

Dung Tran with Zoe at Arlington Mill Community Center during a "Helping Paws" event.

'Helping Paws'

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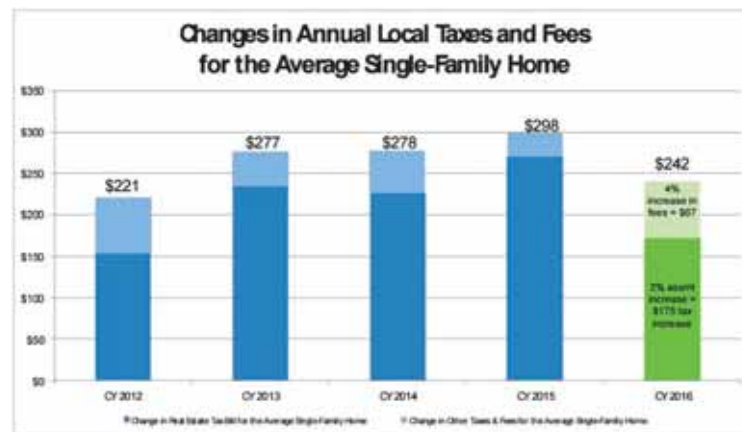
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PHOTO BY AMINA LUQMAN/THE CONNECTION



Commercial vacancy rates have decreased since 2014, but remain high. The Fairfax County and Alexandria commercial vacancy rates in 2016 were both at 16 percent, just under the 17 percent average vacancy rate for Northern Virginia.



The average single family homeowners in Arlington can expect an \$242 increase in in taxes and fees.

GRAPHICS CONTRIBUTED

Budget Season Blooms Looking at the basics of Arlington's 2016 budget.

BY VERNON MILES
THE CONNECTION

The birds will be singing, the snow will be melting, and throughout spring, Arlington County staff and board members will spend most of their afternoons haggling over finances. On Feb. 23, the County Board will vote on County Manager Mark Schwartz's proposed FY 2017 budget, and 2016's budget session will officially kick off.

2016 shows no sign of slowing for Arlington's population growth, which means increases in service demands and the school population. Even before the County

Board can begin financing county projects and services, the county faces \$7 million in non-discretionary inflationary increases to county expenditures. There's a 3 percent (\$1 million) increase in metro costs, and another 3 percent (\$1.9 million) in county debt and 9.5 percent increase (also \$1.9 million) in county facility costs.

Residential assessments in Arlington are expected to increase by 3 percent, with zero growth in commercial property growth. In the commercial property sector, office vacancy continues to be a major concern. Vacancy rates are currently at 20.8 percent, the lowest it's been since the last quarter of 2013. Vacancy rates spiked in late 2014 at

23.6 percent vacancy. With little growth in commercial property, the preliminary FY 2017 outlook prepared by the county manager's office indicated that more of the tax burden will continue to shift towards homeowners.

Arlington County government and Arlington Public Schools have a revenue sharing agreement, meaning 46.5 percent of the local tax revenue goes directly into the schools. Arlington County Public Schools will host its first budget meeting on Thursday, Feb. 18, where preliminary budget guidance estimates that county and schools will face a \$12 million budget gap. If accurate, that gap is less than the record \$20

million gap that the FY 2016 budget started with.

The preliminary outlook noted that student growth had increased by between 2.8 percent and 5.2 percent per year over the last five years. However, that growth was expected to slow to between 2.7 percent and 3.5 percent each year over the next five years.

The entirety of the Feb. 23 Arlington County Board meeting will surround a vote on a request to advertise the FY 2017 budget. Public Budget Hearings will take place towards the end of March, with a tax rate hearing on March 31. Budget adoption will occur in April.

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‘As You Wish’ Annual “Princess Bride” Valentine’s Day screening at Arlington Drafthouse.

Love. Revenge. A clever hero. A beautiful princess. Sword fights. “The Princess Bride” has everything anyone could want in a Valentine’s Day movie, which is how the classic film became an annual tradition at the Arlington Drafthouse, which shows the movie, along with a magic show or stand up, every Feb. 14.

“I grew up with it, I can quote it line by line,” said Dana Biedrzycki, who also saw the movie at Arlington Drafthouse and Cinema last year. “I took my boyfriend last year, and I actually did quote it word for word in the theater.”

For Stacey Sawin, her love of the film goes all the way back to elementary school, when she got it as a present one year for Easter. Over the years, Sawin says it has become her favorite movies, but seeing it on Valentine’s Day, 2016, was extra special because her boyfriend of 10 months, Vikram Rajan, had never seen it.

“That’s inconceivable,” said someone behind them when Rajan confessed.

“I know,” Rajan answered, “I keep hearing that line.”

Further back along the line, Joe Teshar



PHOTO BY VERNON MILES

Line stretching down the block for the sold-out 3:30 showing of “The Princess Bride.”

said his relationship had started with a similar story. He said he had seen Princess Bride before dating his girlfriend, but that she’d made him watch it again with her as a test to see whether they would last as a couple. Teshar said he had enjoyed it well enough the first time, but really loved it when he watched it with her.

The stand-up routine accompanying the movie was performed by Randolph Terrance, which is what Caroline Defebbo said brought her out on that Valentine’s Day.

“It’s already timeless,” Defebbo said, “but this is an additional layer. I’m excited to see a new take on it.”

Not everyone in the line was seeing it to celebrate Valentine’s Day. For Jennifer Burnette and Natasha Dfosu, best friends from high school in line to see the movie, it also happened to be their birthday.

“It’s the ultimate fairy tale,” Burnette said. “It’s a classic.”

— VERNON MILES

13,500 Gallons of Mineral Oil Flow into River

Dominion Power working on remediation.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
THE CONNECTION

The unraveling of the oil sheen mystery on the Potomac River took Federal, state and Arlington County officials, the Coast Guard, multiple lab tests and days of speculation. And although Dominion Virginia Power has accepted responsibility, they still don't know how it happened.

The Coast Guard was notified Feb. 3 by the National Response Center about an oily sheen of unknown origin or extent on the Potomac River. Lt. David Ruhlig, incident commander for the initial response phase of the operation, said the Coast Guard got a cluster of reports in early February from the National Response Center. He said some reports were from their own Coast Guard boats on the river, others anonymous and some attributed.

"We investigate every oil spill report we receive; my specific division alone had over 300 reports last year," he said.

This was 11 days after Dominion Power had informed environmental officials about a leak that had taken place on Jan. 24 when a Dominion transformer failed and the mineral oil used to cool the equipment spilled on the ground and some of the other equipment. It wasn't until Feb. 4 that the public got word of the situation in a news report.

"When the spill happened we notified the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Arlington County later that same day," said Le-Ha Anderson, spokesperson for Dominion Power. "At the suggestion of the EPA, Dominion notified the National Response Center on Jan. 25. Then we were out there every day under close supervision with representatives of the EPA, DEQ and Arlington County while we were doing cleanup and inspecting locations where oil could have gone into any waterway. There was no evidence of any oil outside the area except one manhole in front of the station. We inspected the two outfalls that connect to that manhole and they were clear of any visible sign of oil. We believe we have picked up most of the oil."

