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Sewer Pipe to be Replaced at Little Hunting Creek

Some 789 feet of pipe has developed a sag that is causing blockages and needs to be replaced.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE GAZETTE

Built in 1961, the sanitary sewer pipe that runs beneath the Little Hunting Creek in Mount Vernon has developed a sag that is causing blockages and needs to be replaced. This 12-inch diameter, cast-iron pipe that runs 789 feet between Woodland Lane and Thomas J. Stockton Parkway conveys wastewater used from toilets, cooking, laundry and bathing from 480 homes to a pump station and on toward a treatment plant. So now, a \$1.6 million project to replace the aging pipe is in the works; the new pipe is expected to last for 50 years.

"The current problem is the sanitary sewer pipe has developed a sag," said Matthew Kaiser, information officer from the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services. "It means all the wastewater from toilets, sinks, laundry — all that liquid is forming a blockage in the sag. It's requiring a pretty rigorous, extensive maintenance schedule to keep that from blocking up. If the pipe blocks, it's going to cause a sanitary sewer overflow, which has environmental implications."

Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck said, with the new pipe, he hopes to ensure that area has a long-term, viable, environmentally safe sewer and water system. "The replacement is definitely due. It's necessary because the 50-year-old sewer poses a significant risk to Little Hunting Creek, the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay. If it were to collapse and spring a leak, it would pour raw sewage into (the creek). This is a preventative measure."

The interior of the sewer pipe



County staff on the banks of the Little Hunting Creek in Mount Vernon.

was inspected in 2015 using closed-circuit television cameras mounted on remote-controlled robots. The footage revealed three major sags, and a large amount of debris with a buildup of fats, oils, and grease throughout the pipe. The problem required the sewer line to be placed on a 90-day pressure cleaning schedule.

Kaiser said this isn't an emergency repair project, rather the condition of the pipe was assessed a few years ago and the county has had time to plan and design the best solution possible to fix it. He said replacing the pipe is the most

cost-effective option.

He continued: "The project is to replace the pipe, which should give it

another 50 years. It will reduce or eliminate the constant work that's being done to maintain it. This is a replacement project. It's an older sanitary sewer system."

While no sewage backups have been reported, people are still able to use their sinks and toilets, said Kaiser. "You want to fix this before that becomes an issue; this project has been on the radar for a number of years," he said.

A study was conducted to investigate options for replacing the pipe. The location of the pipe in a tidal creek surrounded by neighborhoods presented challenges to typical construction methods. After considering nine possible alternatives, the study concluded that using the open cut method with a "cofferdam" would provide the best long-term solution. A cofferdam is a temporary enclosure built across a body of water and constructed to allow the enclosed area to be pumped out, creating a dry work environment for the work to proceed. This method reduces the amount of onshore work in proximity to residents; nonetheless, a significant amount of on-shore work will be necessary, such as material delivery and hauling away excavated material.

The project is currently in the design phase, which includes wetlands delineation, field and vegetation surveys, and a geotechnical investigation. "They're working on the design phase to make sure the project is designed the most efficient, best way possible. There's a lot of permits that need to be met because it's in a wetland," said Kaiser.

Design began in December 2017 and will continue through April 2019. Construction will require

significant permitting because the project is in a tidal, navigable water body with adjacent wetlands. Permitting could take up to 18 months so construction is estimated to start in May 2019 and may take eight months to complete. "They're still surveying. In a month, there will be a barge out in the water taking soil samples. There's no disturbance planned until May 2019," said Kaiser.

Construction activities will be mobilized on both sides of Little Hunting Creek. Staging areas and construction access points will be from an HOA's park on the west bank and a private, undeveloped parcel on the east side. The alignment of the pipe hasn't been finalized, so they don't know which yards will be impacted yet. "All efforts are being made to minimize disturbance to residents. The access points will be restored at the conclusion of the project. We will host community meetings as nec-

essary and use provide updates on the website," said Kaiser.

Kaiser said during construction, residents will still be able to use their toilets and sinks. "With any of these replacement projects, there's a bypass system that gets put in place; there will be no service interruption," he said.

This project will be awarded to a contractor through a bidding process once the design is completed.

Every effort will be made to minimize the impact to the park and boat ramp, and to schedule construction activities to minimize interference with recreational activities. And all work will be supervised by county staff. The project will be funded by sewer service fees paid by residents in their Fairfax Water bills.

For questions about the project or to receive project updates by email, contact project manager Thomas Grala at 703-324-5815.

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Money on the Table Required

Board intends to keep options open for a full conversation by advertising tax increase.

BY KEN MOORE

Sharon Bulova indicated that the Board of Supervisors will advertise the tax rate March 6 with the full 2.5-cent increase proposed in County Executive Bryan Hill's budget.

"That's not to say that's what we will end up with," she said during a joint budget meeting with the Board of Supervisors and School Board on Feb. 27. School Superintendent Scott Brabrand also attended.

Hill's proposed budget would fully fund the school's budget request, fully fund compensation increases for county employees, and many county priorities.

Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay heads the supervisors' budget committee. "I think we need to make sure we are able to have a full conversation with our community about the budget that's on the table and knowing that the budget funds our highest priorities, but the only way to do that is to implement a tax increase," he said.

Bulova said she understands the impact the tax rate would have. "We are concerned about that," she said.

"When we advertise the tax rate, that will become the ceiling for what the tax rate can be. It can be lower, it can be the same, but it cannot be higher than what we advertise on March 6," said Bulova.

"That's not to say that's what we'll end up with."

— Chairman Sharon Bulova on proposed rate increase

The board will officially adopt the FY2019 budget on May 1 after a series of community meetings and public hearings on the \$4.29-billion budget.

If the Board of Supervisors were to adopt the full 2.5 cent tax rate increase, it would amount to an additional \$268 on the average homeowner's annual tax bill.

Sully Supervisor Kathy Smith said she fears talking about an average increase when all homeowners will have different property bills and property assessments. "When talking about averages, I also think it's useful to talk about medians,"

she said.

Hill came on board as county executive on Jan. 2, 2018.

"We cannot sustain what we are doing. In my view, this is a one year deal that allows us to have a five year strategic look

forward," he said.

"It is key that we become a prioritized county so we can effectuate the change that we need to go forward."

The budget would transfer \$2.26 billion to the school system, 52 percent of the total. Funding the school's proposed budget

would bring teacher salaries closer to market rates, said Brabrand.

"Every year we wait is a year teachers can make a choice to go elsewhere," said Brabrand.

See fairfaxcounty.gov/budget for more.



Sharon Bulova



Jeff McKay



Kathy Smith



Bryan Hill



Scott Brabrand

FILE PHOTOS

FAIRFAX COUNTY TOWN HALL BUDGET MEETINGS

- ❖ **Wednesday, March 7, 7 p.m.,** Sully District Town Hall, Rocky Run Middle School Little Theater, 4400 Stringfellow Road, Chantilly
- ❖ **Thursday, March 8, 7 p.m.,** Hunter Mill Community Summit, South Lakes High School Lecture Hall, 11400 South Lakes Drive, Reston
- ❖ **Monday, March 12, 7:30 p.m.,** Great Falls Budget Meeting, Great Falls Library Meeting Room, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls
- ❖ **Wednesday, March 14, 7 p.m.,** Providence Community Budget Meeting, Providence Community Center, First Floor Multipurpose Room, 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax
- ❖ **Wednesday, March 14, 7:30pm,** Braddock District Council Annual Budget Meeting, Location To Be Determined
- ❖ **Thursday, March 15, 7 p.m.,** Mason District Budget Town Meeting, Mason District

- Governmental Center, Main Community Room, 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale
- ❖ **Monday, March 19, 7 p.m.,** Mount Vernon District Budget Town Hall, Location to be determined
- ❖ **Wednesday, March 21, 7 p.m.,** Lee District Budget Town Hall Meeting, Franconia Governmental Center Community Room, 6121 Franconia Road, Alexandria
- ❖ **Thursday, March 22, 7 p.m.,** Springfield District Budget Town Hall Meeting, Springfield Governmental Center, Community Room, 6140 Rolling Road, Springfield
- ❖ **April 10-12,** Board of Supervisors Public Hearings on FY 2019 Budget and FY 2019-2023 Capital Improvement Plan. See www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/speakers-form to sign up.

