing.



Master Police Officer Peter Masood explains how dogs are trained to be a part of the K-9 section of the Police Department's Special Operations Division.

Kids, see page 2

Kids, from page 1

Elena Patchan, 12, also was a big fan of the dogs and deemed the event “pretty cool.” She spent the day with her dad, **Scott Patchan**, Office of Partnerships.

But it was Shiv Sharma, 10, son of **Sapna Sharma**, Department of Information Technology, who noted with a big smile that what he liked most was actually what he was missing – being at school. ■



Shiv Sharma (standing, left) participates in the Conversation Cafe workshop coordinated by Jaya Kori, (standing, right) Department of Information Technology (DIT). He is with his mother, Sapna, DIT, and brother Sidhant.



Edwin S. Clay, Library, welcomed the kids to the Government Center.



Marylou Tousignant, KidsPost, with three helpers from the audience.



Joseph Williams, 13, "interviews" for a position as a police officer with Michael Rumberg, Department of Human Resources.

Participating Agencies:

Animal Control
Cable Communications and Consumer Protection
Community and Recreation
Electoral Board
Family Services
Fire and Rescue
Health Department
Human Resources
Information Technology/
Geographic Information Services
Library
Park Authority
Police
Risk Management
Sheriff
Tax Administration
Transportation
Vehicle Services

Bring Your Kids to Work Day Team:

Cathy Maynard, Office of the County Executive
Patrick Balsamo, Cable Communications and Consumer Protection
Wes Blackwell, Vehicle Services
Nancy Brannegan, Family Services
Leonard Clark, Risk Management
Lisa Connors, Public Affairs
Denis Paddeu, Transportation
Sharen Downer, Facilities Management
Jaya Kori, Information Technology
Michael Wall, Police
Fran Millhouser, Library
Valda Brown, Family Services
Chuck Wright, Fitness Center

Meet Chad Grupe, DPWES

People Like Us...

Chad Grupe is an ecologist for the Stormwater Planning Division of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services. He spends a lot of time with insects and fish while protecting and monitoring the county's natural resources.

What I do...

...My fellow ecologists and I determine the health of Fairfax County streams through the monitoring of benthic macroinvertebrates (aquatic insects), fish and bacteria. I am also the project manager for the county's Riparian Buffer Restoration Program, which aims to reforest our stream corridors.

I began working for DPWES...

...In April 2000 as a limited-term employee. I became a full-time employee in spring 2004.

Favorite part of my job...

...I enjoy being able to get out and walk the streams and see what lives in them. I have done this since I was a child growing up in the Adirondacks.

Favorite spot in Fairfax County...

...Any stream in the county where I can't hear the buzz of traffic or see any man-made structures. It's good to know that these places still exist.

Favorite food...

...Pasta with butter and parmesan cheese.

Work colleagues would be surprised to learn...

...I keep Madagascar hissing cockroaches and a 13" African giant millipede as pets.

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

...The Tick

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

...Anything that had to do with fish or insects. With this job I get to do both!

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

...My wife and son. There is no better reason to try and protect our natural resources than your family.

Words of wisdom...

...Be able to adapt. A job never stays the same, you must be able to adapt to whatever changes come to you.

People Like Us is a recurring feature in Courier about some of the interesting people with interesting jobs who work for Fairfax County. Send your nomination for People Like Us to courier@fairfaxcounty.gov. ■



Chad Grupe at work with a fish; the hissing cockroaches are at home. Photo provided by Grupe.

All Fairfax Reads

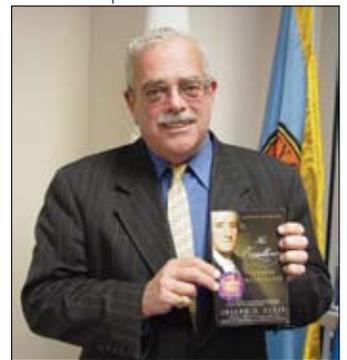
The Library invites all employees and residents to participate in the fourth annual All Fairfax Reads, which encourages adults to read and discuss the same book between May and September. In celebration of Virginia history and the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, this year's book selection is "His Excellency: George Washington" by Joseph J. Ellis.

