



'Fabulation: Or the Re-education of Undine'

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ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 6 ♦ CLASSIFIED, PAGE 11

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



Actors rehearse a scene from Port City Playhouse's production of "Fabulation." From left are Kristra Forney, Marcela Onyango, Tanya Baskin, Lexie Lounsbury and Reginald Gardner. Performances run July 8-22 at Gunston 2 Theater.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARLINGTON DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

On June 20, volunteers from the county and Dominion Energy planted a pollinator patch at Bluemont Park.



PHOTO BY MARY DEMPSEY/THE CONNECTION

Rights of way beneath power lines such as those that run beside much of the W&OD trail are maintained by Dominion Energy; Dominion has been working to reduce invasive species by establishing native upland and lowland meadows in these areas.

Encouraging Native Plants

Arlington and Dominion partner to improve environment.

BY MARY DEMPSEY
THE CONNECTION

This summer, Arlington's Parks and Natural Resources division is continuing efforts to reduce invasive plant species, encourage native plant growth and support area pollinators.

Most recently, in honor of National Pollinator Week, Arlington partnered with NOVA Parks and Dominion Energy to plant a pollinator patch at Bluemont Park.

"The goal of the pollinator patch we put in at Bluemont Park is that visitors will see the benefits of having a pollinator patch," said Andrew Cooney, Dominion Energy's forestry expert. "It will take most of the summer for the plants to get established. We've got to watch out for them since they will be drought stressed."

The Bluemont pollinator patch, which was planted on June 20 by volunteers from Dominion Energy and Arlington County, is also part of Arlington's efforts to increase the number of certified monarch butterfly waystations in the county.

"Monarch butterflies are the gateway insect for pollinators in general," said Alonso



PHOTO BY MARY DEMPSEY/THE CONNECTION

Milkweed, which was planted in the pollinator patch at Bluemont Park, is both a native species and an essential part of the monarch butterfly lifecycle.

Abugattas, who is Arlington's natural resources manager.

According to Abugattas, Arlington is working towards becoming part of the leadership circle of the nonprofit Monarch Watch, which aims to create a network of monarch butterfly waystations across the country.

To encourage monarch butterflies to make use of the patch, Arlington and Dominion planted two different kinds of native milkweed plants, common milkweed and

swamp milkweed. Dominion provided the swamp milkweed and Arlington provided the common milkweed.

According to Abugattas, it is essential to plant different species of milkweed to make the patch sustainable and certifiable.

"When you put a bunch of plants together [of the same species] then it's very easy for pests and parasites to take over," Abugattas said. "With multiple species, if you lose one you still have the other one."

The Bluemont pollinator patch is a small part of Arlington's ongoing efforts to improve its natural habitats. For native pollinators to thrive, invasive species must be systematically controlled.

"We have had a lot of success in managing invasive plants to a level that it can be controlled by staff and volunteers," said Sarah Archer, who is the natural resources specialist for Arlington's invasive species management plan. She added that they try to focus on "early detection and rapid response against plant species that could become a problem."

Walkers, joggers and bikers along the Arlington portion of the Washington and Old Dominion (W&OD) trail and the Four Mile Run trail are likely to have spotted

signs indicating that invasive plant management is underway. These signs indicate that "chemical, mechanical or biocontrol methods are being used to control non-native plant species."

According to Abugattas and Archer, all of these methods are necessary to successfully eliminate invasive species.

"We've found that the targeted use of herbicides really can cut down on the physical labor and time needed to manage invasive plants," Archer said. "Sometimes the only way to manage them is with herbicides. We use chemicals certified to be used near waterways."

Abugattas added that while mechanical techniques such as pulling and mowing are the preferred method of control, these methods can cause issues when not paired with herbicide treatments.

"Pulling can sometimes just divide the plants which actually allows them to reattach somewhere else," Abugattas said. "The targeted use of the herbicides is a necessity."

For the most part, however, invasive species are controlled by volunteers who work

SEE NATIVE PLANTS, PAGE 11



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Streetcar 2.0

Transit options for Columbia Pike are not promising.