She said they were still in that clean-up process when the National Park Service told them there was an oil sheen present on the Potomac.

Del. Mark Levine said he first found out about the oil sheen on Wednesday afternoon Feb. 3 when he received emails from constituents saying there appeared to be oil on the Potomac.

"They could see it, smell it. They asked if I knew anything about it so I started calling around," he said. The Virginia DEQ con-



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

Gulls and ducks had returned to Roaches Run Wildlife Sanctuary on Sunday, Feb. 14. This is the site where an oil sheen was first discovered earlier in February.



Dominion Power transformer station at 18th and South Fern Street in Arlington was responsible for a Jan. 24 spillage of about 13,500 gallons of mineral oil used to cool the equipment. This resulted in an oil sheen found on the Potomac, Roaches Run and manholes nearby.

Staying in the 1890s

Section 62.1-44.19:6 Citizen right-to-know provisions.

Current right-to-know provisions require the State Water Control Board to provide to a local newspaper the discharge information reported to the director of the Department of Environmental Quality when the Virginia Department of Health determines that the discharge may be detrimental to the public health or the board determines that the discharge may impair beneficial uses of state waters.

On Feb. 15 legislation was considered in the Virginia legislature to expand the reporting requirements for discharge of deleterious substance into state waters. HB977 was introduced by Democratic Del. Alfonso Lopez and reported from committee. This bill was considered on the floor of the Virginia House the same day. It expanded current law to require any person who unlawfully discharges any deleterious substance into state

waters to notify the State Water Control Board, the Department of Environmental Quality, or the coordinator of emergency services of the affected locality with 12 hours. Current law allows such a person 24 hours to give notice. The bill also requires that written notice follow to the board, in addition to the department, and specifies that the required report of potentially detrimental discharges by the board or the department to local newspapers, television stations, and radio stations be provided to such media outlets as soon as practicable after receiving it. This bill was defeated on a party line vote 37-56.

Lopez said he introduced his legislation last summer because Virginia is the fifth worst state in the country for toxic dumps. "It was just a coincidence that it was considered yesterday after the information became public about the recent oil spill on the Potomac." He said the legislation would have taken Virginia from the 1890s to the 1950s in terms of notification because it expanded the requirement from newspapers to radio and TV. "And they didn't even want that."

Anderson explained after they had read the Coast Guard report, and done some of their own analysis, Dominion Power took responsibility. But, she said, "We don't know what could have caused this to happen. We don't have any evidence from the Coast Guard that it is a match to the sheen and how it got into Roaches Run."

David Botkins, director of media relations and communication for Dominion Power, said, "I think we'll know eventually what caused it. We always go back and do our own forensics investigation."

The connection of the transformer spill to the oil sheen might seem obvious, but Ruhlig said, "In the early stages we don't presume anything. We look where the facts take us. It was a dynamic event with a significant snow melt that made things more complicated, and we got a series of different reports."

Levine says the same thing happened a month ago in Harrisburg, and five years ago there was a Pepco oil spill. As a result, he plans to introduce legislation in the next session to regulate containment of mineral oil in transformers and also to require a public notification process. "Obviously there isn't one now," he said.

The next step is cleanup and remediation. Marin said that they had opened up a trust fund to pay for the response while they were investigating the responsible party. Now that Dominion has accepted responsibility, it will be up to them to pay for all have the cleanup and remediation.

Anderson says a meeting is scheduled this week to talk about the next steps financially, the mitigation required and the period of time.

"We are committed to do this quickly," Anderson said.

'Helping Paws' Entertains Seniors

A treat for the audience and treats for the performer.

PHOTOS BY
AMINA LUQMAN
THE CONNECTION

BY AMINA LUQMAN
THE CONNECTION

When Charles and Patty Toftoy visit Arlington Mill Community Center with Zoe in their arms, the smiles and laughter begin almost the moment they enter the door.

"Hi Zoe!" says receptionist. Zoe, the 6-year-old Yorkie, wags her tail and prances from side to side. It's show time, and she's ready.

Upstairs, the Toftoys enter a community room, 12 seniors are seated in a half circle. They watch in amusement as Patty Toftoy keeps a hand on Zoe's leash while she darts about and Charles Toftoy sets up. The tricks begin. Zoe charms her audience as she jumps through hoops, runs zigzag through a line of orange cones, sits, jumps and high fives on command. "Good girl," praise Patty and Charles Toftoy. The audience members clap. Zoe knows 12 tricks.

The Toftoys and Zoe are "Helping Paws." It began over 10 years ago, out of a love for their dogs and a desire to make people happy. They have two dogs, Zoe, and an older dog, Sasha. Both are Yorkshire Terriers. Sasha doesn't perform much anymore. "We used to go to senior facilities and let people hold her. But then the dogs started learning tricks," said Patty Toftoy. Soon a full performance was born. Zoe has made appearances at senior adult centers, hospitals, assisted living, nursing homes and rehab centers throughout Arlington County and as far



Salwa Al-Kaysi holds Zoe.



Valentina Levchemko with Zoe.

away as North Carolina. They do a show every third Wednesday at Arlington Mill Center and every second Tuesday at Walter Reed Community Center.

"They really enjoy being here," said Emma Valencia, of her senior participants. Valencia is the senior programs coordinator at Arlington Mill Center. She's been



Charles "Chuck" Toftoy, Patty Toftoy and Zoe

working with the Toftoys and Zoe for years, making sure to include them as an option in their senior recreational activities schedule. "They need it. Most of them live alone," she says.

After the tricks, the couple passes Zoe from hand to hand. Each audience member gets a chance to hold Zoe and feed her a

treat. Broad smiles appear on many faces. "I like dogs very much," smiles Salwa Al-kaysi as she holds Zoe. Most can't resist, and give Zoe a warm hug. Zoe, in her element, revels in it all, happy to accept their treats.

"Helping Paws" has their next appearance on Feb. 29 at the Lee Adult Center.



Oscar Coreas holds Zoe.



Zoe does tricks.



Alex Goldstein holds Zoe.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Email announcements to arlington@connectionnewspapers.com.

Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church is seeking volunteers to give seniors transportation to medical and therapy appointments, the pharmacy and grocery store. The Center also needs volunteers willing to visit seniors in their homes and to make

phone calls from time to time to let lonely seniors know they have not been forgotten. Call 703-506-2199, email info@scmaf.org or visit www.scmaf.org.

Arlington Public Library is seeking teen volunteers to work on Mondays, 3:30-5 p.m. with a year-long time commitment. Responsibilities would include sorting materials, attaching labels to books, etc. Call 703-228-

5960.

ArtStream is looking for volunteers of all ages to act as on-stage mentors for the 2016 Inclusive Theatre productions in Arlington. Inclusive Theatre Companies are scripted acting companies featuring adults with intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities and adults on the Autism Spectrum. The Companies are directed by trained theatre

professionals. Call 301-565-4567.

