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the nature trail. Joshua Britt is second from the right, front row.

Members of the troop who worked on

News

Photos courtesy of the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum

Springfield Scouts Complete Projects at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum

Members of Scout Troop 1853 of Springfield com- Joshua Britt, was paving the Station's nature trail pleted two major service projects at the end of 2018 Fairfax Station. The first project, organized by Scout ing Guard sign by Scout Dennis Velez.

with 22 tons of crushed stone. The second project for the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. The Mu- was the restoration of the Station's motor car seum is located at 11200 Fairfax Station Road in ("speeder") and replacement of a deteriorating Cross-

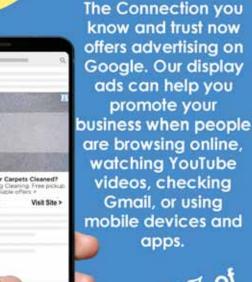


Dennis Velez and his parents.



The nature trail's condition before and after completion of the work.

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weather drop-in centers and shelters that serve Northern Virginia at www.novaregion.org/ 174/Homeless-Shelter-Lists.

If you see someone at risk for hypothermia in Fairfax County, call the police non-emergency line at 703-691-2131. If they appear to be in distress, call 911

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Interested in local Civil War or

Railroad History? Consider volunteering at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. The Museum offers a variety of volunteer opportunities in Museum events, programs and administration. The Museum is also seeking an individual to coordinate the scheduling of the volunteer staff. Training will be provided for all positions. Email volunteers@fairfax-station.org or call 703-945-7483 for opportunities. The Museum is

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

located at 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. It is open every Sunday, except holidays, from 1-4 p.m. Visit www.fairfaxstation.org, www.facebook.com/ FFXSRR, or call 703-425-9225.

The Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke needs volunteer drivers for

trips to medical appointments (Monday - Friday) and companion shopping (Tuesday, Friday) within the Fairfax-Burke area and in the South County area (west of Route 1, Alexandria). Office volunteers are also needed to work in the SCFB (Olley Glen) office to schedule rides. Bilingual volunteers (English and Spanish) are needed as drivers and office volunteers. Email Shavaun Wall at recruiter@scfbva.org or call 703-323-4788

INPUT SOUGHT

Shaping the Future Together.

Fairfax County Government is beginning a strategic planning process with the community to shape

the future together. The goal is to hear all voices and reach all segments of the community. This effort will span most of 2019, but in this first phase, the community is being asked to visit fairfaxcounty.gov/strategicplan and:

- ❖ Take a short five-question online survey
- Join a community conversation in person: Feb. 13 - Reston; Feb. 25 Alexandria: Feb. 26 - Fairfax: March 6 - Falls Church.
- Share the survey and conversation invitation with neighbors, coworkers and county family and friends.

Unmanned Aircraft Systems

(UAS) Program. Fairfax County is developing a comprehensive Public Safety Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) program and would like to hear from residents. Each of six public information meetings will include a static

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

News



Mark O'Meara, owner of University Mall Theatres, as an MC for a lunch of 15000 movie theatres in Las Vegas.



Stepping Up As the Government Shut Down

Area businesses offer support for government employees affected by shutdown.

By Natalia Megas The Connection

s federal employees return to work this week, the fear of another shutdown still looms. In Fairfax, however, that won't stop small businesses from stepping in to help, should furloughed workers impacted by the shutdown need aid again.

Last week, a community of small businesses, schools, and doctors' offices offered free and discounted services and products. Justin Hamacher of Gainesville, Va., who owns Papa Johns in Fairfax City and other locations, was one of them.

Born in Florida, Hamacher moved to Burke and Fairfax, where he grew up. During the 35- day partial shutdown, he offered free pizza to federal workers.

"It [was] the right thing to do. Everyone goes through tough times," he said. "A lot of times, especially in a family when you're trying to save money or live on a tight budget, sometimes it's the little extra things that are usually the first thing to go. Sometimes, those are the things that bring the biggest smiles when you need them."

COMMUNITY MEMBERS reached out to him, asking how they could pay it forward

by donating gifts cards at his pizzeria. He said the response was overwhelming.

"When you think about experiences [like getting pizza on a Friday night] being taken away from a lot of folks through no fault of their own, if I'm able to come alongside and help, even if it's just once, bring a little joy into their household, at least just for one night, that's what we are here to do," he said.

Hamacher relied on the honor system to prove they were government workers and contractors.

"I'm wired to trust and look for the best in people," he said.

"My mentor taught me, I'm supposed to love my neighbor as myself," he said. "The way I try to run my life and our business, to truly show that we love and care for those around us. That's the driving factor and the reason behind it."

Fairfax resident Joanne Walton, whose husband is a government contractor and was affected by the government shutdown said they welcomed Hamacher's generosity. "We were so grateful for the free pizza," said Walton, who had already started putting off vacation plans and paying to repair their refrigerator.

Morgan Holden, an active duty Coast Guard along with her husband, said they



Justin Hamacher in front of his Papa Johns store.

hadn't taken Hamacher's offer yet but were "very grateful for his support."

"My family truly feels supported and grateful that we are part of a caring community despite being new to the area," she said. She and her family moved to Fairfax from California this August.

Dawn Gunning of Fairfax, who is a federal worker with her husband said, "It means a lot." It is not just a free pizza," she said." The support of local business owners who are also our neighbors is very helpful. It is nice to know that folks are thinking of us and willing to help out."

At University Mall Theatres, owner Mark O'Meara was offering free movies.

"Just hearing stories from friends and customers that they are frustrated," he said is what prompted him to reach out to the community. "So, we wanted to do something to ease their plight with a little escapism."