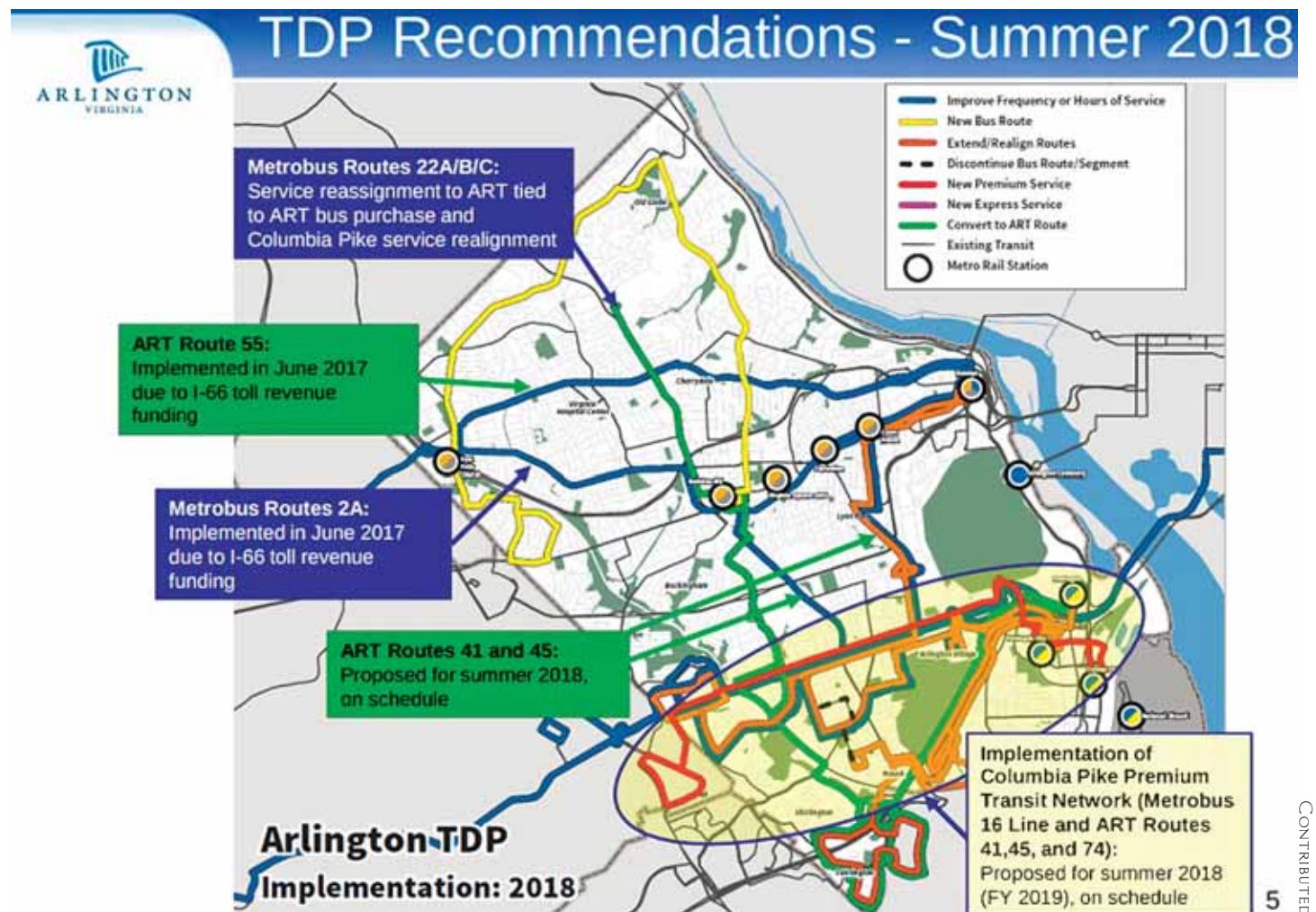
BY VERNON MILES
THE CONNECTION

In 2014, the Columbia Pike Streetcar was killed. Citing public backlash against the costs and logistics. At the time, the County Board promised that an alternative solution would be found to ease the connectivity problems along south Arlington's main street. But three years later, Arlington County seems no closer to a solution.

At a June 27 work session, the County Board set high expectations for Columbia Pike transit that county staff worked to bring back to ground level. The Transportation Development Plan, approved last year, lists the goals along Columbia Pike as increasing capacity to meet the 10-year demand, investing into transit that supports economic development. One major part of the goals involves connecting Columbia Pike with other key areas and other transportation networks around the region, like the Metro. This was one of the primary goals of the streetcar. Finally, the plan calls for a fast, frequent, reliable and easy-to-use premium transit service.

But as the plans are coming together for transit solutions, it's becoming clear that each solution comes with its own share of problems. Much of the discussion was torn between the County Board's ambitions of transit along Columbia Pike and staff attempting to temper those ambitions with a realistic view of the street's limitations. County Board members expressed an interest in a transitway, mirroring the kind that runs through Alexandria up into Crystal City. But Transportation Director Dennis Leach noted that the layout of the streets along Columbia Pike makes transit lanes difficult to implement and could even risk making traffic along Columbia Pike worse. In the staff presentation, it was noted that current ART bus facilities are inadequate to support the increased busload proposed under the transportation plan. ART buses are already expected to exceed storage capacity by 2020, and in 2023 the county will face a dramatic loss in storage capacities when the lease for the Shirlington Road facility expires.

Staff pointed to the relatively low bus utilization along Columbia Pike as an indicator that increased public transit options might not justify the cost. But County Board member Katie Cristol said that the objective is not to meet current demand but to offer transit options that would draw people away from cars and towards mass transit. For other members of the County Board, offering transit is an obligation after the promise made to the region in the wake of the streetcar plans being cancelled.



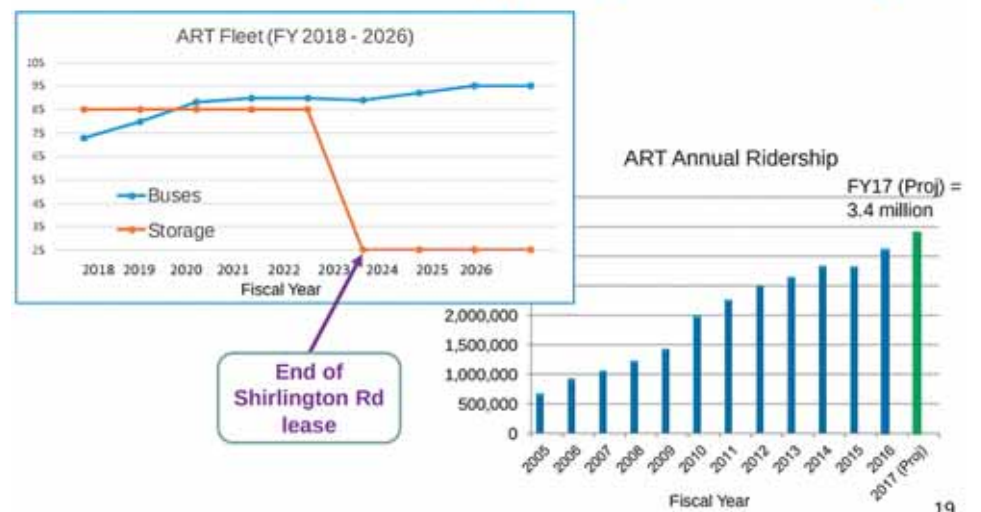
Transportation recommendations for summer 2018, including implementation of a premium transit network on Columbia Pike.

"This isn't the normal way," said County Board Chair Jay Fisette. "We promised a premium service that was going to be as close to the equivalent as rail as we can do, not just 'if we want to put a little more money here'. I think we're a little bit missing the point when we try to do it a normal way."

But despite the County Board's ambitions, county staff repeatedly emphasized that there are very real-world challenges facing transit expansion along Columbia Pike, not the least of which is heavy cost.

"There's no single solution," said Carol Mitten, deputy county manager. "We're very much attempting to provide at least the equivalent to what would be the streetcar with the extent that we can with the pieces."

ART fleet needs dedicated supporting facilities in Arlington



ART bus faces increasing demand and numbers of buses but without the infrastructure support.



Columbia Pike

OPINION

Parting Words

BY VERNON MILES
AND LAURYN OVERHULTZ
THE CONNECTION

After 20 years on the County Board, Chair Jay Fisette gave his final State of the County address. At an event hosted by the Chamber of Commerce on June 28, Fisette spoke about the key changes and challenges Arlington County has faced since he joined the board in 1997 along with his recommendations for the next few years.

"The state of the county is really good. Arlington works," said Fisette. "It really, in my view, is an amazing place that we cannot, should not ever take for granted."

Fisette talked about the most notable changes seen in Arlington, citing a 20 percent population growth in the past 20 years and Arlington being added to the lists of "best places to live" and "most popular place for millennials." According to Fisette, 89 percent of residents expressed satisfaction with the county. Fisette attributed these changes to the willingness of the city and businesses to work together to continue to improve the county.

"There is nothing stagnant, the only constant is change," Fisette said.

Although there has been notable change, Fisette revealed some challenges that the county continues to face and will need to deal with in the next year. The big one, Fisette noted, is Metro. Localities throughout the Washington D.C. area have struggled with how to fund and maintain the Metro system to be able to provide steady service. Fisette said the current funding setup for the Metro is unsustainable and needs to be fixed, or the entire system faces collapse.

"There has to be new funding, and it has to be dedicated funding," said Fisette. "If we fail, many dominoes will fall."

Another issue Fisette touched on was the lack of affordable housing in the region. In the past few years, the county has invested close to \$100 million into the affordable housing industry, but has only created 5,200 units of affordable housing. In fact, according to Fisette, the county has actually lost roughly 17,000 units of affordable housing.