Extracurriculars: Secret Sauce of Success

Superintendent's budget eliminates barrier of \$50 activity fee.

School Superintendent Scott Brabrand's budget would eliminate a \$50 extracurricular activity fee that went into effect this year. Eliminating the fee will cost the schools \$1 million, but Brabrand said it was important.

"I believe that extracurricular activities in Fairfax County are the secret sauce of success for our kids," Brabrand said, during a joint budget committee meeting held with members of the Board of Supervisors and School Board on Feb. 27.

Brabrand said he conducted grade point average research every year when he was a principal. "We looked at every kid, and regardless of background, regardless of race," he said, when students were in-

volved in extracurricular activities they had higher grade point averages.

"Frankly, our kids that do get involved in sports and extracurricular activities already pay a mountain of fees as part of travel, as part of going places and being a part of booster clubs," said Brabrand. "So I don't think an additional fee does anything but set up a barrier for our kids to participate."

Brabrand said two other fees were implemented by the school system for FY2018. Fees will still be mandated for families whose children transfer out of boundary to another school and for students who take

more than six Advanced Placement or I.B. tests.

"The school system pays for the first six," he said.

— KEN MOORE

"Extracurricular activities ... are the secret sauce of success for our kids."

— Scott Brabrand, School Superintendent



PHOTO BY WILL PALENSCAR

The Oakton Cougars defeated the Westfield Bulldogs 59-54 to win the Concorde District Championship on Feb. 16. This year, students who participated in extracurricular activities like sports paid a \$50 fee, but the superintendent of schools proposes eliminating the fee.



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Fire Goes To Two Alarms

Units from the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department and the City of Alexandria Fire Department were dispatched on Monday, March 5, at approximately 1:29 p.m., for a report of smoke in the area near the 1800 block of Belle View Boulevard in the Belle View section of Fairfax County. Multiple callers to 9-1-1 reported large volumes of smoke in the area. The Fairfax County Police helicopter was already flying in the area and located a building with smoke coming from the roof. Units arrived on scene of a three-story, garden apartment building with smoke showing from the roof. Crews located a fire in the attic.

A second alarm was requested due to challenging conditions caused by the large amount of fire and layout of the building. The fire was brought under control and extinguished.

There were no reported firefighter or civilian injuries. There are a total of six condo units in the building. Each unit had a working smoke alarm. However, none of the smoke alarms activated due to the location of the fire. Fire Investigators determined that the fire was accidental in nature and started in the attic. The cause of the fire was an electrical event involving a ceiling fan located in the attic above a unit. Five occupants and two pets were displaced as a result of the fire. Red Cross assistance was offered and declined. Damages as a result of the fire were estimated to be approximately \$70,000.



Attic fire caused approximately \$70,000 in damages.

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Alex/Riverside Estates \$540,000
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OPINION

No Guns in the Classroom

Gun safety is an American value.

BY MONTE F. BOURJAILY, IV

In the aftermath of the horrific school shooting in Parkland, Florida, the President of the United States and the head of the National Rifle Association, have advocated arming teachers and hardening schools in other ways. These are shriveled, reactive measures that appeal to fear and rely on the false statement that “to stop a bad guy with a gun, you need a good guy with a gun.”

Introducing guns into the classroom doesn’t demonstrate the virtue of the Second Amendment, it poisons the educational environment, increases the risk that innocents will be hurt and simply challenges “the bad guy” to creatively get around the armed target. We can uphold the Second Amendment, and the rule of law, and ensure Americans’ safety and sense of security with common sense measures, like repealing the Dickey Amendment, that focus on preventing unsafe and malevolent use of firearms.

Arming teachers is a terrible idea. First, it

changes the dynamic in a classroom, placing the weapon between the teacher and the students. Even if its purpose is to protect students, the weapon is a distraction and a barrier. Second, and more importantly, you are introducing more projectile weapons into a chaotic environment, dramatically increasing the likelihood of friendly fire killing children, other teachers and law enforcement seeking to assist. How well do police and soldiers perform in the high stress conditions of an actual confrontation? Does the stress and opportunity for errors increase or decrease when multiple shooters (friend and foe) are added to a situation? Third, in response to the argument that a shooter will avoid schools knowing that teachers are armed, what is to prevent the shooter from wearing body armor? It is easy to buy. We need to stop reacting and problem-solve and innovate, which is our true nature.

Guns are tools, like cars, that can cause serious injury or death when used improperly or with ill-intent. I also am a hunter who grew up respecting guns.

Why is there a “gag rule” (the Dickey Amendment of 1996) on Centers for Disease Control research into the effects of gun violence? How are guns different than cars? The National Highway Transportation Safety Commission

collects data on motor vehicle fatalities through the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS). Gun owners have a Second Amendment right to own and use guns responsibly, not unconditionally. All Americans have a right to gain a better understanding of how guns are used in ways that harm other Americans and in ways that can pose a risk to all of us.

We must respect the Second Amendment, like we uphold all of the Constitution as the rule of law. However, there are few absolutes under the Constitution, including how far we interpret the right to bear arms. Freedom of Religion does not permit the practice of human sacrifice and Freedom of Speech does not permit fighting words. In short, my right to swing my arms ends at the tip of your nose. We Americans are at our best as problem solvers and innovators. We use data and common sense to find solutions. We confront threats, rather than fearfully wait for them. Can we find common ground on reasonable gun control by listening to each other and recognizing reasonable rights and reasonably accepting certain limits in respectful recognition of the rights of others?

Monte F. Bourjaily, IV is a lawyer who teaches US Government, American History and Philosophy at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology. All submissions are in his personal capacity.

Underground Utilities Get Attention

BY SCOTT SUROVELL
STATE SENATOR (D-36)

The second to last week of the General Assembly session brought a conclusion to most committee work in the legislature, passage of several important bills and a fierce wind storm.

On Friday, a powerful wind storm struck Virginia and inflicted millions of dollars in damage to people and property, far more harm than most people anticipated. Many people lost electricity, some for several days. According to Dominion Energy, it was the fifth worst power outage in company history after

Hurricanes Isabel, Floyd, Irene and the 2012 Derecho.

The mass destruction reaffirms my view that we need to invest in utility undergrounding immediately. The newer developed parts of Northern Virginia where power lines are underground did not suffer outages and while undergrounding is expensive, the disruption of people’s lives has great value also.

This week, the House of Delegates approved my legislation to give Fairfax County additional funding streams to facilitate utility undergrounding on U.S. 1. The bill provides that Fairfax and Prince William counties can use transportation dollars to fund underground utilities on U.S. 1 if they match it with local

dollars. While the Prince William County Board of Supervisors has used local dollars to fund undergrounded utilities on their 14-mile stretch of U.S. 1, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors opposes using any local dollars for utility undergrounding. Perhaps this storm will help change their position.

I also supported the Dominion rate cap repeal bill which reaffirms and mandates broader investment in underground utilities in outage-prone areas such as most of eastern Fairfax and Prince William Counties, areas built out before underground utilities were required in new developments.

Budget negotiations have had a slow start
SEE UNDERGROUND, PAGE 18

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

Last weekend, I received a letter from Sen. Scott Surovell in which he thanked me for attending the public hearing in January 2018 before members of the Fairfax County delegation to the General Assembly. At the hearing, I had expressed my disagreement with Senator Surovell’s opposition to past bills which, if enacted, would have permitted home schooled students to participate in interscholastic activities at their local high schools. I pointed out that Virginia Code Section 22.1-254.1 provides the requirements for home-schooled students to be evaluated to ensure they are meeting appropriate standards of educational progress. In his letter,

Senator Surovell reiterated his view that home schooled students do not receive the same level of educational rigor as do students in our public schools.

In my view, the solution is not to deprive home schooled students of the ability to participate in interscholastic activities and thereby deprive them of the opportunity to enhance their resumes when applying to elite universities. If a solution is needed, it is to strengthen the requirements of Section 22.1-254.1. During this year’s legislative session, a new Bill that would have permitted home schooled students to participate in interscholastic activities at their local high schools was defeated in committee, thereby rendering it

unnecessary for Senator Surovell to vote against it.