Homework Helpers Needed. Columbia Pike Branch Library is seeking high school and college students and retired teachers to work individually with elementary and middle school students from 3-6 p.m. Call 703-228-5960 or visit volunteer.truist.com/acvo/org/oppfor for details.

The
Arlington
Connection

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

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An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Free digital edition delivered to your email box. Go to connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe

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PEOPLE



PHOTOS BY SHIRLEY RIFE/THE CONNECTION

Just Play'n Country for Fun

Dwayne Thompson on the guitar leads off with the words to "Detroit City" as Marshall Hendrickson on the banjo and his wife Peggy join in. Just Play'n Country, a group of long-time Arlingtonians, is practicing at Lee Senior Center at their regular 1-3 p.m. Friday afternoon time. The group plays together for fun but also at nursing homes, churches, elementary schools, the VFW and other local events.

"FLOURISHING AFTER 55"

"Flourishing After 55" from Arlington Office of Senior Adult Programs for Feb. 21-27.

Senior Centers: Lee, 5722 Lee Hwy.; Langston-Brown Senior Center, 2121 N. Culpeper St.; Culpepper Garden, 4435 N. Pershing Dr.; Walter Reed, 2909 S. 16th St.; Arlington Mill, 909 S. Dinwiddie St.; Aurora Hills, 735 S. 18th St.

Senior trips: Sunday, Feb. 21, U.S. Army Band 94th anniversary concert, \$5; Tuesday, Feb. 23, Open rehearsal, Mariinsky Ballet, Kennedy Center, \$23; Thursday, Feb. 25, Henley Park Hotel,

D.C., afternoon tea, \$58; Friday, Feb. 26, Capital Remodel and Garden Show, Chantilly, \$19; Saturday, Feb. 27, Signature Theatre, "Road Show," \$69. Call Arlington, County 55+ Travel, 703-228-4748. Registration required.

Pickleball games and instruction, Mondays, 11 a.m., Arlington Mill. Free. Register, 703-228-7369.

Skating, Mondays, 8:10a.m. - 9:20 a.m., Kettler Capitals Iceplex, Ballston Mall, \$1. Register, 703-228-4771.

Madison Chess Club, Mondays, 9:30 a.m. Games and strategies. Free. Details, 703-534-6232.



Sheet music open in front of her, Karen Mullen on the autoharp sings, "I keep my eyes wide open all the time ... Because you're mine, I walk the line." Mullen says she has been playing with some of this group for over 20 years at the center.



Chuck Vasaley has switched from the harmonica to the clarinet as the pace picks up. Anne Peret, the programming supervisor at Lee Senior Center, says she got a call last week from Leesburg asking how they could duplicate this program. Her answer: "Get the right volunteer musicians."

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VDOT Virginia Department of Transportation

Transform 66 Inside the Beltway Project Arlington County, City of Falls Church and Fairfax County Design Public Hearings

All hearing times are 6-8 p.m., with a brief presentation beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Monday, March 7, 2016

Washington-Lee High School Cafeteria
1301 N. Stafford Street
Arlington, VA 22201

Tuesday, March 8, 2016

Eagle Ridge Middle School Cafeteria
42901 Waxpool Road
Ashburn, VA 20148

Wednesday, March 9, 2016

VDOT Northern Virginia District Office
4975 Alliance Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030

Visit Transform66.org to view a live stream of this presentation at 6:30 p.m.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in partnership with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), will host Design Public Hearings for the Transform 66 Inside the Beltway Project. Improvements involve converting I-66 to dynamically-priced toll lanes in the peak direction during morning (eastbound) and afternoon (westbound) rush hours between I-495 (the Capital Beltway) and U.S. Route 29 in Rosslyn, along with implementing a series of multimodal improvements that will benefit toll users of I-66. Information related to proposed locations and design of toll gantries and signage will be available at the hearings, as well as a presentation on how the toll system will operate.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR 771, draft Categorical Exclusion (CE) documentation has been prepared in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration and is available for review and comment. VDOT staff will be available to discuss the environmental studies underway and the coordination with appropriate regulatory agencies to obtain information about the resources in the project's vicinity. A public notice for review and comment on the final CE documentation will be posted at a later date. In compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 and 36 CFR Part 800, information concerning the potential effects of the proposed project on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places is also provided in the environmental documentation.

Stop by to learn more about the project, discuss your questions with project staff, and attend the formal presentation.

Review project materials at the hearings, including the draft CE, traffic technical report, plans, project schedule, and right-of-way, environmental and civil rights information. Materials are available for review at www.Transform66.org, at public locations listed on the project website, or VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office at 4975 Alliance Drive in Fairfax. Please call 800-FOR-ROAD (800-367-7623) or TTY/TDD 711 to ensure availability of appropriate personnel to answer your questions.

Give your written or oral comments at the hearings or submit them to Amanda Baxter, Special Projects Development Manager, at the VDOT Northern Virginia District Office (address noted above). You may also e-mail comments at any time to Transform66@VDOT.Virginia.gov. Please reference "Transform 66 Inside the Beltway" in the subject line. Comments must be postmarked, emailed or delivered to VDOT by March 24, 2016 to be included in the public hearing record.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT's Civil Rights Division at 800-367-7623 or TTY/TDD 711.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Hula Girl Brings Taste of Hawaii to Shirlington

What started as a food truck has blossomed into a full-fledged restaurant giving Hawaiians — and Hawaiian food fans — a taste of home.

BY HOPE NELSON
THE CONNECTION

Northern Virginia is home to innumerable cuisines. Salvadoran, Korean, Vietnamese, Southern barbecue, Ethiopian ... the list goes on and on. But there's been a dearth of Hawaiian cuisine in the region — until Hula Girl's grand opening in Shirlington changed that.

Hula Girl is one of the newest neighbors in the Village at Shirlington, but its roots go much deeper than its new location alone. Beginning as a food truck during the economic downturn several years ago, the restaurant quickly filled a void in the patchwork of cuisines that knit the region together.

"Lo and behold, the truck kind of just took off," said owner Mikala Brennan. "Our lines got longer and people kept finding us."

And the customer base was diverse. East Coasters found a new outlet for culinary adventures, and native Hawaiians got a little taste of home.

"Hawaiian food was this weird hole here that had not been filled," Brennan said.

In 2013, Brennan determined it was time to grow the food truck into something bigger. She initially set her sights on space in Washington, but quickly determined that moving across the river would meet the restaurant's needs better.

"As I kept looking in D.C., I just wasn't finding what I wanted. One of the big things for me was to have something all on one floor," she said. Two floors "just didn't appeal to me. ... I want it to be residential. I

want it to be a community. I want it to be a neighborhood place."

Walking through the Village at Shirlington one day, Brennan noticed an empty storefront with a sign in the window advertising its availability. But to her consternation, it turned out the space had already been taken. A month later, though, the landlord called to tell Brennan the deal had fallen through and offered her the space.

"I had already looked at the space. The kitchen was done really well; I knew we would have to do a lot of demolition in the front end, but I felt like OK, we've finally found it, after a year-plus of looking," Brennan said.