According to the final 2016 annual report

on affordable housing, the primary source of the affordable housing loss is the decline in market-rate affordable housing (MARKs). Between 2000 and 2016, MARKs affordable at up to 60 percent of the area median income has declined from over 20,000 in 2000 to around 3,000 in 2016. MARKs available at 80 percent of area median income have remained steady, while committed affordable units in the county have risen gradually from 4,000 to nearly 8,000 between 2000 and 2016.

Over the last year, Gina Wimpey from the office of Community Planning, Housing and Development, pointed to a few major housing projects underway. At Clarendon Court, Westover, and Culpepper, 381 total committed affordable units were acquired by the county for a total cost of \$29.1 million. Two new projects have finished construction and are beginning leasing, adding 176 new committed affordable units. Four new development projects were approved that will yield a net \$5.8 million in contributions to Arlington's affordable housing fund once built.

Fisette gave 10 recommendations on how to lead the county, but two recommendations seemed to be the most important. He claimed that the road to success for the county is policy and planning. According to Fisette, the county is currently guided by good policy.

"Continue long-term planning, doing things that make sense, that take time," Fisette said.

His number one recommendation though was for the county to continue to be a community for all. According to Fisette, that is the sure way to make things run smoothly.

"We need to maintain our commitment to be an inclusive, welcoming community," said Fisette. "We have to maintain our values, this is the soul. Without the soul, none of the rest works."

In an email exchange, Duke Banks, president of the Arlington County Civic Federation, added a few more issues he believes the county will face over the next few years.

"[There's an] ongoing debate about community facilities and realization there is no additional land to place needed facilities such as schools, parks, and other public services that is required for anticipated population growth," said Banks.

Metro, schools and affordable housing loom as major Arlington challenges in Fisette's last State of the County address.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

County Board Chair Jay Fisette advocating for the affordable care act earlier in 2017.

Over the last few years, many of the locations for new school sites have been located on green spaces and park land, prompting outcry from local communities facing disappearing open space.

Like Fisette, Banks said Metro is going to continue being one of the major issues for Arlington County.

"Concerning Metro, leadership is needed concerning advocating a new compact to address governance issues of Metro ... coupled with finding a new revenue stream for Metro to do routine operation and maintenance," said Banks, also noting that the costs to the county will mean the County Board will have to reassess the budget. "We need to recognize that two of the major cost drivers to the operating budget are outside of the County Board's control — Metro contribution and the transfer to the School Board based on revenue sharing agreements between the county and the School Board Concerning schools, [we need] to find ways to cope with anticipated [rising] enrollment that is both cost effective and does not crowd out the needs of other public services, such as parks and public safety."

Send in Pet Photos Now

The Pet Connection, a twice-yearly special edition, will publish the last week of July, and photos and stories of your pets with you and your family should be submitted by July 20.

We invite you to send us stories about your pets, photos of you and your family with your cats, dogs, llamas, alpacas, ponies, hamsters, snakes, lizards, frogs, rabbits, or whatever other creatures share your life with you.

Tell us the story of a special bond between a child and a dog, the story of how you came to adopt your pet, or examples of amazing feats of your creatures.

EDITORIAL

Do you volunteer at an animal shelter or therapeutic riding center or take your pet to visit people in a nursing home? Does your business have a pet? Is your business about pets? Have you helped to train an assistance dog? Do you or someone in your family depend on an assistance dog?

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Timing Is Everything

This week's paper went to press on Monday, July 3, and as a result does not include coverage of Independence Day events from the Fourth of July. Please see next week's paper.

The
Arlington
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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

Lessons from a Retired Teacher

Experiencing changes in teaching.

By SHIRLEY RUHE
THE CONNECTION

School let out a week ago and Michael Zito has just retired after 29 years teaching AP Science at Yorktown High School. "I don't think it has really sunk in because it is summer. I got a little weepy saying goodbye especially to the freshmen. I always said, 'see you next year.'"

Zito has spent his whole teaching career at Yorktown. While he doesn't remember the first day, he does recall being very comfortable the first year since he had spent the previous five years in a lab. But he says one day he thought "the lab's not for me." I'm a people person and that's a big piece I will miss. My daily interactions with the students and coworkers will be hard to replace."

Zito reflects on changes he has seen in nearly three decades. "Kids are kids. Their attention span today is not there and their listening skills are not that good." He points to an iPhone sitting on the table.

He says grading has become a negotiation. "Students measure themselves by the grade they receive, not by what they learn. Parents, too." He says a phone call with parents was often hard to arrange when he first started teaching but now emails flow back and forth from parents as well as students all of the time.

He says his theory of teaching is to develop interpersonal relationships. "If kids aren't comfortable, they aren't going to learn." He continues, Yorktown is known as a high achieving high school with many families from an upper socio-economic status. But there

are challenges at both ends of the scale. "Special Ed kids and second language learners get lost at Yorktown while it is a challenge to teach kids at the upper end who get easily bored."

Instead of memorization, Zito has adopted a Socratic teaching method where students ask and answer questions to develop critical thinking skills. He uses a lot of case studies. "One of my frustrations, and what pushed me out, was that we don't teach kids to think. We use the SOL checklist. I don't like the direction of the current administration in Arlington. I'm doing all of this stuff and I've never been observed." He adds, "There is a fair bit of posturing."

A case in point is the new personalized learning approach, "a great buzz word but we don't know what that means and haven't had any training." He says there is supposed to be a committee to look at it but they just keep adding layers of bureaucracy and the teacher get ignored."

He has seen the content of science change. "When I first began, for instance, we would do a case study on genetically modified food



SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

Michael Zito, AP Science Teacher, Yorktown High School

asking the question about whether these structures should be released into the environment for testing. It was a discussion in ethics. Now," he says, "the genie is out of the bottle and the question is not whether, but transgenesis," the transfer of genes between species.

Zito teaches AP Environmental Science which didn't exist before 1998. "It's more about the big pic-

ture than reductionism. It's about making connections that are more important than the pieces. For instance, climate change, very complex. You have to understand how the atmosphere works, gas laws, physics, density." As an example, "we ask the question why San Francisco and Washington D.C., cities on approximately the same latitudes, have climates that are so different."

"The technology today is wonderful." He used to work with lectures, an overhead projector and a chalkboard. Zito says three years ago they started giving every freshman at Yorktown a MacBook Air. "It's pretty cool to see kids use it as a tool." But one of his students didn't receive one and since computers were used for everything including assignments and feedback, it was a problem. After two weeks, she still hadn't received her computer so he made another inquiry. Still no response. "So I went to the School Board. All of a sudden we were flooded with computers because it was a problem other places in the school. But I was rep-

SEE LOOKING BACK, PAGE 10

Children and Books — 'A Perfect Pairing'

Retiring from school library.

By SHIRLEY RUHE
THE CONNECTION

Dede Macekura is retiring after 19 years as a library administrative assistant at Gunston Middle School. She says despite the library's extensive collection of electronic books she thinks at least 50 percent of the students prefer a hard cover book. "In my observation, kids read more now. In my school there is much more emphasis on reading for literacy."