I found myself wondering what could possibly be the true motivation for Senator Surovell’s opposition. I may have found it in researching awards he has received and endorsements of his 2015 candidacy for the Virginia Senate. In 2015, he was endorsed by the Virginia Education Association and the Virginia Federation of Teachers. Most notably he received the “Solid as a Rock” award from the Virginia Education Association and the Fairfax Education Association. Recipients of these awards could only receive them if they had a 100 percent voting record on education issues during the time period 2014-2015. I suspect that a vote

in favor of permitting home schooled students to participate in interscholastic activities at their local high schools would have ruined Senator Surovell’s 100 percent voting record.

Voters in Senator Surovell’s senatorial district should now be wondering whether a plaque displayed on Senator Surovell’s office wall (if the award came with one) is more important than facilitating higher education opportunities for the children of his constituents. Senator Surovell is up for reelection in 2019 and his constituents should call him to the question on this issue.

H. Jay Spiegel
Mount Vernon

Mount Vernon Gazette

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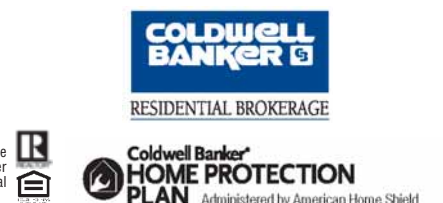
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OPINION

Budget Battle

By PAUL KRIZEK
STATE DELEGATE (D-44)

The budget is the final piece of significant legislation remaining for the General Assembly to come to an agreement on. The stakes this year are especially high for Virginians, because the House of Delegates finally expanded Medicaid to include nearly 400,000 hard-working uninsured Virginians. I proudly voted for the House budget, but our work is not yet finished.

Gov. Terry McAuliffe introduced his final budget to the General Assembly in 2017, and both the House Appropriations Committee and the Senate Finance Committee have introduced amended versions of it in their respective chambers. There is a \$600 million gap between the Senate budget and the House budget. The Senate failed to include Medicaid expansion in its budget, forcing it to adopt a budget that cuts traditional government services down to the bone.

The House budget would let the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services apply for immediate Medicaid expansion while also directing it to request a special waiver that will allow certain Medicaid recipients to receive workforce training, with the intention that able-bodied recipients may then obtain employment or provide community service. Already, the feds have approved these special waivers for Kentucky, Indiana and just this week, Arkansas.

The Virginia hospital industry has conditionally agreed to foot the entire cost of Medicaid expansion to save taxpayers money, this

works out to 10 percent of the cost. The mechanism, a "provider assessment," would be treated as a special tax on hospital providers.

There is also a "kill-clause" in the program, that would end our expanded Medicaid program if the Federal government ever reneges on this life saving, popular assistance program.

The Senate budget is draconian in its cuts. It fails to raise salaries for State employees or teachers; it eliminates funding to ensure every elementary school has a full-time principal; reduces school divisions' flexibility to fund programs by reducing the funds appropriated from the Lottery; it contains substantially less money for higher education and reduces need-based financial aid for in-state undergraduate students by \$23 million; and it fails to include funding for mental health initiatives so critical to our neighbors.

There is still a significant amount of work yet to do, and we are bracing for the possibility of staying in Richmond for an extra week. The ball is now in the Senate's court. Every single one of the House members appointed as budget conferees voted for Medicaid expansion, while only half of the appointed Senate budget conferees have indicated support for the measure. I am hopeful that this is the year that Medicaid expansion comes to fruition. When a family of three making just \$11,000 a year makes too much money to qualify for Medicaid in Virginia we know that the time has come to finally do the right thing.



COMMENTARY

SCHOOL NOTES

Email announcements to gazette@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday at noon. Photos are welcome.

Drake Bowers, of Alexandria, was named to the fall 2017 dean's list at New River Community College (Dublin, Va.).

Ashley Elizabeth Haas, of Alexandria, has been named to the McDaniel College (Westminster, Md.) fall 2017 dean's list with honors.

Leah Kirk, of Alexandria, graduated from Carson-Newman University (Jefferson City, Tenn.) with a Bachelor of Science in interdisciplinary studies.

Jarrod Denham, of Alexandria, a sophomore majoring in health and exercise science, was named to the Bridgewater College (Va.) dean's list for fall 2017.

Nicolas Cucinotta, of Alexandria, was named to the dean's list for the fall 2017 semester at The Citadel (Charleston, S.C.). Cucinotta was awarded Gold Stars for achieving a 3.7 grade point average or higher for the 2017 fall semester.

Elizabeth Smith, of Alexandria, was named to the fall 2017 dean's list at The University of Alabama.

Dean Kiamos, of Alexandria, was named to the fall 2017 dean's list at The University of Alabama.

Stephen Rexroat, of Alexandria, was named to the fall 2017 dean's list at The University of Alabama.

Hugh Moffitt, of Alexandria, was named to the fall 2017 dean's list at The University of Alabama.

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Resolving Final Bills But Not Gun Violence

BY ADAM EBBIN
STATE SENATOR (D-30)



We have entered the final days of the General Assembly session, and the focus of the legislature has shifted from systematically addressing the more than 3,400 introduced bills and resolutions to conference committees — small groups of legislators charged with reconciling bills

that have passed the House and Senate with slight (and sometimes not-so-slight) differences.

Two major pieces of legislation in conference are bills dealing with establishing a dedicated funding source for Metro and the starkly

contrasting Senate and House budget proposals. Del. Mark Sickles (D-Fairfax), who represents part of the 30th District, has been named as one of six House budget conferees. This is the first time since I was elected in 2003 that there are two House Democrats among the conferees. Senate conferees include Senators Janet Howell (D-Reston) and Dick Saslaw (D-Fairfax). Howell represents part of Arlington and Saslaw's dis-

trict covers part of Alexandria's west end.

Over the course of the 2018 session, the legislature has held lengthy floor debates on issues ranging from use of hands-free phones while driving to reopening the Colonial Downs horse racing track. However, one issue which has been notably absent from floor debate has been legislation to curb the epidemic of gun violence.

While over 60 bills were introduced this

SEE FAILING ON GUN, PAGE 17

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Discussing School Shootings with Children

Open dialogue is key to quelling fear, say mental health professionals.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Helping parents who are grappling with their children's feelings of anger and fear following the recent Florida school shooting and subsequent fallout was a recent topic that Lisa Jackson-Cherry, Ph.D., department chair and program coordinator, Pastoral Clinical Mental Health Counseling & Pastoral and Spiritual Care programs at Marymount University, had with her graduate students. The class discussed how high profile acts of violence can frighten children who might feel as though they or someone they love could become a victim or find themselves in danger. From mass shootings to natural disasters, an open dialogue with children is key to dealing with thoughts and feelings.

"In most instances, talking about the incident helps to gain some control over what is not controlled," said Jackson-Cherry. "Normalizing feelings and thoughts like fear, sadness, anger, and confusion can help children know they are not abnormal in how they are feeling or thinking."

"First ask what they heard rather than starting by telling them about it," added Joanne Bagshaw, Ph.D., professor of psy-

chology at Montgomery College. "I wouldn't get too stuck on the details. Just get a sense of what they know and make sure it's accurate."

In fact, exploration is key. "Encourage children to express their feelings and validate them," said Bagshaw. "You can start by saying, 'I can understand why you're feeling that.'"

Monitor both the amount and source of information that children receive about high profile incidents, advises Bagshaw. "I would really limit their social media and news intake about the violence," she said. "Videos about the shooting are too traumatic, and watching them can be too traumatizing and too dramatic."

Reviewing the family's safety plan can help children feel secure, advises Bagshaw. It's something she did in her own family. "At my daughter's middle school, you can't just walk into a building like they did in Florida," she said. "I reminded my daughter of this and explained the safety differences between her school and the school in Florida. One thing that you don't want to say is that 'That will never happen here.' You want to focus on what's real and what's realistic."

Maintaining a sense of normalcy follow-

ing a public display of violence can help quell fear that children might be feeling, advises Jerome Short, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at George Mason University and a licensed clinical psychologist. "Parents play a key role by staying calm, maintaining household routines, explaining that many events we worry about seldom happen, and stating that we will cope with whatever happens," he said. "Parents should place the highest priority on helping children stay safe."