Ellis, an award-winning historian, describes the development of George Washington's character during his years in the French and Indian War, his astute strategy for winning the Revolutionary War, his reluctance in moving from military life to the political arena as the

nation's first president, and his success in leading the fledging democracy.

"I have already read this book," noted **Gerald E. Connolly**, chairman of the Board of Supervisors. "It turns Washington from a marble statue into an heroic human being who suffered and sacrificed for a sacred cause and prevailed because of his extraordinary persistence."

This fall look for events and activities related to "His Excellency," including a presentation by the author on Sept. 27. More information is available at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library. ■



Chairman Connolly with a copy of this year's All Fairfax Reads selection. Photo provided by the library.

Bike to Work on May 18

County employees have three good reasons to participate in Bike to Work Day:

1. For their health.
2. For the environment.
3. For the free T-shirt!

There are several more reasons to join thousands of county and Washington region residents who will hop on a bike May 18. Hosted by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), this annual event is held every spring to increase awareness of bicycling to work.

"Bike to Work Day is an opportunity to encourage people to think about bicycling as a commuting option," said **Charlie Strunk**, bicycle program coordinator for the county's Department of Transportation (DOT). "Bicycling can help reduce the number of cars on the road, which can reduce greenhouse gases as well as congestion. It has added benefits of providing exercise and fresh air to participants, and it's cheaper than driving."

Six bicycling pit stops will be set up in the county. According to Strunk, DOT will be sponsoring two of the pit stops at Fairfax Corner and the Franconia-Springfield Metro

Station. The other four pit stop locations are Reston Town Center, Vienna, University Mall and Tysons Corner.

Each pit stop will offer snacks, entertainment, speakers and chances to win bicycles and other prizes. You need to register with WABA by today, May 11, to receive a T-shirt and be eligible for prizes.

People without bicycles can join too; information is available at www.waba.org for those who need to borrow a bike for the day. To find the most convenient bicycle route, contact Strunk at 703-324-1127, TTY 711.

Participants can also learn how to load their bicycles in the new Fairfax Connector bike racks at the Fairfax Corner, Reston and Vienna pit stops. All Fairfax Connector buses will be equipped with bike racks by fall 2007, giving cyclists more travel flexibility and options. For information about the Fairfax Connector Bike-N-Ride program, call 703-339-7200, TTY 703-339-1608, or visit the Web site at www.fairfaxconnector.com. ■



Bicycle Program Coordinator Charlie Strunk bikes to work.

Celebrate Fairfax! June 8 - 10

Celebrate Fairfax! returns to the Government Center June 8-10. Here are some highlights of the festival.

Sneak Peek: County employees are invited to the annual Sneak Peek event on Friday, June 8 from noon to 2 p.m. Employees will be able to enjoy items from the crafts market, food from more than 30 food vendors and the carnival. The Motown cover band formed by county employees, DC Transit, will be playing on the Bud Select Stage at noon. Remember that Sneak Peek is intended for the county's employees only.

Entertainment: Among the festival's highlights, there will be 80 concerts on six stages, including a great mix of national, regional and local performers. Go to www.celebratefairfax.com for a list of dates and times for head-

line entertainment, including a performance by the band "Smash Mouth."

Fairfax County Expo: More than 40 agencies are participating this year with exhibits focused around the theme, "Fairfax County: Past, Present & Future." Highlights include toilet bowl racing, homeownership orientations and workshops, a 30 foot replica of the Godspeed, colonial games and other interactive educational displays.

How You Can Get Involved: Festival volunteers are still needed; contact **Meagan Lindsay** at meagan.lindsay@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-5457, TTY 71, to sign up for a shift. For general information, or to view the complete entertainment schedule for Celebrate Fairfax!, visit www.celebratefairfax.com or call 703-324-3247, TTY 711. ■

Focus on Benefits



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

Deferred Compensation: Increasing Retirement Contributions

The 457 deferred compensation plan offers two powerful tools to accumulate money for retirement: contributions that are not currently taxed as income and tax-deferred earnings. By electing regular payroll deductions, saving is automatic.