It didn't take long for Brennan and her crew to settle in and make the space their own. While the food is always a linchpin of any restaurant, it's crucial not to underestimate the importance of the décor and ambience, and Brennan spent a lot of time thinking that through.

"I think a lot of people can look at Ha-

Details

Hula Girl

4044 Campbell Ave., Arlington
11:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Sunday-Thursday; 11:30 a.m.-11 p.m. Friday-Saturday.

Hidden gem: The wood ear mushroom salad. "I think when people do kind of find it, they're like 'Oh my gosh, this is so great,'" says owner Mikala Brennan. "I wanted to do something that was vegan-friendly."

Point of pride: The bathroom, which is decorated with photos that bring meaning to Brennan's life. "A lot of them are pictures of my mom," Lynda "LB" Brennan, who was a Pan-American flight attendant. "If you look closely at the pictures, it's a story."



Hula Girl's table décor is fun — and functional.

waiian and it can go in a lot of different directions," she said. "... I wanted to bring elements in that were Hawaiian, but I didn't want to bang people over the head with it. I wanted it to be subtle."

The final result is less tiki bar and more friendly, comfortable beach-chic. Light-colored wood tables and walls serve as the foundation for the space, and lively artwork dots the walls.

But at the end of the day, the Hawaiian food is the star of the show. The poke — traditional Hawaiian raw fish salad — and Spam musubi are two of Hula Girl's top sellers, Brennan said. The musubi, a sushi snack containing marinated Spam, can be an acquired taste for some, but it generally wins over a number of converts, Brennan added.

Don't discount the mainland entrees. Brennan says the non-Hawaiian dishes pack a punch despite their stateside roots.

"We have beautiful New York steaks in here," she said.

And vegetarians won't be left out of the fun, either. The menu boasts several teriyaki plates, one featuring tofu as the protein of choice, served with rice or a salad.

Also, Brennan says, the wood ear mushroom salad is a bit of "a sleeper hit." Teaming with sweet potato noodles, edamame, daikon, and of course the featured mush-



The restaurant's cocktail, wine, and beer lists are extensive. The Spicy Hula begins with a habanero-infused tequila and cools the tongue off with some lime and hibiscus syrup.

rooms, it's great by itself — or with grilled chicken or steak for the omnivores at the table.

The bar offers a plethora of cocktails, wines, and beers to wash down your meal.

"Our mai tai is one of the best things that we have," Brennan says, and the wine list sports many regional and further-flung offerings, beginning with Maryland and stretching out to the Finger Lakes region of New York and beyond. The beers, Brennan says, are a blend of local and Hawaiian breweries, ranging from Adroit Theory in Purcellville to Kona Brewing Company on the Big Island.

The restaurant's first few months of life have been a whirlwind of growth, but Brennan says they're not finished yet. She's still aiming to get one of the D.C. area's most famous Hawaiians — President Obama — in for a meal before he moves out of town.

"I briefly went to the same high school as he did and we were born in the same hospital," Brennan said.

Based on the reception Hula Girl has received from the community, he wouldn't be disappointed.

CALENDAR

Email announcements to arlington@connectionnewspapers.com. Include date, time, location, description and contact for event: phone, email and/or website. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

ONGOING

Art Exhibit: "The Power of Color."

Through Feb. 27, Monday-Friday 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Gallery Underground, 2100 Crystal Drive. "The Power of Color" focuses on vibrant color. Free. Visit www.galleryunderground.org for more.

Photography by Jan Bender and Richard Weiblinger.

Through March 30, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday-Saturday at The Barry Gallery-Reinsch Library at Marymount University, 2807 N. Glebe Road. Photographer Jan Bender focuses on film, using traditional techniques, Weiblinger's photographs and plant

photograms are hand-printed. Free. Visit www.marymount.edu/barrygallery.

Sci-Fi Book Club. Third Wednesday of each month, 7-8:30 p.m. at Java Shack, 2507 N. Franklin Road. Free. Visit www.library.arlingtonva.us.

"King of the Forest: Adventures of BioPerversity."

Through April 3, gallery hours at Arlington Arts Center, 3550 Wilson Blvd. This exhibit features the work of 13 contemporary artists from the mid-Atlantic region whose work explores the interactions between humans and non-human species. Free. Visit www.arlingtonartscenter.org for more.

"Daydreams in the Anthropocene."

Through April 3, gallery hours at Arlington Arts Center, 3550 Wilson Blvd. Artist Rachel Schmidt examines the role humans play in the environment. Free. Visit www.arlingtonartscenter.org for more.

Instructor Select. Through April 3, gallery hours at Arlington Arts

Center, 3550 Wilson Blvd. In the Jenkin's Community Gallery, Arlington Arts Center will present Instructor Select 2016, featuring work by both students and instructors. Free. Visit www.arlingtonartscenter.org.

LGBT & Straight Friends Social.

Tuesdays. Happy Hour, 3 p.m.-7 p.m.; Mikey's "Bar A" Video Wall, 7 p.m.; start time at 8 p.m. IOTA Club & Cafe, 2832 Wilson Blvd. For 21 years and older. Free. Visit www.iotaclubandcafe.com for more information.

Food Truck Thursdays. 5:30-8:30 p.m. at the corner of North Irving Street, and Washington Boulevard. Find a round-up of regional food trucks. Free to attend. Visit www.dmvfta.org.

Karaoke. 8 p.m. on the first Sunday every month at Galaxy Hut, 2711 Wilson Blvd. Visit www.galaxyhut.com or call 703-525-8646.

Pub Quiz. 8 p.m. every Sunday at Whitlow's on Wilson, 2854 Wilson Blvd. Prizes for first place. Free. Visit

www.whitlows.com or call 703-276-9693.

Storytime. Mondays and Fridays, 10:30-11 a.m. at Kinder Haus Toys, 1220 N. Fillmore St. Storytime with Ms. Laura. Call 703-527-5929.

Lego Club. Monthly on the first Wednesday, 4-5 p.m. Glencarlyn Branch Library, 300 S. Kensington St. The library provides tubs of legos and a special challenge and after the program the creations are displayed for everyone to see. No registration required. Call 703-228-6548 for more.

Crystal City Sparket. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. on Wednesdays at 1900 Crystal Drive. Sparket — A Creative Market is an extension of DC's Eastern Market with arts, crafts, and handmade goods. Free to attend. Visit www.crystalcity.org.

Open Mic Night. Wednesdays, at 8 p.m., sign ups are at 7:30 and 10 p.m., at Iota Club & Cafe, 2832 Wilson Blvd. Free. Visit <http://www.iotaclubandcafe.com/>.

Art for Life. Third Thursday of each month. The Hyatt Regency Crystal

City's "Art for Life" Partnership with National Kidney Foundation brings a new artist each month to The Hyatt for a reception. Free. Visit www.torpedofactory.org.