Macekura says in her first 10 years a class would read the same book like "The Outsiders." "Now there is more of an array for students to choose from. It's more interesting when you have a choice." She adds, "Also I think librarians discard the old dusty books and order more new and relevant books. For instance, we may have all of the Newbery winners but the 1940s cover isn't very appealing so kids won't pick it up."

"We have more realistic alternatives today although kids still like fantasy. And graphic novels are good for reluctant readers; just having comicky pictures helps them get through it. Sometimes it's hard work to get them to read." She adds they have pared down the non-fiction because almost all research is online. "In Arlington all students are issued an iPad in 2nd-



SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

Dede Macekura, Library Administrative Assistant, Gunston Middle School

8th grade and all students in 9th-12th are issued a laptop." She says you have to have rules on when they can be used. "For middle schoolers it is hard sometimes to remember that. But it can also be a good tool. Teachers and parents are grappling with the right balance."

Macekura says her four-hour shifts weren't easy. "It was hard work. I was always on my feet." She helped students find what they needed, shelved books, processed new books and repaired old ones. "I would cart books for a

SEE CHILDREN, PAGE 10

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ENTERTAINMENT

Port City Playhouse Presents 'Fabulation'

"Fabulation, or the Re-education of Undine" is a satirical look at social stereotypes.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

Port City Playhouse is presenting "Fabulation: or the Re-education of Undine" from July 8-22 at Gunston 2 Theater in Arlington.

The play takes a satirical look at social stereotypes at both ends of the social spectrum. Undine is a successful African-American businesswoman at the top of her game. When her husband disappears after embezzling all of her money, Undine heads back to her childhood home in Brooklyn's Walt Whitman projects. Her rags-to-riches-to-rags journey leads her to places like jail, the welfare office and a reunion with her husband. Through this painful but witty journey, Undine learns about the importance of family.

Director/Co-Producer Eleanore Tapscott said Port City has been interested in producing "Fabulation" for a few years. She said it fits the theatre's mission of producing top-quality, thought-provoking plays within a diverse community that are either outside of the usual community theater repertoire or are of significant historical or human importance. "Fabulation, or the Re-education of Undine" ticks both boxes, as the play makes satirical and incisive commentary on cultural stereotypes, single motherhood, professional career opportunities for African-American women, and a host of other issues," she said.

She added: "Assimilation into the wider society and acceptance of those societal norms of success is not

unique to the African-American experience. I believe all ethnicities have their 'what price assimilation' moments. (Playwright Lynn) Nottage makes it explicitly clear that there are serious pitfalls when a person attempts to escape their past."

She said the play was written to be performed at a rapid pace because one scene dissolves into the next without blackouts, so the best way to ensure such pacing was frequent rehearsals. But that proved challenging as many of the actors were participating in summer Fringe productions and working around other performance schedules.

She added: "In watching Undine's journey, I see myself and so many others in Undine's story. Undine's last line in the play is 'I breathe!' and I believe that's what happens when we embrace our family history (warts and all) and come home. We breathe and we live."

Tanya Baskin plays the role of Undine, an African-American woman whose life crumbles around her forcing her to return to her childhood home where she must cope with a harsh new reality. "Through her journey, Undine faces the challenges and multiple setbacks that allow her to transform and redeem her moral compass that she discarded 14 years earlier," she said.

She said while she starts out as an ambitious social climber with little to no regard for anyone in her circle, by the end of the play you are rooting for her. "Trying to capture her complete journey as a charac



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

From left are Tanya Baskin (Undine), Marcela Onyango (Inmate 1), and Kristra Forney (Inmate 2) rehearsing a scene from Port City Playhouse's production of "Fabulation."

SEE "FABULATION," PAGE 7

CALENDAR

Submit entertainment announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

ONGOING

"Jesus Christ Superstar." Extended through July 9 at the Signature Theatre, 4200 Campbell Ave. Visit www.sigtheatre.org for more.

Rosslyn Cinema and Pub in the Park. Fridays through Aug. 25, 6 p.m. at Gateway Park, 1300 Lee Highway. On Fridays, Rosslyn Cinema brings you games, drinks, dinner and free outdoor movies this summer. Visit www.rosslynva.org for more.

Arlington Farmer's Market. Every Saturday, 8 a.m.-noon at the corner of N. 14th Street and N. Courthouse Road. A weekly celebration of local food including fresh produce, meats, dairy, cheese, baked goods, free range eggs, specialty items, cut flowers, plants and herbs. Email csingiser@cfwdc.org or call 917-733-6402.

FRESHFARM Market. 3-7 p.m. on Tuesdays at 1900 Crystal Drive. Shop from local farmers and producers with seasonal fruits and vegetables, fresh-cut flowers, container plants and herbs, farm-raised eggs, all-natural meats, artisan baked goods, and specialty foods. Visit www.crystalcity.org for more.

Friday Night Live. 8 p.m. Fridays at the Church at Clarendon, 1210 N. Highland St., Suite A. Local musicians perform. Free. Visit 1bc.org for more.

LGBT & Straight Friends Social. Tuesdays. Happy Hour, 3-7 p.m.; Mikey's "Bar A" Video Wall, 7 p.m.;



PHOTO BY STEVE BROIDO

On Friday, July 7 meet photographer Steve Broido from 5-8 p.m. at the Gallery Underground, Crystal City Shops, 2100 Crystal Drive. Steve Broido Solo Show "Around Death Valley," consists of shots taken in Death Valley National Park, California, this color photography exhibit features remote and sparsely populated spots in 5,000 square miles of Death Valley National Park. Exhibit on display through July 28. Visit www.galleryunderground.org or call 571-483-0652 for more.

start time at 8 p.m. IOTA Club & Cafe, 2832 Wilson Blvd. For 21 years and older. Free. Visit www.iotaclubandcafe.com for more.

Invasive Plants Removal. Work parties are held every month to keep the parks free of destructive invasive plants. Teens, adults and families welcome. Every second Sunday of the month 2-4:30 p.m. at Gulf Branch Nature Center, 3608 Military Road; call 703-228-3403. Every third Sunday of the month 2-5 p.m. at Long Branch Nature Center, 625 S. Carlin Springs Road; call 703-228-6535 or visit registration.arlingtonva.us. Free, no registration required.

Storytime. Wednesdays 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 p.m. and 10 p.m., at Iota Club & Cafe, 2832 Wilson Blvd. Free. Visit www.iotaclubandcafe.com/.

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Jung Min Park: Memoryscape. Various times at the Arlington Arts Center, 3550 Wilson Blvd. Jung Min Park creates memorable urban and architectural scenes through first-hand experiences and observations of cities and sites. Call 703-248-6800 for more.

THURSDAY/JULY 6

Columbia Pike Movie Night. Just after sunset, Arlington Mill Community Center, 909 S. Dinwiddie St. Movie is "Dirty Dancing" (1987 - Rated PG-13), sponsored by Pike 3400 Apts. Visit columbia-pike.org/movie-nights for more.

Shirlala Music Festival. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Village at Shirlington, 2700 S Quincy St. Every Thursday through Aug. 24 free music and \$5 wine tastings benefitting Arlington Thrive, Arlington Fair and Homeward Trails. Visit villageatshirlington.com/ for more.