"I would caution against using leading questions like, 'Are you scared?' because this question already implies they should be scared of something and that may not be accurate," continued Jackson-Cherry. "Depending on their answers, parents can assist in having the child integrate aspects of power and control in a situation where they may not be in control."

While putting national events into perspective in a way that children can understand, Short also advises parents to explore emotions. "Ask children what they are feeling and empathize and validate what they say. Ask children how they feel about school," he said. "Is there anything at school that worries them? Be reassuring that you will help protect them."

Reviewing safety guidelines can help children feel secure, says Short. "Parents [can say that] local police are working to keep the community safe. We need to look out for each other," he said. "Say that high-profile violence is unlikely to happen at local schools because of safety procedures. For example, there are more than 130,000 elementary and secondary schools, and we focus on relatively few schools where shootings have occurred."

Even those children who don't express emotions or appear unaffected by news reports of violence might still be anxious about the event. "Many children may not display outward anger or fear but that does not mean they are not fearful, angry, or sad about what they have heard or experienced," said Jackson-Cherry. "I think in most circumstances, parents asking about a child's knowledge of the event would be a good way to start."

Limit a child's exposure to media coverage of acts of violence and discuss it in an age appropriate manner, advises Jackson-Cherry. "If the parent is watching or listening to the news together with their child, try asking, 'What are you thinking or feeling about what just happened or was reported?'" she said. "I asked my 15 year old, 'Has the school discussed the shooting in Florida? Have you had drill in case it were to happen?'"

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ENTERTAINMENT



Chef Subash Rai sautés duck fat for an order of duck fried rice.



Chef Subash Rai juggles skillets and woks for several different dishes at one time.



Chef Subash Rai stirs 60-gallon pot of sauce used for many Nepali dishes.



Condiments for Classic Royal Nepali Thali served with crispy goat intestines.

Meet Chef Subash Rai of Royal Nepal Restaurant

BY SHIRLEY RUHE

Exotic smells greet your nose as you open the door to Royal Nepal at 3807 Mt Vernon Ave. Walk into a different world with jars of green cardamom, cinnamon sticks, yellow dal and bay leaves lined on the top shelf above the bar and a row of jars of tea underneath including jasmine pearl, lemongrass and silver yeti from the high mountains in Nepal, organic, very healthy. A large screen hangs on the wall showing mountain climbers trekking through the peaks of Nepal.

Chef Subash Rai is making Classic Royal Nepali Thali, a dish with four different condiments plus a meat choice (today it is goat intestines) and basmati rice topped with a fried egg. He heats a small splash of Mazola oil in a small skillet. Rai starts another small skillet on the burner in the middle. Shallots begin to sizzle in the first skillet and are joined by two scoops of umbrella mush-

rooms seasoned with rosemary, sage, tarragon and parsley. "They cook to 160 degrees."

In the next skillet Rai adds minced garlic and shallots and goat intestines already seasoned "with garam marsala and a lot of spices." A couple of minutes and in goes the onion gravy. Rai tosses a small chunk of butter in both skillets "for texture and some moisture," and covers the goat with an upside down skillet to cook it faster.

Rai reaches to the back burner and stirs the basic sauce in the 60-gallon pot with a long handled spoon. "It is 50 pounds of diced onions and 50 pounds of diced tomatoes and spices. This sauce is used for everything."

On another burner he heats duck fat for an order of duck fried rice with about two ounces of shredded duck meat cooked until brown and crispy. Then Rai adds chopped garlic and shallots and two handfuls of sliced onion. Some stirring and in goes a shredded slaw of cabbage, red peppers, and carrots. Rea tosses the mixture in the air to

turn it over. Once, twice. To finish it off, he adds a hearty portion of basmati rice with two splashes of oyster sauce and two more of Maggi seasoning.

"Now we'll make the sautéed spinach." Another skillet. Simple and quick. He adds chopped garlic and shallots, a large handful of fresh spinach, a small chunk of butter and a sprinkling of kosher salt. The spinach wilts quickly. A quick toss in the air and it sits ready to plate. Ready on another burner are black-eyed peas with bamboo shoots and chunks of red potatoes cooked with chopped scallion and cilantro. "Next I show you the plating."

Rea arranges five small burnished bowls on a thin, narrow platter "for the condiments." First the homemade pickles, then the black-eyed pea combination, the sautéed spinach, the herbed mushrooms, and finally the crispy goat stomach and intestines, each with a small spoon. A large platter of basmati rice topped with a fried egg is placed on the table alongside with a big spoon for combining a mouthful of rice

with a condiment.

Rea says a customer favorite is the lamb chops with homemade yogurt, and of course, a lot of spices including green cardamom, chili peppers, cumin, cinnamon sticks and bay leaves. "In our country bay trees grow to be really tall," he says pointing to the ceiling. Another favorite is the Mo Mo, a dumpling stuffed with meat and served on a long platter with a spoonful of green Szechwan pepper tomato sauce on one end and red tomato sauce with nuts on the other "for a choice."

Rea was born in Nepal where he was a cook but came to the United States to grow into his passion. "It makes me happy." But when he came to the U.S. he worked cleaning because "nobody knew I could cook — new place, new thing." But his friend working in D.C. offered him a job helping in a restaurant. Then Rea worked at the Fairmont Hotel for 6 years and has been at Royal Nepal for nearly a year.

So back to the next order of chicken with puffed rice. "Cooking is my passion."

CALENDAR

Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday.

ONGOING

Art Exhibit. Through, March 10, various times at The Gallery @ Convergence, 1801 N. Quaker Lane. The All City High School Art Exhibition hosted by the Convergence Arts Initiative returns for its third and most exciting year so far. This year's expanded event features over 90 Alexandria high school students and will welcome two additional schools to its juried exhibition; Commonwealth Academy and The Howard Gardner School. Visit www.ourconvergence.org.

"Terracotta Warriors" in Market Square. Through March 11, all day in Market Square, 301 King St. Two replicas of the famous "Terracotta Warriors." Each replica stands six feet tall and weighs about 500 pounds, and will be on display through March 2018. Visit www.alexandriava.gov for more.

THURSDAY/MARCH 8

Local Author Thursday. 5-7 p.m. at The Old Town Shop, 105 South Union St. Book signing by Kathleen

Sanders, "John W. Garrett and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad." Light refreshments. Call 703-684-4682 or visit www.TheOldTownShop.com.

The Auld Alliance: France and Scotland. 7 p.m. at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St. The Auld Alliance: France and Scotland from Braveheart to Bonnie Prince Charlie, a lecture by Jennifer Paxton, PhD, Professor, Catholic University. Wine, desserts and light fare. \$10 per person supports ACSCC programs. Information and tickets at shop.alexandriava.gov.

Tiny Planet – Tom Teasley and Seth Kibel. 7 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Teasley is a globe-trotting percussionist whose approach as performer, educator, and cultural envoy is heralded worldwide. Kibel is a woodwind specialist in jazz, swing, and klezmer. Together, their improvisatory blend includes Jewish klezmer, Arabic rhythms, and American jazz. \$15. Visit www.nvfaa.org/events/ for tickets.

MARCH 8-25

"George...Don't Do That!" At MetroStage, 1201 N. Royal St. The Music and Magic of Joyce Grenfell, devised and performed by Catherine

Flye with Music Director and pianist Joe Walsh and Michael Tolaydo as Narrator. A musical entertainment celebrating the wit and wisdom of one of Britain's most beloved comedienne. Visit metrostage.org.

FRIDAY/MARCH 9

Garden Talk: Growing Roses. 2-3 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Celebrated for beauty and fragrance, the rose lends elegance to any garden. Although this universally-loved plant has a reputation for being temperamental, Master Gardeners will show you common-sense approaches and precautions to help ensure growing success. For adults. \$10/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes using code 290 183 3501 or call 703-642-5173.