What a difference \$20 can make! A small increase each year in your contribution amount can make a significant difference in your deferred compensation account balance by the time you retire.

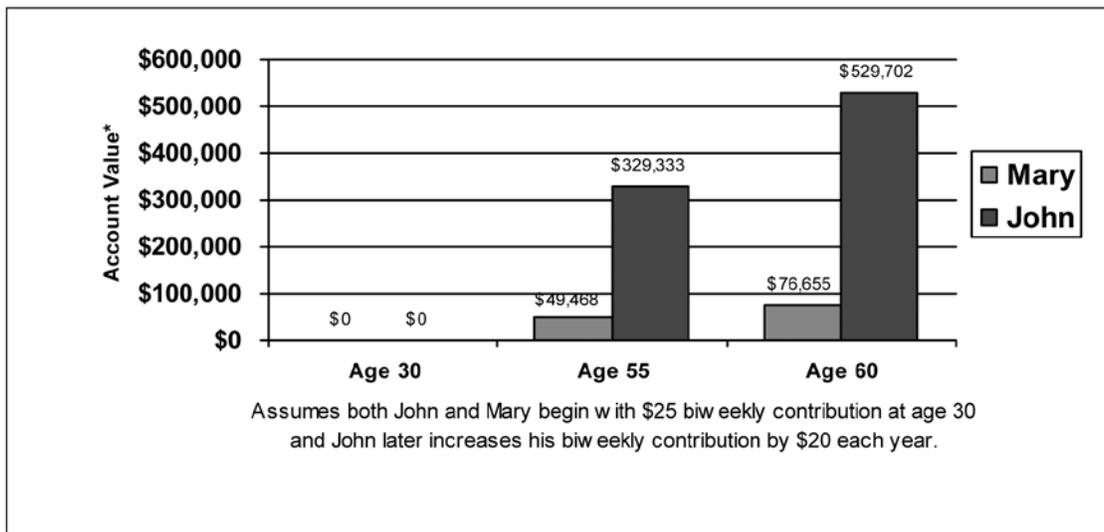
For example, John and Mary are both 30 years old. They decide to enroll in a 457 plan and contribute \$25 biweekly. John decides to increase his contributions by \$20 each year but Mary makes no change. By age 55, Mary

has over \$49,000 in her account but John, at the same age, finds he has over \$329,000. Five years later, after continuing to increase his contributions by \$20 each year, John has over \$500,000, which is \$400,000 more than Mary has in her account.

Even small increases in your deferred compensation contribution amount can provide significant returns over time.

If you would like to enroll in the deferred compensation plan, increase your contribution amount or discuss your investment strategy, call the Financial Help Desk at 703-324-4995, TTY 711. ■

Example:



*Assumes 8 percent annual rate of return. Not an actual account – for illustrative purposes only. The performance of your account may be higher or lower and will vary according to investment options selected. Past performance is not indicative of future returns.

Millennium Forum On May 23

Steven Johnson is the keynote speaker for the Millennium Forum "Everything Bad is Good for You: How Popular Culture is Making Us Smarter" on Wednesday, May 23, from 10:30 a.m. to noon in the Government Center Board Auditorium. The free event is open to all county employees.

Johnson is a cross-disciplinary thinker who applies broad-ranging research and creative thinking to interesting social problems and comes up with intriguing and important insights into how we live and learn, work and play.

Both social critic and technologist, Johnson has written several popular books on the intersection of science, technology and personal experience, three of them national bestsellers. His writings have influenced everything from the way political campaigns use the Internet, to cutting-edge ideas in urban planning, to the battle against 21st-century terrorism.

A writer-in-residence at New York University's journalism department, Johnson is a contributing editor to *Wired* and writes a monthly column for *Discover*. He was co-founder and editor in chief of the revolutionary Web magazine FEED.

Johnson graduated from Brown University and earned an MA from Columbia. He was a finalist for the 2002 Helen Bernstein Award for Excellence in Journalism and was named one of the "Fifty People Who Matter Most on the Internet" by *Newsweek*.

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



Steven Johnson will speak at Millennium Forum on May 23.