FRIDAY/JULY 7

Yappy Hour. 3-7 p.m. at Oz Restaurant and Bar, 2950 Clarendon Blvd. Featuring drink and food specials by Chef Brad, and pets treats provided by Kriser's Natural Pet, taking place every Friday evening. Call 202-997-4515 or visit www.ozarlington.com for more.

Opening Artist Reception. 5-8 p.m. at the Gallery Underground, Crystal

City Shops, 2100 Crystal Drive. Steve Broido Solo Show "Around Death Valley," consists of shots taken in Death Valley National Park, California, this color photography exhibit features remote and sparsely populated spots in 5,000 square miles of Death Valley National Park. Exhibit on display through July 28. Visit www.galleryunderground.org or call 571-483-0652 for more.

Water Fun Field Day. 6-8 p.m. at Drew Park, 3514 22nd St S. Water Ninja Warrior Challenge, Sprinkler Tug of War, Splash Four Corners, water balloon activities and more. Wear a swimsuit and shoes that can get wet or muddy. (Shoes must be worn at all times.) Visit parks.arlingtonva.us/events/water-fun-field-day/ for more.

Golden Eye. 6-11 p.m. at Gateway Park, 1300 Lee Highway. Part of the Rosslyn Cinema + Pub in the Park movie series, featuring a movie and food from one of the food trucks on site. Visit www.rosslynva.org/go/gateway-park for more.

Bands in Concert. 8 p.m. at Lubber Run, N. Columbus Street and 2nd Street N. Los Gallos Negros band. Visit CultureCapital.com for more.

JULY 7-22

Fabulation, or the Re-education of Undine. 8-10 p.m. at Gunston 2, 2700 S. Lang St. Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Lynn Nottage, tells the story of Undine Barnes Calles, a businesswoman who has created a successful public relations firm and suddenly sees her once-balanced life completely fall apart.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 7

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 6

\$20; \$18 Seniors. Visit www.portcityplayhouse.org for more.

SATURDAY/JULY 8

Cool Creek Critters. 10-11:30 a.m. at the Alcova Heights park fire ring, 901 S George Mason Drive. Dress to get wet and spend some time exploring waterfalls, trying to catch water striders, and taking a closer look at some creek critters. Please wear closed-toe water shoes. Call 703-228-3403 for more.

Lord of the Flies Audition. 1-3 p.m. at Synetic Theater, Studio Violet, 2155 Crystal Plaza Arcade T-19. The Synetic Teen Company will stage William Golding's "Lord of the Flies," adapted for the stage by Nigel Williams. Visit synetictheater.org/teen/ or email tori@synetictheater.org.

Seashell Workshop. 1:30-2:30 p.m. at the Gulf Branch Nature Center, 3608 Military Road. Discover the unique feeding methods of mollusks like the moon and cone snails. Look at their shells and the signs they leave behind on their prey. Ages 7-12. Call 703-228-3403 for more.

R.I.P. - Remove Invasive Plants. 2-4 p.m. at the Gulf Branch Nature Center, 3608 Military Road. Work parties are held every month and are making a real difference, with the return of ferns and wildflowers, and the animals that depend on them, in areas once covered in destructive invasive plants. Call 703-228-3403 for more.

Terrific Turtles Campfire. 7-8 p.m. at the Gulf Branch Nature Center, 3608 Military Road. This engaging program will be filled with entertaining activities that may include stories, special animal guests, games, songs and of course, S'mores. Call 703-228-3403 for more.

'70's vs '80's Retro Party. 8 p.m. at the The State Theatre, 220 N Washington St., Falls Church. Venture into the retro and dance the night away with funk, disco, new wave, pop and rock. Costumes encouraged. Ages 18 and older. Visit www.thestatetheatre.com for more.

Bands in Concert. 8 p.m. at Lubber Run, N. Columbus Street and 2nd Street N. King Soul band. Visit CultureCapital.com for more.

JULY 8-9

St. Mary's Booksale. 9 a.m.-1 p.m. on Saturday, and 8 a.m.-noon on Sunday at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 2609 N Glebe Rd. Annual book sale to benefit the Arlington Pediatric Center Visit stmarysarlington.org/ or call 703-527-6800.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

On Monday, July 17, the installation of the Meeting Bowls, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at 1320 N. Courthouse Road. Meeting Bowls come to Arlington, a creation of artists' Eva Salmerón and Emilio Alarcón. Visit www.arlingtonarts.org or call 703-228-1850 for more information.

SUNDAY/JULY 9

Bands in Concert. 8 p.m. at Lubber Run, N. Columbus Street and 2nd Street N. Akua Allrich band. Visit CultureCapital.com for more.

MONDAY/JULY 10

Registration Begins. For the Northern Virginia Senior Olympics through Sept. 2. The NVSO includes about 70 events that exercise the mind as well as the body. To qualify for the Olympics participants must turn 50 years old by Dec. 31. RSVP Northern Virginia at 703-403-5360 or email RSVP at rsvp@volunteerfairfax.org. For a complete list of events and venues please visit www.nvso.us.

TUESDAY/JULY 11

Fix It Lessons. 4-7 p.m. at the Central Library, 1015 North Quincy Street. Learn to repair things. Call 703-228-5990 for more.

Bad Art Night. 7-8:30 p.m. at the Westover Branch Library, 1644 N McKinley Rd #3. Get to know fellow artists, from professional to hobbyists. Epic trophy awarded for the piece voted "Worst of All." For ages 18+. Call 703-228-5260 for more.

JULY 11-AUG. 29

Drawing: The Natural World. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Arlington Arts Center, 3550 Wilson Blvd. This eight-week course will focus its attention on the natural world, and teach you to

record what you see, using materials like graphite, charcoal, and ink. \$250. Ages 18 and older. Call 703-248-6800, or visit www.arlingtonartscenter.org for more.

WEDNESDAY/JULY 12

Walking Tours of Rosslyn. 6:30-8 p.m. at the Central Place Plaza, 1800 N. Lynn St. With artist Graham Coreil-Allen. Visit www.rosslynva.org/ for more.

Blues Brothers Film. 7:45 p.m. at Arlington Cinema and Drafthouse, 2903 Columbia Pike. Check out Jake and Elwood singing "Hey Bartender." Ages 21 and over after 9 p.m. Visit acdh.arlingtondrafthouse.com for more.

JULY 12-AUG. 30

Drawing and Painting: The Figure. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Arlington Arts Center, 3550 Wilson Blvd. Beginning, returning, and advanced students learn drawing and painting in this course on the human form. \$280. 18 and older. Call 703-248-6800, or visit www.arlingtonartscenter.org for more.

THURSDAY/JULY 13

Columbia Pike Movie Night. Just after sunset, Arlington Mill Community Center, 909 S. Dinwiddie St. Movie is "Raising Arizona" (1987 - Rated PG-13), sponsored by APAH. Visit columbia-pike.org/movie-nights for more.