Brunch at Freddie's. Third Saturday of every month, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at Freddie's Beach Bar, 555 23rd St. The Arlington Gay and Lesbian Alliance gathers for an all-you-can-eat breakfast buffet (\$9.99). All are welcome. No reservation is required. Visit www.facebook.com/events/700174390103305.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 17

Pet Therapy. 10:15-11 a.m. at Walter Reed Senior Center, 2909 S. 16th St. The public is invited to meet Zoe, a therapy Yorkshire Terrier. Free. Call 703-608-8314 for more.

Arlington Sports Hall of Fame Program. 6:30 p.m. at Columbus Club of Arlington, 5115 Little Falls Road. Arlington Sports Hall of Fame officers will make a brief presentation about the Hall of Fame, its activities and plans for 2016 and

ENTERTAINMENT

beyond, including plans for a Hall of Fame display in an Arlington public library or school, and possible annual social events. Tickets start at \$25. Contact Rick Schumann at BSCRSVP@gmail.com or 703-241-0390.

FEB. 17-MARCH 27

“Romeo & Juliet.” 8 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday, 2 p.m. Sunday at Synetic Theater, 2611 Jefferson Davis Highway. Synetic returns with another “Wordless Shakespeare” production. General admission tickets start at \$35, \$15 for students, and senior citizens and military receive a \$5 discount. Visit www.synetictheater.org for more.

THURSDAY/FEB. 18

Designing a Sustainable, Manageable Yard. 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Fairlington Community Center, 3308 S. Stafford St. Master Gardeners of Arlington and Alexandria will cover the basics of sustainable landscapes and answer questions about individual garden management challenges. Learn the best management practices of sustainable landscapes — using native plants, making the most of available water, building soil health and reducing maintenance. Free, but registration required. Visit www.mgnv.org for more.

SATURDAY/FEB. 20

Workshop: Vegetable Gardening. 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. at the Ellen Coolidge Burke Branch Library, 4701 Seminary Road, Alexandria. The Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, (Arlington and Alexandria) present a workshop for the beginning vegetable gardener on best management practices for site selection, soil requirements and soil improvement. This planning program provides guidance on crop selection and planting schedules. Free. Call 703-228-6414.

Rock Spring Recital Children’s Concert. 10:30 a.m. at Rock Spring Congregational United Church of Christ. “Karen Builds a Violin,” is a musical tale with selections ranging from Mozart to bluegrass to ragtime, children are active participants as the story unfolds. Violinist Karen and violist Elizabeth are both members of the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra. Free. Visit www.rockspringuss.org for more.

Opening Reception. 6-9 p.m. at at Arlington Arts Center, 3550 Wilson Blvd. The center celebrates the artists and artwork of “King of the Forest: Adventures in Bioperversity,” “Daydreams in Anthropocene,” and “Instructor Select 2016.” Free. Visit www.arlingtonartscenter.org for more.

“An Evening of String Quartets.” 7:30 at Lyon Park Community Center, 414 N. Fillmore St. The IBIS string quartet will perform “Quartettsatz” by Schubert. Free. Visit www.facebook.com/ibischambermusic.

SUNDAY/FEB. 21

Rock Spring Recital Children’s Concert. 4 p.m. at Rock Spring Congregational United Church of Christ. Rock Spring Recital Series will work by Brahms, Prokofiev, and Massenet. Free. Visit www.rockspringuss.org for more.

Global-Phonic Music Festival: Rodrigo Amarante. 7:30 p.m. at Rosslyn Spectrum Theatre, 1611 N. Kent St. Performer of the theme song for Netflix show “Narcos” will perform contemporary Brazilian music. Free, but tickets required. Visit www.arlingtonarts.org.

MONDAY/FEB. 22

Laughter Yoga. 6-7:30 p.m. at Arlington Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy St. Laughter Yoga, for all ages, is a fun practice that reduces stress and strengthens the immune system. Free. Email arlingtonlaughteryoga@yahoo.com.

MONDAYS, TUESDAYS, THURSDAYS/ FEB. 22-MARCH 17

Rosie Riveters. 4-6 p.m. at Shirlington Public Library, 4200 Campbell Ave. Three classes, for ages 4-6 (Tuesdays), ages 7-10 (Mondays), and ages 11-14 (Thursdays), are designed to provide space for girls ages 4-14 to imagine, create and play while developing their skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Boys may also enroll. Free. Visit www.rosieriveters.com to register.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 24

AFAC Bar Olympics. 7-9 p.m. at Spider Kelly’s, 3181 Wilson Blvd. Two-person teams compete in six bar games in a tournament-style competition benefiting Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC). The entry fee is \$10 each, \$20 per team. Visit www.afac.org for more.

THURSDAY/FEB. 25

Home Improvement Basics. 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Lee Community & Senior Center, 5722 Lee Highway. Home Depot staff provide easy techniques for painting, staining, and repairing plastic or drywall. Free. Call 703-228-0550 for more.

Spellbinders Story Fest. 1-2 p.m. at Walter Reed Community Center, 2909 S. 16th St. Arlington Spellbinders, part of the national organization, is a group of retirees who tell stories to children in schools and day camps. Free. Call 703-228-0955 to register.

FRIDAY/FEB. 26

Lecture: Arlington During the Civil War. 11 a.m.-12 p.m. at Arlington Mill Community Center, Street Level Gallery, 909 S. Dinwiddie St. David Farner, Historian and Researcher, discusses Arlington during the Civil War. Free. Visit www.arlingtoneconomicdevelopment.com.

Nancy Connors: The Keirsey Temperament Sorter. 1:30-2:30 p.m. at Aurora Hills Community & Senior Center, 735 18th St. S. Join Senior Adult Specialist Nancy Connors and take a 70 question abbreviated Myer Briggs personality profile called the Keirsey Temperament Sorter, score it and discover and appreciate your personality temperament and style. Free. Call 703-228-5722 for more.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/FEB. 26-27

“West Side Story Meets Romeo & Juliet.” 7 p.m. at Rivendell School, 5700 Lee Highway. Middle school students at Rivendell perform an interpretation of two Shakespeare plays. Tickets are \$10, \$30 for families. Visit www.rivendellschool.net for more.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/FEB. 26-28

“South Pacific.” 7:30 p.m. Friday-Saturday, 3 p.m. on Sunday at Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, 4444 Arlington Blvd. Chalice Theater celebrates its 20th anniversary with Rodger and Hammerstein’s “South Pacific.” The story revolves around prejudice, war, and romance on an American military base during WWII. Tickets are \$20 for general admission, \$15

for seniors and students. Visit www.uucava.org for more.

FEB. 26-MARCH 6

“Treasure Island.” Various times at Thomas Jefferson Theatre, 125 S. Glebe Road. Encore Stage & Studio presents an adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson’s classic novel. Young Jim Hawkins leaves a dull life to search for where “X” marks the spot on a treasure map left behind by an old sea captain. Tickets are \$10-15. Visit www.encorestageva.org.

SATURDAY/FEB. 27

Bilingual Diabetes Storytime. 10:30-11:30 a.m. at Arlington Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy St. This storytime is for children and families living with diabetes. Offered in English and Spanish. Free. Visit www.library.arlingtonva.us for more.