Scottish Social and Whisky/Wine Tasting. 7-10 p.m. at the historic Lloyd House, 220 North Washington St. The Alexandria Sister Cities Committee will sponsor The Alexandria Sister Cities Scottish Social and Whisky Tasting. In addition to the tasting, BBQ dinner, wine and other beverages will be provided. Tickets are \$45 and can be purchased at www.eventbrite.com,

search Whisky and Wine.
Sneak Peek at Late Shift. 7-11 p.m. at Torpedo Factory Art Center's Target Gallery, 105 N. Union St. Before March150 kicks off, the Torpedo Factory is hosting The Late Shift: Sneak Peek for visitors to celebrate March150's return and start building a wish list for when the art sale begins. Visit torpedofactory.org/event/the-late-shift-sneak-peek/.
Chamber Concert Series. 7:30 p.m. at the Durant Arts Center, 1605 Cameron St. The Symphony Orchestra of Northern Virginia Woodwind Ensemble will present an evening will be full of music by some of the great masters, as well as lesser known gems of the chamber music world. All tickets \$15, children 5 years and under are free. Visit tinyurl.com/y847t63e. Tickets are also available at the door.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/MARCH 9-10

"The Addams Family." 7:30 p.m. at St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School, Chapel/Performing Arts Center, 1000 St. Stephen's Road. Stage One Players presents, *The Addams Family*, based on the ghoulish, macabre, weird cartoons of Charles Addams. In their unique home in Central Park New York, next to a cemetery full of

their ancestors, a weird and wonderful family comes to life in "The Addams Family." Tickets: \$5, call 703-212-2777. Visit ssas.org.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/MARCH 9-11

"The Addams Family." Friday-Saturday, 7:30-10 p.m.; Sunday, 2-4:30 p.m. in the Garwood Whaley Auditorium, Bishop Ireton High School, 201 Cambridge Road. The Bishop Ireton Drama Department presents "The Addams Family." From costuming to choreography, more than 60 Ireton students have contributed to this production. Visit www.bishopireton.org or call 703-751-7606.

SATURDAY/MARCH 10

NoVa TEEN Book Festival. Opens at 9:30 am at Washington-Lee High School, 1301 N. Stafford St. Forty authors will take part in the NoVa TEEN Book Festival. Author panels and breakout sessions will be held throughout the day-long event packed with books, authors, and activities. Book lovers of all ages are welcome. Free admission. Find a full event schedule and registration information at novateenbookfestival.com.

ENTERTAINMENT

Let Eateries Make Dinner at Home

BY HOPE NELSON

The holiday-entertaining season is in the rear-view, but it's still much too early for a week-end picnic. What's a hungry – and busy, and perhaps a tad lazy – diner to do when a sit-down restaurant won't fit the bill, but spending an evening in the kitchen is simply too much work?

Enter the booming business of restaurant-cooked dinner finished off at home. From bags to boxes, Alexandria's food scene is making cooking and serving a joint effort. Here are a couple of options around town to whet your appetite.

Stomping Ground, 2309 Mount Vernon Ave.

Del Ray's favorite biscuit-and-brunch purveyor has expanded its menu to dinner and, further, to dinner you can pick up and take home to either pass off as your own or give credit where due. From down-home Southern fare to all-vegetarian dockets, the take-home menu changes from week to week.

The restaurant's "Stomp at Home" pickups are on Fridays and Sundays weekly, with upcoming menus including the likes of grilled steak with chimichurri paired with veggies and strawberry shortcake, or gumbo with shrimp and Andouille sausage and all

the fixings. Expect to pay \$45 per box – each parcel is plenty for two – and pick up on Friday or Sunday nights between 4 and 6:30 p.m. Reserve in advance.

Society Fair, 277 S. Washington St.

Need a bento box for a quick-fix meal at home? Prepping for date night? Society Fair has you covered, no matter the occasion. The eatery's Bags to Go program allows diners to pre-order the meals of their choice to be picked up on the Big Day. And like Stomping Ground, the restaurant's menu runs the gamut from daily specialties like the Italian bento box (featuring olives, hard-boiled eggs, prosciutto, and more) or the hoping-for-springtime Catching Fireflies bento box with the likes of beets, kale salad and pasta.

More in the mood for date night? Some upcoming editions of the popular Date Night Bag include a St. Patrick's Day-themed shepherd's pie, served with an Irish Caesar salad and other festive accoutrements, and chicken piccata with mashed potatoes, mixed greens and an olive oil cake. Prices run from \$8.99 to \$13.99 for bento boxes; for date night bags, expect to pay \$49. Reserve in advance.

Hope Nelson owns and operates the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at www.kitchenrecessionista.com. Email her any time at hope@kitchenrecessionista.com.

CALENDAR

Family Fun: Garden Terrarium

Workshop. 10 a.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Create an enclosed, mini garden terrarium that is fun to view and easy to take care of. Learn about the water cycle and have fun decorating with colored sand, stones, and a figurine. Ages 5-adult. \$12 per project (not per person). Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes using code 290 182 3701 or call 703-642-5173.

Enhancing Winter Gardens. 10:30 a.m.-noon at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. With some planning and planting, enjoy color, texture and plant shapes while the garden is dormant. Horticulturist Judy Zatsick shares top winter interest plants and how to care for them. Also take a short walk outside to see what surprises Green Spring holds for the winter visitor (weather permitting). For adults. \$18/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes using code 290 187 4501 or call 703-642-5173.

Festival of Owls. Noon-2 p.m. at Huntley Meadows Park, 3701 Lockheed Blvd. The park is offering visitors a chance to meet live owls up close and soar into the night time world of Great Horned Owls, Barred Owls and Eastern Screech Owls. Speakers from Secret Garden Birds and Bees Wildlife Education and Preservation will bring live birds to the program. Ages four and up. \$12 per person for county residents and \$14 for out-of-county visitors. Register at <https://go.usa.gov/xneTa>. Call the park at 703-768-2525 or visit online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/huntley-meadows-park/.

Write Like A Woman. 1 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Facilitated by Poet and Author KaNikki Jakarta, this workshop welcomes women writers ages 18-100. The workshop centers on uplifting and inspiring through writing. For amateur and professional writers. Free. RSVP at admin@nvfaa.org.

Women in Action. 3-4:15 p.m. at The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington St.

Celebrate women and learn about issues important to women and girls in the community at this special event. Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and their accompanying adults will participate in hands-on activities and add their own future goals to a timeline of Juliette Gordon Low's story. Participants will talk with a panel of current and former Girl Scouts and discover how scouting empowered them. \$6 per person. Advance purchase is recommended. Purchase tickets at the online shop at shop.alexandriava.gov or by calling 703-746-4994.

Alexandria Choral Society: The

Morning Watch. 7:30 p.m. at George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Alexandria Choral Society presents The Morning Watch, featuring Eleanor Daley's "Requiem." Gala and silent auction reception following performance. \$20 adult, \$15 senior/military/student, child (13 and under) free. \$5 more when purchased at the door. Tickets at www.alexandriachoralsociety.org/boxoffice.

MARCH 10-25

March 150. Gallery hours at Torpedo Factory Art Center's Target Gallery, 105 N. Union St. Target Gallery's popular annual exhibition and art sale, March 150, returns to the Torpedo Factory Art Center for the 8th year. This yearly all-media exhibition features nearly 200 works created by artists local to Alexandria and the greater D.C. region. All work in the show is priced at \$150. Visit <http://torpedofactory.org/event/march150-8th-annual-special-exhibition-art-sale/>.

SUNDAY/MARCH 11

Nature Journaling Workshop at Del Ray Artisans. 10 a.m.-noon at Del Ray Artisans, 2704 Mt. Vernon Ave. Instructor is naturalist/illustrator Margaret Wohler. Field art kits are available for purchase. Instruction fee. Visit DelRayArtisans.org/event/nature-journaling-2.

journaling-2.

Faure Requiem. 10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m. at Trinity United Methodist Church, 2911 Cameron Mills Road. Hear Faure's Requiem, accompanied by strings, harp and organ. This masterwork will be preceded by selections for harp and violin. Free. Call 703-549-5500 or visit www.trinityalexandria.org.

Foodscape Revolution. 1:30-2:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Foodscape design requires a well balanced mix of flowering and edibles plants. \$10. Register online at fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes using code 290 183 0901 or call 703-642-5173.

Marine Corps Women's Reserve Band Tribute. 2 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall, Northern Virginia Community College, Alexandria campus. Marine Band Living History: Marine Corps Women's Reserve Band Tribute. Free, no tickets required. Visit www.marineband.marines.mil/.