Presenting 'Fabulation'

FROM PAGE 6

ter was a very difficult challenge because she really isn't a nice person," she said. "Hopefully [audiences] will see that this is a story about redemption and truth and perhaps see something that they recognize in their own lives."

Alex Lopez plays the role of Herve/Ensemble, who is Undine's Latin husband who walks out on her. "Although he is a well-traveled man with sophisticated tastes, something that Undine values because it gives her cache, Herve is a selfish man who uses others. He may also lack the capacity to do what is right for them as a married couple as he takes all her money and disappears," he said.

Lexie Lounsbury plays the role of Stephie/Ensemble, the ditzy but well-meaning assistant to Undine. "She's young, spunky, and a little air-headed, but she cares about Undine a lot," she said.

As far as challenges, she said she hadn't done many comedic plays before, so it was tricky to navigate the timing. "Also, playing so many characters, it was difficult to separate their traits so the audience could understand who was who," she said.

She said she hopes the audiences will take away a positive attitude. "Even though Undine's situation looks bad on paper, it isn't really as hopeless as it seems."

In addition to playing some ensemble characters, Terry Spann plays the role of Flow, the brother of Undine who has issues with her because of how she departed from the family. "He is a very blunt, no-nonsense (and no filter) Operation Desert Storm veteran now working as a drugstore security guard," he said.

He said the author packed a lot into the fast-moving play. "However, my biggest challenge was (and is) to keep from laughing

when I am supposed to be serious. This is a very funny piece."

Marcela Onyango plays the role of Rosa/Ensemble. "Rosa is an optimistic and forward-looking individual. While she recognizes that her life may not necessarily be where it can be, she doesn't despair about it," she said.

Manuel McCoy plays the role of the Father/Ensemble to Undine and her brother Flow. He served in the Vietnam War and now works as a security guard. "This honest, no-nonsense character brings love and humor to his family," he said.

The audience takeaway from the play is "no matter what happens or how much time goes by, family is family and will always be there for you," he said.

Gayle Carney plays several characters, including Devora and Allison. "Devora is a lot of fun and reminds me when I played hand games and jumped rope," she said. Allison was more of a challenge for her, "because I really had to stretch to play a person who is so phony and who mentions a well-known celebrity — Eartha Kitt."

She said she hopes the audience walks away knowing that the world is made up of so many different types of people and everyone is of value. "Most importantly, no matter how far we rise in society, we must not forget our roots," she said.

Krista Forney plays the role of the Grandmother/Ensemble. "I play multiple characters but they're all representative of, what I think are, the lowest points of Undine's fall from grace," she said. "Fabulation: or the Re-education of Undine" runs July 8-22 at Gunston 2 Theater in Arlington. Show times are July 7, 14, 20, 21 at 8 p.m. and 3 p.m. matinees on July 8, 15, 22. Admission is \$20; \$18 for seniors. 2700 S. Lang Street. Tickets are available at www.portcityplayhouse.org.

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Meditation as Medicine

Practice linked to improvements in health.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

In her dimly lit basement in Great Falls, Mary Beth Kogod sounds a meditation bell that echoes through the room. The 12 people sitting on cushions in a circle around her close their eyes and listen to the gentle sounds of her voice.

"If your mind begins to wander, gently guide it back to the sound of my voice," said Kogod, as she leads the group in a mindfulness meditation session.

The practice of meditating to aid with ills running the gamut from stress and anxiety to pain and depression is on the rise. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), 18 million people practiced some form of meditation in 2015, and the number of Americans who engage in the practice has doubled over the last 15 years.

"We have more smartphones and other electronics that consume us and give us constant access to stressful events we see on the news," said Kate Love, who runs the Open Mind-Open Heart meditation group in Bethesda. "There is the expectation that we need to be available and informed all the time. This expectation wasn't in place 10 years ago."

Love says that while scientific research

to back up these claims is limited, it is growing. For example, a study funded by the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health at NIH shows that mindfulness practices have a positive impact on insomnia.

"There is the expectation that we need to be available and informed all the time. This expectation wasn't in place 10 years ago."

— Kate Love

Meditation usually entails sitting relatively still and quiet, as in Kogod's meditation session, and focusing on one thing, such as a sound, an image or one's own breath.

"I teach clients concentrative meditation where they focus on one thing," she said. "I also teach mindful meditation where people try to cultivate a sense of awareness of what is happening in their body. For example, what thoughts pass through your mind as



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Kate Love of the Open Mind-Open Heart meditation group in Bethesda says that meditation can help reduce stress.

you sit quietly? What sounds do you hear? What emotions do you feel? The work comes when you notice these sensations and then let them go."


A 2011 study by the Association for Psychological Science showed that meditation can be effective in boosting memory and

concentration. Settings for this mind-body practice now range from workplaces to classrooms.

Amber Wilson, a fourth grade teacher, guides her students in mindfulness meditation practices most afternoons during the school year. "A lot of my students have difficult home environments which affects their ability to concentrate in school," she said. "When I stop them between subjects and let them chill out a little bit, it really makes a difference in their performance, even after just five minutes."

Meditation can also help with addiction treatment, says Warren Schelter, Ph.D., a psychologist with a practice in Alexandria. "It can instill a sense of calm and overall wellbeing," he said. "Anxiety and depression often go hand-in hand with addiction, which is why a calming meditation practice might be effective for some people."

Schelter underscores the fact that meditation should not replace traditional medicine. "I would recommend that anyone experiencing symptoms of mental or physical illness see a medical doctor first," she said. "Mediation should work in conjunction with traditional medicine, not in place of it."



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Publishes: July 26, 2017 • Ads close: July 19, 2017

Connection readers love their pets. This keepsake edition will feature photos, anecdotes, advice and more about beloved family pets. Reach pet owners where they live in a section sure to attract and hold their attention.

The Pet Connection will publish on July 26, 2017, and photos and stories of your pets with you and your family should be submitted by July 19. We welcome short stories about how you got your pet, a noteworthy talent or anecdote about your pet, tales of the bonds between your family and your pet, plus drawings, paintings or other artwork of your pet by children or adults.

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PEOPLE

'Music to Do Good and Help People'

Project Joy will provide an income for Zambian orphans.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

When Arlington's Don Halterman was the praise and worship director at Centreville Presbyterian Church, he went on a mission trip to Zambia in 2012. And although he returned home to his life here, the orphans he'd met there stayed on his mind.

A musician, he was determined to better their lives in some way. And now, through a new venture called Project Joy — via which these children will perform and sell their original songs — he intends to do just that. But it'll take some help from others to bring it to fruition, and he's hoping members of the community will open their hearts and wallets to lend a hand.

"When I went to Zambia, I fell in love with the orphans there and became passionate about helping them," said Halterman. "And since retiring from my position at Centreville Presbyterian, two-and-a-half years ago, I've wanted to start my own music company. But I wanted to do meaningful music that impacts the world — which is my company's mission statement."

So he and the three others in the company, Grander Music — John Nixon, Anders Arestad and Kent Washburn, organist at Memorial Baptist Church in Arlington — looked for artists and organizations to promote, in line with their goal. Their vision statement is "Rite place, right people, write music."