Pirate Party. After 11 a.m. performance of Encore Stage & Studio’s “Treasure Island” at Thomas Jefferson Community Theatre, 125 S. Old Glebe Road. Find stage combat demonstrations, meet performers, and more. Tickets are \$20 (sold separately from play tickets). Visit www.encorestageva.org for more.

Feel the Heritage Festival. 1-6 p.m. at Drew Community Center, 3500 23rd St. S. Find live music, dance, a “Hall of History,” children’s activities and more. Free. Call 703-228-5725.

Black History Month Quiz Competition & Celebration. 2-4 p.m. at Charles Houston Recreation Center, 901 Wythe St. The Alexandria Society for the Preservation of Black Heritage in partnership with the Alexandria Black History Museum will host a quiz competition. Alexandria public school students in grades 6-8, are eligible to participate. Free. Call 202-624-9082 for more.

“Wash Over You-Part 1.” 4:30 p.m. at Atlas Performing Arts Center – Lab Theatre II 1333 H St. N.E., Washington, D.C. Arlington’s Jane Franklin Dance presents “Wash Over You,” which finds travelers moved along an unpredictable river. Tickets are \$20. Visit www.janefranklin.com.

MONDAY/FEB. 29

Meet the Author: Diane Kiesel. 3-4:30 p.m. at Arlington Central Library, 1015 Quincy St. As part of Black History Month, Diane Kiesel will discuss her biography of Civil Rights pioneer Dr. Dorothy Boulding Ferebee. Free. Call 703-228-2144.

Movie Screening: “An Ordinary Hero.” 7-8:45 p.m. at Columbia Pike Branch Library, 816 S. Walter Reed Drive. Freedom Rider and Civil Rights activist Joan Mulholland will be joined by author Mike O’Brien for a screening of the documentary “An Ordinary Hero: The True Story of Joan Trumpauer Mulholland,” followed by a discussion, Q&A and remarks. Free. Visit www.library.arlingtonva.us for more.

Signature in the Schools: “295N.” 7:30 p.m. at Signature Theatre, 4200 Campbell Ave. Featuring a cast and crew of talented Arlington County high school students, “295N” looks at the history of race in America through the lens of Baltimore’s troubled history. Free, but reservations required. Visit www.sigtheatre.org or call 703-820-9771 for more.

MARCH 1-APRIL 17

“The Flick.” Various times at Signature Theatre, 4200 Campbell Ave. “The Flick” follows the story of three employees at a crumbling Massachusetts movie theatre. Tickets start at \$40. Visit sigtheatre.org.

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PHOTOS BY JON ROETMAN/THE CONNECTION



The Yorktown gymnastics team won the 6A North region championship on Feb. 13 at Patriot High School.

Yorktown teammates Julia Hays and Juliette Mitrovich placed 1-2 in the all-around at the 6A North region gymnastics championships on Feb. 13.

Cool-Headed Hays Helps Yorktown Win Region Title

Freshman places first in all-around, beam and floor.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

It didn't take long for the Yorktown gymnastics team to face adversity at regionals.

The Patriots were competing on floor during the first rotation when freshman Julia Hays, one of Yorktown's top performers during the season, encountered a problem: the CD containing the music for her routine wasn't working.

"I was kind of confused," Hays said. "I didn't know what to do."

Hays, the last Yorktown gymnast scheduled to perform on floor, had a choice: go through her routine with no music and receive a one-point deduction, or try again later in the meet.

Stuck in a potentially stressful situation, Hays kept a cool head and opted to go through her routine later in the meet. After the third rotation, Hays headed from bars back over to floor and, using a video on her mom's phone as the music source for her routine, put forth a performance that would eventually have her standing on top of the

medal stand.

"She handled it really well," teammate Juliette Mitrovich said. "She's one of the calmest competitors I've ever met. I don't know how she does it, but I think she did really well."

Hays finished first on floor, beam and all-around, and helped Yorktown capture the team title during the 6A North region championship meet on Feb. 13 at Patriot High School.

Hays finished with an all-around score of 37.65, with Mitrovich placing second (37.475). Hays scored 9.775 on beam and 9.55 on floor, despite less-than-ideal circumstances.

"She took it in stride like everything else," Yorktown head coach Joanne Price said. "She offered to compete with no music and found out that was going to deduct her a full point, so we went another route. They told her she could compete again later in the meet and she said a couple of times, 'I can do it after beam' or 'I can do it after bars.' She was ready and willing to go whenever. When we decided it was best she did it and nailed it."

YORKTOWN PRODUCED a team score of 146.05 and qualified for states. West Springfield finished runner-up (143.575) and earned the other state tournament berth.

Defending state champion McLean finished third with a score of 142.625, followed by Battlefield (141.25), Lake Braddock (139.625), Osbourn Park (139.625), Chantilly (133.525) and Oakton (130.225).

"It's just so exciting to feel like all of their hard work and everything paid off," Price said. "They hit the routines the way they needed to and the scores landed where we needed them to be."

Yorktown had a talented team each of the last two seasons but failed to qualify for regionals due to the competitiveness of Conference 6. The Patriots finished behind McLean and Washington-Lee each year and only the top two teams from each conference advance.

This year, Yorktown won the Conference 6 championship and followed it with a region title.

"It's the greatest feeling ever," Mitrovich said. "Everyone always screams when they win and I never really understood what that was like until now. It's really amazing."

Along with her runner-up finish in all-around, Mitrovich placed second on beam (9.725), tied for third on floor (9.5), finished fourth on bars (9.05), and tied for ninth on vault (9.2).

"I think I knocked it out of the park," she said.

Yorktown's Olivia Zavrel placed third on

bars with a score of 9.3.

Marisa Daugherty and Courtney Frisk also competed for the Patriots.

A scheduling conflict left several Yorktown gymnasts with a decision to make during the season. Some of the Patriots are also members of the Arlington Aerials club team, which had a competition in Florida scheduled the same day as the 6A North region meet. With no guarantee the team would even qualify for regionals, those with a choice opted to compete for their high school team.

"We knew as a team we had a very good shot of making it to regionals," Zavrel said. "For us, and most of the McLean girls, we all decided it was a priority for us to come here because if we didn't come we were never going to make it to states and that's just a bummer."

Next up for Yorktown is the state meet. The team competition is scheduled for Friday, Feb. 19 at Kellam High School in Virginia Beach. The individual competition is Feb. 20.

"We have high hopes, of course," Price said. "Tonight, we had a couple of routines that fell short, they weren't as good as last week, and then a couple that were better. ... I think it was a lesson learned today that this takes a team and I think going into next week we'll have the same attitude of what can we all do to help that team score"

BULLETIN BOARD

Email announcements to arlington@connectionnewspapers.com. Include date, time, location, description and contact for event: phone, email and/or website. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

VISITORS, CALLERS NEEDED

The Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church has initiated two programs for senior adults who find it difficult to leave their homes. The Friendly Visitor program matches volunteers to seniors who would like a visit periodically. The Friendly Caller program allows volunteers to call seniors to let them know they

haven't been forgotten and remind them to call the Center if they need help. Both programs allow for setting up a time convenient for both client and volunteer. Call the Shepherd's Center at 703-506-2199 or e-mail info@scmafc.org.