Complete Dogness. 4 p.m. at The Athenaeum, 201 Prince St. Complete Dogness is a new family friendly performance about a delightful little doggy with bad habits. She can eat a delicious wool sweater or steal a whole block of cheese in no time. But there is hope as Barky learns new tricks and as the whole family adjusts. The performance incorporates spoken word, movement, and music. \$15 adults, \$10 children under age 10. Call 703-933-1111 and www.nvfaa.org.

MARCH 13-APRIL 15

Art Exhibit: Renewal. Gallery hours at Potomac Fiber Arts Gallery, Torpedo Factory Art Center, Studio 29, 105 North Union St. Gallery artists producing themed work may draw on any aspect of "renewal" for inspiration. This show will highlight the work of gallery artists Debra Lee, Cheryl Roesel, and Julia Stephens. Visit Potomacfiberartsgallery.com.


WEDNESDAY/MARCH 14

Pi Day. At Jackson 20, 480 King St. In



Peer behind the scenes of Buckingham Palace into the woman behind the crown and the moments that have formed the modern monarchy. Written by Peter Morgan, the creator of "The Crown" Netflix series.

SHOW DATES:
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ENTERTAINMENT

addition to the apple and the banana cream pie, Jackson 20 serves up a special slice this Pi Day. Free entry. Call 703-549-6080 or visit jackson20restaurant.com/.

THURSDAY/MARCH 15

Meet the Legends Reception. 6 p.m. at Center for Design, Media and the Arts, 3301 Netherton Drive in Alexandria, on the NOVA Community College Alexandria Campus. Sponsored by Living Legends of Alexandria, the event introduces the 2018 Living Legend honorees. Visit alexandrialegends.org/.

World War I Lecture Series. 7 p.m. at The Lyceum, Alexandria's History Museum, 201 South Washington St. Join The Lyceum for Women's History Month and three lectures about women's contributions to the World War I war effort. "Doing Our Bit" (While Having a Bit of Fun): American Nurses in World War I," by Marian Moser Jones, a social historian and ethicist of public health who explores the institutionalization of benevolence in the United States. \$10 per person. Reservations recommended. Tickets at shop.alexandria.gov.

THURSDAYSATURDAY/MARCH 15-17

"Must Love Music" and "WXYZ." Thursday-Friday, 7:30-9:30 p.m.; Saturday, 2:30-4:30 p.m. at Richard Kauffman Auditorium, The Lee Center, 1108 Jefferson St. Original musicals starring actors with Down syndrome and autism. In "Must Love Music," love and music are the only way to escape the spirits on a mysterious island. Then, the big city newsroom at "WXYZ" may be too much for a rookie reporter. Visit www.art-stream.org/see-a-show.



FRIDAY-SATURDAY/MARCH 16-17

"The Addams Family." Friday-Saturday, 7:30-10 p.m. in the Garwood Whaley Auditorium, Bishop Ireton High School, 201 Cambridge Road. The Bishop Ireton Drama Department presents "The Addams Family." From costuming to choreography, more than 60 Ireton students have contributed to this production. Visit www.bishopireton.org or call 703-751-7606.

SATURDAY/MARCH 17

Art of the Book - Calligraphy. 10-11 a.m. at Historic Huntley, 6918 Harrison Lane. Historic Huntley is offering three classes this winter that delve into different aspects of book making. Register for any of the series. Call 703-768-2525 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/historic-huntley.

Family Fun: St. Paddy's Peas and Potatoes.

1-2 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. St. Patrick's Day is the traditional day to plant potatoes. Learn the origins of this staple and its importance to Ireland. Listen to tales of leprechauns, sample spuds, and plant peas and potatoes in our garden. Ages 5-adult, \$7 per person. Register parent and child online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes using code 290 101 3001 or call 703-642-5173.

Downton Fashion. 1-3:30 p.m. at at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Artist Caroline Hottenstein showcases two custom-made dresses that span the brief time period - 1912 to 1925 - portrayed in the TV show Downton Abbey. One is Titanic-era, one a 1920s Flapper design. For adults. Reservations required, \$42/person (program + tea); \$18 (program only). Programs are by reservation only. Call 703-

'The Addams Family'

Stage One Players presents, "The Addams Family," based on the ghoulish, macabre, weird cartoons of Charles Addams. In their unique home in Central Park New York, next to a cemetery full of their ancestors, a weird and wonderful family comes to life. Friday, March 9 and Saturday, March 10, 7:30 p.m. at St. Stephen's and St. Agnes School, Chapel/Performing Arts Center, 1000 St. Stephen's Road. Tickets: \$5, call 703-212-2777. Visit www.sssas.org.

941-7987, TTY 703-324-3988.

Author Talk: Kimberly McLeMore.

3 p.m. at Kate Waller Barrett Branch Library, 717 Queen St. Kimberly McLeMore's newest book is a memoir sharing her experience as a survivor of domestic abuse. Kimberly McLeMore is a podcast host and founder and CEO of the Women's Small Business Initiative. Books will be available for sale and signing after the talk. Free. Contact mzimmerman@alexlibraryva.org or visit alexlibraryva.org.

Country-Western Dance.

6-9:30 p.m. at Lincolnia Senior Center, 4710 North Chambliss St. The Northern Virginia Country-Western Dance Association will hold a dance. Lessons, 6-7 p.m. Open dancing, 7-9:30 p.m. A DJ provides music. Couples and singles of all ages welcome. Admission for NVCWDA members \$10; non-members \$12; children under 18 accompanied by a paying adult \$5. Smoke-free, alcohol-

free. BYO refreshments. Visit www.nvcwda.org.

SUNDAY/MARCH 18

Ides of Bark. 1-4 p.m. at Grist Mill Park, 4710 Mt. Vernon Memorial Highway. Supervisor Dan Storck invites all dogs and their companions to join him for an afternoon of play and learning at the 3rd Ides of Bark Dog Festival. The event is free and open to the public, with games, gift baskets, prizes, food trucks and fun for the whole family. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon/ides-bark.

Amazing Plants for Shade. 1:30-2:30 p.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Learn about shade and about the incredible, diverse selection of plants that have adapted to the limitations, as well as advantages, of lower light conditions. \$10/person. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes using code 290 185 6501 or call 703-642-5173.

Virginia Bronze March Handbell Concert.

4-5:30 p.m. at George Washington Masonic National Memorial, 101 Callahan Drive. Tunes including Song of the Flowers, What a Wonderful World, Crocodile Rock and Fly Me to the Moon. \$10. Call 888-824-2541 or visit vabronze.org/.

MONDAY/MARCH 19

Garden Buds. 10 a.m.-11 a.m. at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road. Meet in the Children's Discovery Garden. Children will enjoy different sensory materials in the garden, rain or shine. Dress for the weather and explore. 2-3 years, \$5 per child. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes using code 290 102 8621 or call 703-642-5173.

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ENTERTAINMENT



Aldersgate Church Community Theater is presenting "Death by Design" from March 9-25.

CONTRIBUTED BY
HOWARD SOROOS

ACCT Prepares 'Death by Design'

A 1930s mix of comedy and murder in the style of Coward and Christie.

BY STEVE HIBBARD

The Aldersgate Church Community Theater (ACCT) is presenting "Death by Design" from March 9-25. What happens when you mix the brilliant wit of Noël Coward with the intricate plotting of Agatha Christie? Set during a weekend in an English country manor in 1932, the story by playwright Rob Urbinati is a delightful mash-up of two of the greatest English writers of all time. Edward Bennett, a playwright, and his wife, Sorel Bennett, an actress, flee London and head to Cookham after a disastrous opening night. But various guests arrive unexpectedly — a conservative politician, a fiery socialist, a nearsighted ingénue, and a zany modern dancer — each with a long-held secret. When one of the guests is murdered, its left to Bridgit, the Irish maid with an interest in homicide, to solve the crime.