Halterman said the word "rite" is used as signifying a sacred spot. "We believe that God put us [the right people] together to do this — write music that can do good and help people," he said. "What makes the music meaningful is its impact in the world after we create it."

He returned to Zambia in 2014 and started singing with the orphans there and helping them write songs. "I loved the way



In their music studio are (back row, from left) Don Halterman and Kent Washburn and (front row, from left) John Nixon and Anders Arestad.

they sang so joyfully and passionately," he said. "Their voices were untrained, but really beautiful."

The following year, Halterman — now the keyboardist for the modern worship service at Mount Olivet United Methodist Church in Arlington — went back again. Accompanying him was Cathy Baker, a board member of Every Orphan's Hope (EOH) — a national group that sponsors Zambian orphans and builds villages in Zambia. "I worked with the kids, singing songs and helping a couple of them write original songs, and Cathy recorded them," said Halterman.

One in five Zambian children became orphans after that country's AIDS epidemic; and in 25 percent of households there — some 625,000 — the primary caregiver is a child. And there's such widespread poverty in Zambia that it's extremely difficult for orphans to find a sustainable source of income.

"The Zambian community doesn't support employment opportunities for the younger generation, so they have to find their own things to do," said Halterman. "So EOH works on sustainability projects for them, and I'm adding in my project to theirs." (To see a video about it, go to <https://www.gofundme.com/project-joy>).

Via Project Joy, he plans to produce a full-fledged documentary on the entire process

of teaching the children new, original songs, plus dances to their music. Then the goal is to have them perform their songs and dances at various community churches and functions throughout Zambia — but mainly in Lusaka, the capital and most-modernized part of the country.

"These kids have no money or material goods, yet they're happier and more joyful than anyone in the U.S.," said Halterman. "It just takes me aback. I believe it's because of the joy of the Lord — only He can give it to you. We all have joy as humans; but when you connect it with God, it bursts out so other people can see it."

Ironically, he said, when he was a boy in Sunday School, he remembers saying, "I'll do anything for God; just don't send me to Africa to be a missionary." Said Halterman: "It was just the unknown, so it was scary to me then. So this project is God's sense of humor."

Basically, he said, "It's tough over there. These kids have so little; their parents have either died of AIDS or left them. But I want them to have a sustainable, meaningful life so they can be part of the solution, not the problem."

EOH supports more than 100 orphans there, and 25 have been identified as having the skills to perform the songs and dances. "We'll produce seven, original songs — two of them written by one of the orphans and five written by me," said



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DON HALTERMAN

The orphans gather around Don Halterman and his guitar to learn new music.

Halterman. "They'll have reggae and island rhythms."

They'll be recorded as both a CD and a DVD, and people who donate at the Website, www.musicprojectjoy.com, will be able to download them. "It's all tax-deductible because we teamed up with a nonprofit called PCI — Public Communications Inc. — which will collect the donations and send 100 percent of the money to Project Joy," said Halterman. "There are no salaries; but we need to raise \$58,000 to help us travel to Zambia, produce the CDs and DVDs and prepare the kids to go out and perform."

Then the orphans can both sell the CDs and perform for money, which will provide an income for them. On the DVDs, available to contributors, each song will be accompanied by a video.

"We plan to return to Zambia in August, for about two weeks, to do the project," said Halterman. "The kids are excited about it; they love singing and interacting with others. And I did the music tracks to go with their songs."

He's hoping people will contribute to the cause at the Website because, unlike many other projects, this one will have an immediate, positive impact on the children's lives. "They could do a concert the week after we leave," he said. "And this is a way people can help kids in Africa, even if they can't go there. They can still be an integral part of these orphans' lives and really make a huge difference."

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**THE
CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS**

PEOPLE

Looking Back

FROM PAGE 5

rimanded for not following the
chain of command."

Now teachers use the interactive
white boards for presentation, vid-
eos. And notes can be saved. "Ev-
erything is going electronic so you
don't have to carry around paper."
It is especially relevant in science
where there are electronic sensors
for collecting data. "It used to be
we measured photosynthesis by
counting bubbles; now with the

probes we can measure the carbon
dioxide and oxygen. Very profes-
sional. We were doing something
interesting on blood types but I
was told not to touch it because
it's not on the SOL."

Zito's advice for a new teacher
today would be to focus on what
you are doing in the classroom. Be
prepared and enjoy your time with
the kids. "Have an assumption of
good will. You get what you give
and you can't demand respect.
And smile."

Children and Books

FROM PAGE 5

teacher who was studying a spe-
cific subject and wanted to have
what the library had available on
that subject."

Parental involvement has
changed according to Macekura.
"It used to be there were a lot more
activist parents county-wide, activ-
ist in a good way. I just don't see
that anymore. At a PTA meeting
you might get a dozen parents. It
is indicative of life today."

Macekura says she has seen four
library software systems come and
go in her 19 years. "We finally have
a good one that is more user
friendly."

Her advice to a new library as-
sistant is to be flexible. "Always
remember kids are the reason
we're here. My mantra is to treat
kids the way I would want other
adults to treat my kids. Sometimes
there are difficult ones." She also

says, "Read the books yourself. "
She tries to read two middle
school books to one adult book to
balance it off. "This year I discov-
ered a writer, Ruta Sepetys, who
writes World War I fiction taking
place in Europe. She has such a
way with words. I kind of got cap-
tivated."

She says she feels great. "It was
time to retire. The job had a steep
learning curve for her in the be-
ginning, and she says she had to
get dressed to look like a human
being in the morning. "But I just
loved the kids and I love books. It
was a perfect pairing. I looked for-
ward to going to work every day."

She adds, "You do form attach-
ments and it keeps you young."
But she says there are so many
other things to do. "I am tired of
getting up at 5:30 a.m. The first
thing I'm going to do is read the
newspaper cover to cover with a
cup of coffee."

SPORTS

Thunderbolts Defeat Riptide

In its second meet of the NVSL Di-
vision IV season, the Donaldson Run
Thunderbolts hosted the Virginia Run
Riptide and secured another team vic-
tory with a final score of 235 -185.
Continuing his streak, DR swimmer
Charlie Greenwood broke another DR
team record again this week beating
his own former record with a time of
39.12 in the boys' 11-12 50 breast-
stroke.

Double individual race winners for
Donaldson Run were: Ryan Clark
(girls' 8 & under 25 back and 25 fly);
Rachel Conley (girls' 9-10 50 free and
25 fly); Sean Conley (boys' 13-14 50
free and 50 fly); Charlie Greenwood
(boys' 9-10 50 breast (DR team
record) and 50 fly); Grace Jansen
(girls' 11-12 50 breast and 50 fly);
Ella Rigoli (girls 13-14 50 back and
50 fly); Charlie Taylor (boys' 11-12
50 free and 50 fly); and Jack
Tsuchitani (boys' 11-12 50 back and
50 breast).