THROUGH SATURDAY/FEB. 20

YogaFit Conference. At the Hilton Crystal City Hotel, 2399 Jefferson Davis Highway. This conference will offer yoga teacher training classes and will also offer the chance for anyone who enjoys yoga, several classes to deepen their yoga practice. Visit yogafit.com for more.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 17

Money Talk: A Financial Course for Women. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Arlington Central Library, 1015 N. Quincy St. This course is designed specifically for women. This session will cover planning for future life events. Free. Visit www.bit.ly/VCEFinancePrograms to register.

FRIDAY/FEB. 19

County and School Boards Meet. 4 p.m. in the Library at Jefferson Middle School, 125 South Glebe Road. The Arlington County Board will meet with the Arlington County

School Board for the purpose of discussing the new elementary school at the Jefferson Middle School site and transportation options related to the Stratford School site. The public is welcome.

SATURDAY/FEB. 20

Application Deadline. Arlington-Aachen Sister City High School Exchange July 2-19, 2016. Apply at www.arlingtonstercity.com.

SUNDAY/FEB. 21

Blood Drive. 8 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at St. Agnes Parish Center, 1910 N. Randolph St. Boy Scout Troop 111 is

holding a blood drive. Make an appointment at inovatbloodsaves.org, click on "Donate Blood" and enter code 7810 or sign up by calling 703-732-8677. Walk ins welcomed.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 24

Community Snow Forum. 7-9 p.m. at Francis Scott Key Elementary School, 2300 Key Blvd. In the wake of the January blizzard, Arlington County Government is asking the public to invited to share their experiences. Fill out the on-line survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/BZKSH79 prior to the event or if unable to attend until Feb. 19.

'Star Wars' Fans Flock to Local Classes

Movie's popularity leaves fans wanting to feel "The Force."

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Beams of neon light flash around a dark room. Young Star Wars fans from a galaxy not so far away wield light sabers and move with carefully choreographed steps. These Jedis-in-training are undergoing a fantasy combat training that melds martial arts with light saber fighting, Star Wars-style.

"Star Wars fans are the ultimate martial arts enthusiasts. Star Wars is 100 percent developed on the concepts and philosophies of martial arts ... the use of the sword, the belief structure," said Michael Dietrich of Dietrich's Karate Fitness and Life Skills in Burke. "Now we have an opportunity to invite students because of their interest in the movie. It's an easy way to bring them into our schools and show them what martial arts are all about."

Building on the hype surrounding the recent release of "Star Wars: Episode VII - The



PHOTO COURTESY OF DIETRICH'S KARATE FITNESS AND LIFE SKILLS

Students work on light saber skills during a class at Dietrich's Karate Fitness and Life Skills in Burke.

Force Awakens," Dietrich began offering classes at his newly created "Laser Saber Academy." Students sign up for a six-week class, where they learn how to use a light saber, tap into "The Force," and improve their focus, discipline and determination.

"Any time a new movie or TV show comes out that features a robot, there is a spike in

interest in robotics," said Dan Gallagher of RobotWorks in Burke. "Every kid I've talked to since the Star Wars movie came out wants to know how BB-8 works. Before that, they talked about other robots like Wall-E, R2D2, and Baymax."

At RobotWorks, Gallagher's students learn basic robot design, construction and pro-

gramming. "In general, though, kids are always interested in robots and how they work. Robots are fun," said Gallagher. "Building robots is even more fun, so we see a steady interest that might jump a little when a new movie robot makes an appearance because it acts as a reminder of that interest — bringing it back to the front burner."

The concepts of the Star Wars universe are seeping into the extracurricular class choices at local schools, with students opting to take offerings like robotics and 3-D modeling. "I think that there is some interest in our STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics) activities that grows from sci-fi movies like Star Wars," said Richard Rho, director of Technology Education and Innovation at St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School. "I have had students 3D model and print the Tie Fighters and X Wing from the movies as well as talking about how we could create our own BB-8 droid in the robotics lab as the off season project."

Educators say that such activities are fun and engaging while also educational. "It's great students are getting inspired by the movie to create ideas and designs and spreading that interest with the rest of our community," said Rho.



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JIGO, LLC trading as La Cote D'or Cafe, 6876 Lee Hwy, Arlington, VA 22213. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On and Off Premises; Mixed Beverage license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Jacques Imperato, owner
NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 dates from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200

ABC LICENSE
The Shamrock Arlington, LLC trading as The Spirits of '76, 3211 Washington Blvd, Arlington, VA 22201. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On and Off Premises; Mixed Beverage license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Patrick Doody, Member
NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 dates from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200

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21 Announcements

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Painerya LLC trading as Pio Pio Peruvian Cuisine, 762 Walker Rd, Ste A, Great Falls, VA 22066. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL(ABC) for a Wine and Beer On Premises and Mixed Beverages license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Benazur Pain, President.
NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date to the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

I Never think of the future. It comes soon enough.
-Albert Einstein

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21 Announcements 21 Announcements 21 Announcements

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Zone 2: The Springfield Connection The Burke Connection The Fairfax Connection The Fairfax Station/Clifton/Lorton Connection	Zone 5: The Potomac Almanac
Zone 3: The Alexandria Gazette Packet The Mount Vernon Gazette	Zone 6: The Arlington Connection The Vienna/Oakton Connection The McLean Connection The Great Falls Connection

One Hundred Pills



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

What exactly am I going to do with 100 pills? Well, barring unforeseen (good or bad) circumstances, I'll certainly continue to take them every four weeks: two the day before my chemotherapy infusion, two the day of and two the day after, as I've done so now, for this particular medication, going on 30-plus months. "Not that there's anything wrong with that," or new, for that matter. But when I refilled this prescription last week, I was surprised when, after the pharmacy customer-server opened the bottle to show me the pills and ask if I had any questions, she then mentioned the count: "100." That's a lot of pills, I thought, more than usual. Typically, I receive only 30 pills.

As I drove home from the pharmacy, I began to think (always dangerous). Why would my oncologist prescribe so many pills? I only need six per month. Is there a minimum he must order? A maximum? Did he ever prescribe? Does he even have any input? Perhaps he's projecting my life expectancy? One hundred pills divided by six per month calculates to 17 months/infusions for which I now have pills. I don't want to look a gift oncologist in the mouth, but as a seven-year cancer survivor, I'm well aware that cancer treatment/results are hardly cast in stone and 17 months seems like a long time not yet gone (David Crosby song title, sort of).

I'm sure part of my presumptuousness is naiveté. I want/need to believe in something/anything positive (any port in a storm) concerning/relating to my health/treatment. More so when I'm in between my every-three-month, face-to-face appointment with my oncologist. That's when we review my most recent diagnostic scan and assess my overall status and consider treatment options before agreeing on a schedule for the next three months. Not that I'm discouraged from communicating with him in the interim. Quite the opposite in fact; he's very responsive to my e-mails. It's more that electronic communication is a "two-dimensional" type of communication, and I'm a "three-dimensional" kind of communicator. Obviously, I can respond electronically to his answers and presumably we could type back and forth, but dare I show my age and say: It's just not the same as being there/talking on the telephone. Ergo, during this between-appointment interval, I'm sort of left to my own devices and in turn inclined to wobble — and wonder, emotionally, about my life. Perhaps I should look on the bright side and be glad my oncologist didn't order six pills.