Director Eddie Page said his intent was to offer an evening of side-splitting comedy with a murder. "Playwright Rob Urbinati has written a farce tribute based of the style of two of England's finest playwrights: Sir Noël Coward and Dame Agatha Christie. Noël Coward, England's greatest comic playwright, composer, director, actor and singer of the 20th century was known for his wit, flamboyance, with such classics as 'Hay Fever,' 'Private Lives,' and 'Blithe Spirit.' Then there's the Agatha Christie element: a country estate with plenty of mysterious and outrageous suspects to point the finger at. Christie's reputation as 'The Queen of Crime' was built upon the classic elements: a murder is committed; multiple suspects who are all concealing secrets; and the sleuth who uncovers these secrets," he said.

He said Urbinati's style has given him and the cast a broad range of options when presenting each character's story. "My biggest challenge was deciding the right mix between Noël Coward's like wit and flamboyance and that of Agatha Christie's suspenseful sleuthing techniques," he said.

He added: "We have attempted to combine one-part murder, two-parts mayhem and seasoned with a hearty dose of clever wit by a very talented cast," he said. "The audience should choose their own weapon of choice that should contain laughter in order to unlock the mystery to a perfectly designed murder. Its light-hearted fun and guaranteed laughter for the whole family."

Larry Grey is playing the role of Walter Pierce, a rather priggish, stuffy conservative government fig-

ure. He is "very high-brow and critical of anyone who does not measure up to his conservative values," he said. "Yet a married man with an infatuation with Sorel Bennett, an aging movie star."

He added: "Walter must not be likable; he is the epitome of hypocritical conservatism — vain and conceited yet an underlying vulnerability."

He said he hopes the audiences enjoy the play. "It is a witty satirical look at human condition with all its flaws. And perhaps for an hour and a half we can laugh at ourselves and the world," he said.

Cal Whitehurst plays a Communist radical named Eric who is mentally unstable. "He has just escaped from a mental institution when he shows up at Edward and Sorel Bennett's country house to try to persuade Edward to stop writing plays about the hijinks of people in high society and instead write socially significant works like those of Bertolt Brecht," he said.

As far as challenges, he said, "The greatest challenge to playing Eric is maintaining a high level of nervous excitement without becoming monotonous and creating a fully realized character audiences will find believable and sympathetic. The play is set in England in 1932, and Eric's accent, mannerisms and attitudes must be specific to the time and place," he said.

Heather Norcross is playing the role of Sorel Bennett, an aging actress who longs to stretch the parameters of her talents and play the great roles even though she is not quite sure what they are. "She loves her husband despite throwing the occasional vase and keeps herself entertained by tempting unknowing men home into her eccentricity to keep herself entertained," she said.

She said as far as challenges, "Sometimes who the actor thinks the character is and who other people think the character is don't always line up. Reconciling that, while keeping true to the script and feeling comfortable in the role is not always easy," she said.

Erik Rieloff plays the role of Jack, who is the Bennett's chauffeur. "He's been with the family for a long time and has a connection to every character in the story. He's a real ladies' man and that gets him into quite a bit of trouble sometimes, but he doesn't take things too serious," he said.

He added: "The cast is absolutely phenomenal, and everyone has helped each other in a great way to ensure that the piece comes together. Sometimes having to do the Cockney accent was a little bit difficult but that is the extent of my challenge."

The Aldersgate Church Community Theater, 1301 Collingwood Road, is presenting "Death by Design" March 9-25. Show times are Fridays and Saturdays, 8 p.m.; Sundays, 2 p.m. \$15/general; \$12/students and seniors; and \$10/groups. Visit www.acctonline.org.

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Hailey Fisher is verbally committed to dive at N.C. State.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE GAZETTE

Hailey Fisher, 18, of Mount Vernon has been doing flips for as long as she can remember. Her mom Linda, 42, is the gymnastics coach at Mount Vernon High for 18 years, and her dad Tim, 45, teaches diving with the Alexandria Dive Club.

"Her mother is a gymnast and I'm a diver so she's been around gymnastics and diving her entire life," said her dad Tim, her main dive coach who's been coaching since 1993. "She's been an athlete since she's been very young. She's been doing gymnastics with her mom and trampoline with me. She's always been gifted with her flips and carried that through her diving. She's very flexible, very quick, and has acrobatic awareness, and that's transferred very well with her diving."

It's no wonder that the Mount Vernon High School senior is a three-time state diving champion, scoring 434.25 and coming in first place against divers from eight high schools in the Virginia 6A state championship on Feb. 16 at Oak Marr Rec Center.

She holds the record for VHSL 6A state championship, at 447 points for 11-dives. And she also holds the record for 5A state schools, which is 465 points. That's also the Mount Vernon High School diving record.

In addition to her state records, Hailey is a two-time All-American (in 2015 and 2016) and a four-time Region champion four years in a row for Fairfax County, as well as a four-time Conference champion. She's also a two-time All-Met Honorable Mention and one-time All-Met First Team.

Hailey dives for both Mount Vernon High's Swim and Dive team as well as 10 years with the Alexandria Dive Club, which meets at Lee District Rec Center. Her dad started that club in 2008; today it has 85 members. Before that, she dove with the Patriot Dive Club for three years.

Her dad says her best dives are her back-one-and-a-half-pike on the one meter and back-two-and-a-half-tuck on the three meter. "She's super consistent; that's her thing, where a lot of people are inconsistent with their dives, she remains consistent in her meets. She stays in 430-465 consistently on 11

dives," said her dad.

Tim Fisher coaches with the Alexandria Dive Club, which is currently ranked the No. 2 Junior Dive Club in the country. He dove in college and was the IHSAA state diving champion at Indiana High School in 1990. Bryan Bahr is the head high school diving coach at Mount Vernon.

Hailey's strategy during a dive meet is to remain consistent, she said. "I dive the way that I dive at practice. I keep my head in the practice zone, but if I get in the competition zone, I psych myself out. The way that you practice is the way you're supposed to compete."

And she tries to stay relaxed, she said. "I take it dive by dive. I try not to get too anxious. Just stay relaxed and do them the way I practice them," she said. "They all have to be high-scoring in order to win; I can't have one specific dive. Most of my dives are pretty consistent," she said, scoring between 6 and 7 or higher.

She dives the same exact dives for high school and club team, she said. "I dive year-round; I only get one month off in August," she said.

Her goal was to be state champ four years in a row, but she couldn't dive last year due to ankle surgery.

With diving taking up three hours of her day, she doesn't have a lot of spare time for other activities. But she does squeeze in gymnastics; she was the captain of her gymnastics team at Mount Vernon, which has three members. She also tinkers in studio art and photography, ceramics, painting, and drawing as well as hiking and being outdoors. She verbally committed to dive at North Carolina State in the fall, where she plans to study business and marketing. Hailey has two siblings: Miah, 15; and Jacob, 13.



Hailey Fisher with her dad Tim of Mount Vernon.



PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE GAZETTE

Hailey Fisher won her third Virginia state diving championship, 6A Division on Friday, Feb. 16, at Oak Marr Rec Center.

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OPINION

Failing on Gun Safety Issue

FROM PAGE 10

legislative session to address the epidemic of gun violence, nearly all of those bills were quietly and summarily dismissed by Republican-led committees and subcommittees along party-line votes. Legislation introduced in the wake of the Las Vegas massacre to make mass shootings less deadly such as bills that would ban bump stocks (SB1-Ebbin), provide universal background checks (SB5-Ebbin), or restrict the sale of high-capacity magazines (HB1145-Convirs-Fowler) were swiftly defeated.

Every 10 hours, a Virginian is killed with a gun. While devastating to those directly involved, many of these deaths rarely make the news. Legislation to address the reality of everyday gun violence, including bills to prohibit the possession of firearms by stalkers (HB1544-Murphy), exempt gun safes from retail sales tax to incentivize gun owners to keep guns where children can't easily get to them (HB172-Filler-Corn), or reinstate the one-handgun-a-month limit (HB353-Reid) to stem the rapid export of crime guns to other states, were defeated as well.

Including the tragic events of Parkland, Fla., over 153,000 students attending more than 171 primary and secondary schools in the United States have experienced a shooting on campus since the Columbine High School massacre in 1999. Despite this, HB198, legislation introduced by Del. Rip Sullivan that would keep guns out of the hands of people who present a threat to themselves or others and that mirrors a proposal supported by U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, was not even granted a hearing.