The team's single winners were (in
order of age and event): Cole Mont-
gomery (boys' 8 & Under 25 free);
Thomas Rodman (boys' 9-10 free);
Emily Brooks (girls' 15-18 50 free);

Elsa Leichty (girls' 11-12 50 back); TJ
Hutchison (boys' 13-14 50 back); An-
drew Rehr (boys' 15-18 50 back);
Drew Harker (boys' 13-14 50 breast);
Anna Trainum (girls' 13-14 50 breast);
and Grace Motta (girls' 15-18 50
breast).

Winning DR relay teams included:
Bran Kaplan, Charlie Greenwood, Tho-
mas Rodman, Will Taylor (boys' 9-10
medley relay); Scarlett Bennett, Diya
Redburn, Rachel Conley, Coco Rigoli
(girls' 9-10 medley relay); Hank Holley,
Jack Tsuchitani, Charlie Taylor,
Hayden Stolzenberg (boys' 11-12 med-
ley relay); Elsa Leichty, Grace Jansen,
Julia Sherinian, Margaux Harms (girls'
11-12 medley relay); TJ Hutchison,
Drew Harker, Henry Rehr, Sean Conley
(boys' 13-14 medley relay); Andrew
Rehr, Huck Browne, Harrison Rehr,
Andrew Meighan (boys' 15-18 medley
relay); Emily Brooks, Grace Motta,
Emma Hutchison, Sarah Conley (girls'
15-18 medley relay); Jack Tsuchitani,
Charlie Greenwood, Sean Conley, An-
drew Meighan (boys' mixed age relay);
and Grace Jansen, Rachel Conley, Ella
Rigoli, Emily Brooks (girls' mixed age
relay).

Native Plants

FROM PAGE 2

with neither herbicides nor heavy machinery. The volunteer efforts, called RiP (Remove Invasive Plants) occur on Saturdays at various locations throughout the county.

According to Archer, Arlington is also exploring other methods of invasive plant control such as introducing insects or pathogens which feed off of invasive species, such as the mile-a-minute weevil, an insect which feeds exclusively on the mile-a-minute invasive weed.

Similarly, Dominion Energy is making a concerted effort to control invasive species and encourage native meadows to develop in the areas they steward.

"We've created 43,000 acres of pollinator and native species habitat," Cooney said. "We've been doing this as part of our business. It's the right thing to do not just for the pollinators but for other species."

According to Chuck Penn, media relations manager for Dominion Energy, the company is responsible for keeping the areas around transmission facilities and power lines clear. In addition to simply mowing these areas, Dominion has worked to reintroduce native pollinators.

"Not only [are we] keeping the rights of way safe for our employees but looking for ways to plant pollinators because of the crisis with pollinators," Penn said.

According to Cooney, planting native pollinators benefits both Dominion and local ecosystems because invasive plants are usually taller and harder to control than native species.

"Species that do well in disturbed areas are often invasive and colonial," Cooney said. "If I can maintain an upland or lowland meadow and encourage native species to grow, everyone wins."

Penn and Cooney added that they hope area residents will both see the impact of these efforts and be inspired to work towards a common goal.

"If more and more people replicate what [Cooney] has been doing it will make a difference," Penn said.

Archer and Abugattas expressed similar sentiments about the power residents have to make an impact.

"If you have a garden, something as simple as planting native species can help make your yard an expansion of what we are doing in the parks," Abugattas said.

"Most of the county is not parkland," Archer added. "We can make recommendations and suggestions, but ultimately we are in charge of only a small portion of the land that is out there. A lot of what we have is already compromised so we have to protect what we have left."

Web Resources

- ❖ To learn more about Arlington's conservation efforts, visit the Natural Arlington Blog at environment.arlingtonva.us/category/natural-arlington
- ❖ For more information about volunteering and other ways to contribute go to environment.arlingtonva.us/get-involved
- ❖ To find out more about Dominion Energy's conservation work along the W&OD, visit www.dom.com/wod.

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Not An Auto-Matic Fix



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

But a fix nonetheless, of our 17-year-old back-up car, a 2000 model year Honda Accord. On balance, since inheriting it from mother in 2008, it has been an exceptionally reliable and reasonably-priced second car and one which I'm happy to own. I drive it approximately 7,000 miles per year and not over long stretches. In effect, it is our local car. And considering there is no monthly car payment and the insurance/maintenance costs are low, as a non-car guy who only wants to get from point "A" to point "B", I can live with it "Big time," to quote our current President.

Now I'm at a bit of a crossroads, however. (And not that this is a "cancer" column per se, but it is a column affected by yours truly being a cancer "diagnosee.") I am dropping the car off at my local mechanic, Tony, later today because there are some warning signs and idiot lights suggesting I do so. First, the infamous "check engine" light is illuminated. Its yellow which Tony said is not as bad/urgent as if it were red. Nevertheless, to turn it off/fix the underlying problem (since it doesn't appear to be the gas cap) will likely cost hundreds. The preliminary assessment is that the fault is emission related.

The second area of concern is temperature, specifically how poorly my car's air conditioner is cooling and how loud the fan controlling it is when engaged even when one/low is selected. Adding insult to summertime discomfort, the passenger-side window doesn't slide down, either when using its own power-window switch or the master control on the driver's side. To summarize, I have one window (the driver's side) that can go down and extremely limited air conditioning. I wouldn't say it's hot in the car, but I'm sure any normal person would. Having had previous conversations with Tony about these repairs, I know the dollars needed to right these wrongs might not make any sense given the age and mileage on the car and the diagnosis of its owner. Yet here I am trying think long term, not cancer term. What to do?

I don't want to be miserable driving the Honda anymore (and it is me who's driving it). But I only need the air conditioning for another six to eight weeks or so — and not every day, and rarely at night. I do need to open the windows though for eight to 10 months, not so much during the winter and rarely on cold nights, but opportunities do present themselves. Spending the hundreds/possibly thousands of dollars for all repairs now however might make me miserable, too. The question persists then for any of us who own/want to maintain older cars: when are you throwing good money after bad? Ergo: when is enough, enough? (I sound like Carrie Bradshaw from "Sex and the City.")

Would I be better off spending the repair money on a newer car and enjoy whatever warranty protection I could muster and thus minimize future repair bills or not? The only problem with buying that "newer car: it's likely (heck, there's no 'likely' about it) there will be a monthly car payment which at present I do not have, and in so having one will definitely make me miserable.

Factor in my health status and I can't stop asking myself: do I solve a problem that affects the quality of my life today at the expense of tomorrow (pun intended) or do I plan/repair for tomorrow and suffer the consequences of having done so today?

As a stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer patient originally characterized by my oncologist as "terminal" and given a "13-month to two-year" prognosis to boot back in late Feb., 2009, I've always tried to live my life and make decisions as if I had a future beyond what I was told.

And for the past eight years and four months, I have pretty consistently maintained that approach. Still, the longer I live, the more my underlying medical diagnosis impacts my thinking/judgment. Unfortunately, worlds sometimes collide and reality is up for grabs. And occasionally decisions are made in a "bizarro" kind of way where topsy is turvy and vice versa. Welcome to my whirled.

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

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