I suppose, if I wanted to be honest with myself, I'd say the number of the pills prescribed/in the bottle probably mean nothing. The doctor simply checked a box and off the order went with nary a consideration of the patient's reaction. Nor do I think the doctor is aware of patient co-pays, deductibles, percentage of benefits used or any of the other out-of-pocket expenses associated with the prescription/patient's health insurance. "Hippocratically" speaking, that's not his job. His job is to keep me/the patient alive. And since I'm still alive, pill-count notwithstanding, I'm looking forward to the next 17 months. Seeing my bottles of pills become less full over time gives me a peculiar sense of accomplishment: that I continue to survive in the face of what was originally a fairly discouraging set of circumstances. Occasionally, however, I have to be realistic; 100 is simply a number, not a prognosis.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

General Assembly Reaches Crossover

By ADAM P. EBBIN
STATE SENATOR (D-30)



The Virginia General Assembly has finally reached "Crossover," the halfway point by which each chamber must complete work on its own bills and begin considering legislation passed by the other body. Over 870 bills have passed the House of Delegates and over 700 made it through the Senate. We will be working dili-

COMMENTARY gently over the coming weeks to consider the remaining legislation, including 13 of my bills that have passed the Senate and await consideration by the House.

One noteworthy bill I've passed through the Senate is SB327, which eliminates the automatic six month driver's license suspension for first-time marijuana possession. Copatroned by Senators Bill Stanley (R-Franklin) and Tom Garrett (R-Buckingham), this bill enjoyed broad support and was endorsed by both Alexandria Commonwealth's Attorney Brian Porter and Alexandria's Public Defender Melinda Douglas. This legislation removes a consequence wholly unrelated to the underlying criminal offense, which too often results in loss of employment and other hardships that disproportionately impact the most economically disadvantaged Virginians. Passing this bill through the House would allow Virginia

allows for the expungement of alcohol and marijuana possession offenses after a period of five years if those offenses occur before a person turns 21. This passed the Senate unanimously.

This week on the floor I spoke against two bills — SB270 and SB705 — that seek to end the non-existent problem of "sanctuary cities" despite federal prohibitions, the Dillon Rule, and state mandates that already make "sanctuary cities" an impossibility in Virginia. Rather than asking localities to enforce immigration law to the extent required by federal law, this legislation demands immigration law be enforced "to the full extent permitted." These bills mischaracterize localities that have internal police policies that discourage profiling and encourage community policing as "sanctuary cities." Currently, policies such as not inquiring about the immigration status of witnesses at a crime scene are widely

practiced to encourage residents to report wrongdoing regardless of their residency status. SB270 would reduce state funding to localities with such policies, while SB705 would hold them liable for the "full amount of any personal injury or property damage" caused by an undocumented person forcing law enforcement to choose between public safety and state dollars. Unfortunately, these bills passed the Senate along party lines despite the fact that effective pro-community policing policies exist throughout the state, from Virginia Beach to Prince William County, and despite the Senate's unanimous support for such policies three years in a row.

Please join me at one of my Town Hall Meetings on Saturday, Feb. 20:

♦ Lee District: 9:30-11:30 a.m., Hayfield Elementary School, 7633 Telegraph Road, Alexandria

♦ Mt. Vernon District: 12:30-2 p.m., Whitman Middle School, 2500 Parkers Lane, Alexandria.

Please share your thoughts on legislation and other state-related matters with me by emailing district30@senate.virginia.gov. Follow me on Twitter @AdamEbbin and Facebook at www.facebook.com/EbbinCampaign. You can sign up for my weekly email updates at www.AdamEbbin.com.

It is my continued honor to represent the citizens of the 30th Senate District.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Public Input Encouraged

To the Editor:

Your recent article ["Completing the Street," Arlington Connection, p. 2] on the county's new Neighborhood Complete Streets (NCS) Program misrepresents the program. The article implies that NCS will not solicit or consider resident and community input in the development of the projects funded by the program, but in fact community involvement will be greatly encouraged at all stages of project selection and development. Residents and community organizations are asked to nominate street im-

provement ideas for funding consideration. Proposals will be evaluated using the County Board-approved selection criteria. The County Board's appointed Neighborhood Complete Streets Commission (NCSC), a total volunteer citizen body, will help make such selections.

A public participation plan will be developed for each project that enters the planning stage. Direct involvement will be expected from residents and neighbors of that street, as well as from community associations and other appropriate stakeholders for that project.

Community input will be incorporated into the development of the preferred scope and design for that planned project.

Residents and other community members are always encouraged to provide feedback on a proposed project to the NCSC, an advisory commission to the County Board.

All NCS projects must be approved for funding by the Arlington County Board. When the NCS Program Guide was approved, the County Board confirmed that the board, and county staff, will give due consideration to written expressions of community sentiment in regards to various elements of proposed projects.

Dennis Leach

Director of Transportation
Arlington County's Department of
Environmental Services



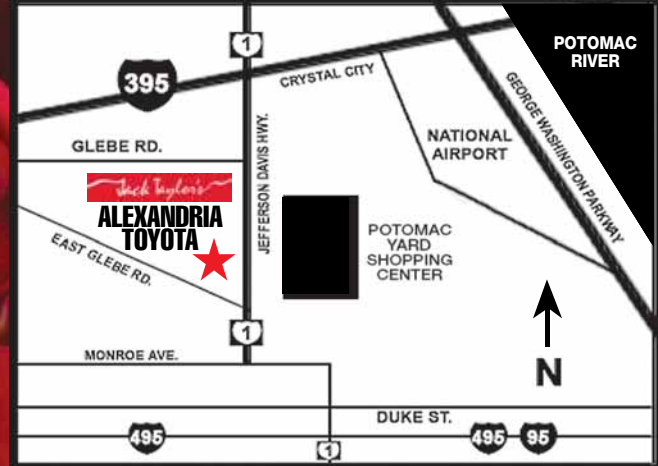
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MARINE CORPS MARATHON

Healthy School Award

The Marine Corps Marathon presented the Healthy School Award and a \$1,000 check on Feb. 5 to Claremont Immersion Elementary School from MCM partner Sodexo. From left are Miles the bulldog; PE teacher Jason Cash; Assistant Principal Carlos Ramirez; Larry McMarlin of Sodexo; PE teacher Renee Seay, Principal Jessica Panfil, Molly the Bulldog and MCM Director Rick Nealis. In addition to the monetary award and Healthy School plaque, the elementary students also received healthy snacks from Sodexo and the students were entertained by the health and nutrition show "Jump With Jill" presented by MCM partner the National Watermelon Promotion Board.

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WINTER SAVINGS



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- \$50.00 OFF with purchase of \$500.00 Or more

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