Only HB287, a bill to provide a special license plate for supporters of gun violence prevention, is still under consideration. I co-sponsored this legislation introduced by Del. Marcus Simon (D-Falls Church).

One silver lining was that the vast majority of firearms legislation introduced this session focused on gun violence prevention. As a result of the 2017 election, we've been able to stop playing defense against bills to expand concealed carry reciprocity, permit Virginians to carry ninja stars, and introduce guns into domestic violence situations. A bill to allow guns in churches passed the Senate on a party line vote, but was quietly defeated in the House.

This changing atmosphere surrounding gun violence has been met with bristling opposition by pro-gun legislators. Last Friday, the debate reached a boiling point. Delegate and US Senate candidate, Nick Freitas (R-Culpeper) lashed out at House Democrats blaming "the abortion industry," "broken families," and the "welfare state for the gun violence epidemic."

It has become clear that the voices of legislators

alone cannot move this issue forward. In the aftermath of the school shooting that claimed 17 lives, the bravery and resilience of the young people in Parkland have moved and inspired action. Students throughout the country are standing in solidarity with the survivors and speaking out in loud, informed and passionate voices to amplify this message.

In Alexandria, over 1,000 TC Williams High School students led by Jay Falk and Hannah Miller, in coordination with over a dozen high schools in the capital region organized a day of action termed #WeAreAllEagles, in reference to the mascot of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

Upcoming student-led actions include widespread school walkouts on March 14 to mark the one-month anniversary of the Parkland Shooting. Coincidentally, this is the same day as the rally at the NRA headquarters in memory of the victims of the Sandy Hook tragedy that has been held on the 14th of each month since the shooting in Newtown, Conn. On Saturday March 24, students are leading the March For Our Lives to advocate for gun violence prevention reforms in Washington, D.C. Hundreds of sister marches are scheduled to occur simultaneously around the country, including ones in Charlottesville, Richmond, and Hampton Roads.

In order to coordinate our efforts as lawmakers to complement this grassroots activism, Del. Kathleen Murphy and I have formed a General Assembly Gun Violence Prevention Caucus. Our first meeting was attended by over 25 members from both the House and the Senate and featured a discussion with the office of the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security. We discussed avenues available for reform, enforcement actions and other steps that the executive branch may be able to take, as well as crafting our 2019 agenda.

Local officials are also stepping up. The Alexandria City Council and Fairfax County School Board have passed resolutions in support of gun violence prevention. Alexandria School Board members will be voting on a similar resolution on March 8. Arlington Public Schools have issued a statement supporting the March 14 walkout and plan to issue a call to action for local legislators at an upcoming board meeting.

Led by the courageous students of Parkland, the time is now to channel outrage into activism and enact meaningful gun violence prevention. We can't wait any longer.

Please follow @AdamEbbin on Twitter, like my facebook page at facebook.com/ebbincampaign, and email your views to me at district30@senate.virginia.gov.

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Reflections



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

A few weeks back at my last post CT-scan appointment with my oncologist (when all continued to be amazingly stable), he finally asked me the question I've been wondering if he'd ever ask: "Mr. Lourie, I talk about you all the time, how well you're doing; is there anything I can tell people about what you're doing that might help them?"

My first reaction was to laugh and then ask if I even have cancer. I mean, typically, one diagnosed with an incurable disease doesn't just live life merrily along as if the diagnosis was a mere inconvenience, no matter what he or she may or may not be doing. My oncologist assured me that I indeed have cancer and even offered up some news about my tumors with which I was totally unfamiliar.

Five years ago when I was hospitalized (due to excessive fluid in my lungs), in the course of the procedure, the thoracic surgeon did a DNA profile of my tumors to determine if I had a specific mutation (allowing for more targeted treatment). Unfortunately, the ALK and ROS-1 mutations were not confirmed. In pursuit of more current information, more recently, I had a liquid biopsy (a blood test) which tested for the EGFR and T790 mutations. Again, no confirmation. As it stands now, I am as unclassified. For the nine-year moment then, I remain in treatment without the targeted precision so many of my fellow cancer survivors have been extraordinarily fortunate to have. Yet life goes on.

So what am I doing? Other than laughing in the face of death (my best attribute), which if anecdotal reports are to be believed, truly is the best medicine, a bit more. Remaining positive and generally upbeat is a parallel corollary to humoring yourself and those around you.

But more specifically and perhaps uniquely, I am supplementing my standard of care with some non-Western care: alkaline water, organic apple cider vinegar, and about 60 pills a day, most chosen for their qualities of strengthening my immune system and/or eliminating the toxins from my body. I can't say I'm eating really right, but neither will I admit to not eating totally wrong. Reducing stress and exercising are popular advisories in my control. One out of two will have to do.

However, as I told my oncologist, whatever I'm doing I've been told to do by my holistic health and fitness coach. She knows what, how and why. (I might as well be Sergeant Schulz from "Hogan's Heros: "I know nothing.") I don't feel qualified to speak to any of what I do.

Yes, I've survived but, I'm a sports and chocolate guy not a science and medicine man. All I can do is list what I'm doing. I can't chapter and verse any of it. I'm not NIKE, but I just do it. It's a routine and I rarely stray. I do add stuff occasionally but to think any of what I do might have a bearing on another cancer patient's survivability? Not hardly, and that's what I told my oncologist. Dina suggested the alkaline water. I suggested my "coach."

I guess I'm just not that deep of a thinker. I trust people the same way that as a salesman I want them to trust me. I'm not leading anybody astray, and I'm providing them the best available knowledge. I'm not manipulating. Nor am I maneuvering. I'm simply managing dos, don'ts, maybes, what ifs and why nots.

Moreover, I'm trying to think outside the box while respecting and appreciating that the box has its purpose as well.

Heck, for all I know, my non-Western stuff has had minimal impact on my life expectancy and the standard of care from my oncologist has provided the most.

Maybe I'm just an anomaly, pure and simple: a nine-year-plus non small cell lung cancer survivor. What am I doing? Trying not to abuse the privilege, that's what.

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

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OPINION

Underground

FROM PAGE 6

due to the ongoing impasse over expanding Medicaid coverage. I expect this session with either go beyond the March 10 target adjournment date or we will have a special session since the two chambers are separated by \$500 million in revenue before expenses are even discussed.

The House Appropriations Education Subcommittee killed my two education equity bills without explanation: One bill would allow free online classes and the second would require school districts which use electronic textbooks to provide a device for all free and reduced lunch students to access their textbooks from home. Local school systems complained about the budget impact. I told them they were violating the Virginia Constitution and federal law, but that apparently was not convincing. I will be back next year.

The House Commerce and Labor Committee unanimously approved my legislation to extend the coal ash moratorium. The bill will create a framework to set up a resolution of the coal ash storage problem next year. I am hopeful it will lead to recycling programs at all four Virginia coal ash sites, an approach that would solve this pollution problem once and for all.

In the forthcoming last week of this session, I am hoping we will send to Governor Northam for his signature several "big" bills, including —my coal ash bill, the Metro funding bill and the Dominion rate cap repeal.

I will soon meet with the Virginia Department of Transportation to review the latest redesign of U.S. 1 between Costco and Woodlawn in Fairfax County. Also, I am working with the Secretary of Transportation to prioritize 36th District improvements including widening I-95 from VA-123 to the Prince William Parkway, bus rapid transit from Huntington to the Woodbridge VRE station and U.S. 1 widening as part of the \$300 million concession payment made by Transurban to extend the HOT lanes to Fredericksburg and Washington, D.C. These projects are squarely within the parameters of eligible projects.

Please email me at scotturovell@gmail.com if you have feedback. It is an honor to serve as your state senator.

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue.

The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors.

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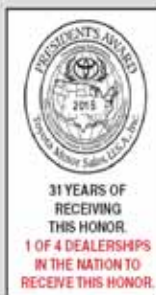
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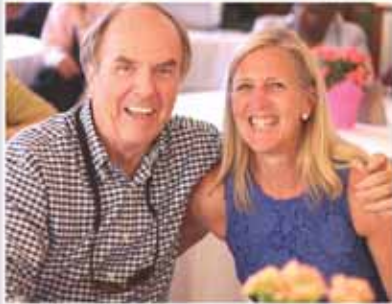


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