Repairs at Pennino and Herrity Garages

The Facilities Management Department (FMD) is making repairs on the Herrity and Pennino garages located at 12011 and 12055 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. These repairs will require changing traffic patterns within the garage. Please be alert and cautious for the changing traffic patterns, as well as workers in the area. The repairs are expected to take approximately four months, continuing through August. For questions or reasonable ADA accommodations, call the Facilities Management Department Work Control Center at 703-324-2055, (option 1), TTY 711.

Green Spring Garden Markets

On Saturdays, May 12 and May 19, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria, is holding Green Spring Garden Markets. Green Spring invited a select group of local growers to provide shrubs, native plants and

wildflowers, ornamental grasses, herbs and unusual perennials and annuals for sale.

The Green Spring Master Gardeners will be on hand highlighting a particular horticultural practice, such as shade gardening, composting, containers, etc. Walk through Green Spring Gardens' beautiful grounds and get inspired.

Call 703-642-5173, TTY 703-803-3354, for further information and reasonable ADA accommodations.

Communications Strategy Reminder

The Fairfax County Communication Strategy requires all county publications to include several standard elements, such as the date, department name and contact information, TTY telephone numbers and more. Publications must also include the county seal accompanied by the phrase "A Fairfax County, Va., publication." The Office of Public Affairs has received a number of requests to provide this required statement in other languages and they are now available in the Resources section of the strategy. For more information, send an e-mail to commstrategy@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Courier Deadline

Due to the Memorial Day holiday on May 28, the deadline to submit information and articles for the June 8 issue of *Courier* is moved to noon on Friday, May 25. If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Connors, *Courier* editor at 703-324-3197, TTY 711, or lisa.connors@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Bicycle Safety

Now that the weather is warm, people of all ages enjoy riding bicycles. Bike riding is fun, but accidents can happen.

According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, more than 500,000 people in the United States are treated each year as a result of bike-related accidents. Children ages 15 years and younger are at a particularly high risk, as they account for 59 percent of all bicycle-related injuries. Here are some tips to stay safe:

Get Ready: Always check your bike before riding. Check the tires for defects and proper inflation, make sure the seat, pedals, handlebars, reflectors, etc., are secure and the brakes are functional. Performing a simple check of the bike may identify problems before you start riding.

If the bicycle has not been used for a long time, it is recommended

that a professional bike shop look it over.

Helmets: Helmets are required by state and county codes. In Fairfax County, all riders under the age of 14 must wear helmets. It is recommended all riders, regardless of age wear helmets while bicycling.

Only use helmets that have been approved by the Consumer Product Safety Commission or by the Snell Memorial Foundation, a nonprofit organization that tests helmet safety and sets stringent standards.

A helmet should sit firmly on the rider's head and not be tilted forward/backward. It must be fastened while riding.

Keep in mind helmets lose their capacity to absorb shock after a hard hit. If you are involved in a significant fall and hit a surface hard with the helmet, the helmet should be replaced.

Riding: Always share the road with cars, other riders, walkers, and strollers. If possible, choose a bike path free of cars. Keep an eye on the road ahead so you are prepared for changing conditions such as wet leaves, gravel or rocks, curbs, storm grates, etc. Remember to ride on the right side of the road, obey traffic signs, check for traffic and maintain control.

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

Tell Us About Your Favorite Book!

What is your favorite book? Is it a classic you read as a child, the latest bestseller, or a book you read 10 years ago that made a lasting impression on you?

In conjunction with All Fairfax Reads (see page 3), Courier would like to hear from you about a book that you really enjoyed and why you would recommend it to others. It can be fiction or nonfiction. The deadline for submissions is May 25. Selected book recommendations will be published in an upcoming issue.

Send an e-mail with your favorite book to courier@fairfaxcounty.gov. Please include your name, agency



and phone number. Provide the title of the book, the author (if you know it) and a short paragraph on why you enjoyed it.

You can also send your favorite book submission to Courier editor, Office of Public Affairs, Suite 551, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA 22035. ■

Courier is published most payday Fridays. The deadline for articles and information is two weeks before publication.

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