MANAGING PARTNER from Fairfax Station Rebecca Geller of The Geller Law Group offered work to federal workers impacted by the shutdown. The firm received almost 200 applications to do part-time, short-term work. They hired 22 furloughed workers.

"Many of our clients and friends are federal employees. We see the ripple effect the shutdown has had on our greater community, the effects a long shutdown has on our economy, and the frustration of those who would rather be working, and we figured there was something we could do about it," said Geller. "We, just like many law firms, have administrative projects that always seem to get pushed to the back burner due to timely client matters. There is a talented workforce out there that would rather be working, and they [were] getting frustrated sitting at home. Our thought was that we could take this opportunity to hire furlough employees on a temporary basis to tackle various projects in our office. We can help our community by providing a means for additional income to these federal employees while they are not getting paid by their regular jobs, and don't know if they will get repaid for this time," she said.

Lorton Building Fire Goes To Two Alarms

On Saturday, Jan. 26, at 10:42 p.m., units were dispatched for a fire alarm activation in the 8200 block of Legion Drive in the Lorton area of Fairfax County

Units arrived on scene and reported smoke showing from a one-story, commercial building. Crews discovered fire in the attic of the building. A second alarm was requested. This brought additional units from Fort Belvoir Fire and Emergency Services and from Prince William County Fire and Rescue. Units extinguished the fire. There were no civilian injuries. One firefighter sustained a minor injury that did not require transportation

to a hospital.

There were no occupants present at the time of the fire. The building had functioning smoke alarms that activated and notified the alarm monitoring company. Fairfax County 9-1-1 was then notified. The building did not have a fire sprinkler system.

Crews discovered fire in the attic of the building.

A second alarm was requested. This brought additional units from Fort Belvoir Fire and Emergency Services and from Prince William County

Fire Investigators determined that the fire was accidental in nature and started in the attic. The cause of the fire was the electrical wiring within the attic.

No one was displaced because of the fire. Red Cross assistance was not needed. Damages as a result of the fire were approximately \$437,500.



Photo courtesy of Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department

The cause of the fire was the electrical wiring within the attic.

OPINION

Human Trafficking: Monstrosity in Our Backyard

BY PAT HERRITY Springfield District Supervisor

uman trafficking is a heinous crime and major issue in Northern Virginia. The victims are often children, teens, and young adults who are forced to have sex with as many as 30 customers a day while their

trafficker profits. It's easy to think that this awful exploitation of our most vulnerable citizens wouldn't be prevalent in one of the richest regions in the country. But the truth is it's happening in our backyards, and the fight to end it starts with raising awareness to prevent it.

As a member of the Board of Supervisors, I'm proud to say that I've supported anti-human trafficking legislation for many years, including nationally recognized bipartisan legislation put forward by former Congresswoman Barbara Comstock. I continue to support the efforts of Fairfax County law enforcement, nonprofits, faith groups, and schools in the fight to end human trafficking, but there's still so much to be done.

Since 2013 Northern Virginia has seen over 500 cases of human trafficking, in addition to a significant spike in calls to the National Human Trafficking Hotline within the last two years. Human trafficking is the second fastest growing crime sector nationally, and is pro-



as the first.

Prevention of this heinous crime starts with awareness, which is why I support January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

For that reason, I recently awarded a proclamation to Bill Woolf, executive director of Just Ask Prevention, declaring January 2019 as Human Trafficking Awareness Month. Just Ask Pre-

vention is a leading nonprofit I've worked closely with, as their goal is to make sure that young people and parents are able to protect themselves and their children from becoming victims of trafficking.

Over the last few years, we've worked together to support the implementation of human trafficking curriculum in Fairfax County Public Schools. This curriculum teaches students to recognize the recruiting and manipulation tactics of traffickers. As some survivor videos note in the curriculum, often times these tactics are subtle, not the "snatch-and-grab" tactic you would expect. Traffickers are becoming increasingly savvy in trapping their victims, even using social media to identify teens who are likely targets and grooming them through flattery.

As a father of two, I see raising awareness of human trafficking as critical for securing the safety of our children. While I have supported many grants to provide funding for our police to combat trafficking, awareness can

jected to surpass the drug trade protect our children before they fall prey to the horrors of this monstrous crime. With trafficking cases involving all 26 high schools in Fairfax County, we cannot fall into the mindset that it could never happen to us, never to our

> I've listened to heartbreaking stories of parents who never believed something as awful as sex trafficking would happen to their daughter or son, until the police found their child assaulted and drugged in a hotel room. No child and no family should ever have to go through that pain.

> Those parents have impressed upon me the importance of listening to our kids and asking them questions about the people they meet and interact with before they are manipulated into believing there is no way out.

> But it's not enough to just watch out for our own kid. As a community, we need to look out for other people's kids as well by taking notice of the kids on our daughter's soccer team, at our son's bus stop, and at the fast food place on the corner. Together we can ensure that our community is inhospitable to all forms of human trafficking and that no kid goes unnoticed and unprotected.

> If you or someone you know is a victim of human trafficking, contact the National Sex Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or text 233733 for help. If you are in immediate danger, call 911.

> For more information about protecting yourself and others from human trafficking, visit http://www.justaskprevention.org.

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Tax Season Is Upon Us

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM STATE DELEGATE (D-36)

he arrival of W-2 forms in the mail reminds us, even if we may have momentarily tried to forget, that tax season is upon us. This is no ordinary tax year however. Massive changes in federal tax laws will result in significant changes at the state level as well. No one can speak

with authority as to what the differences will be for an individual taxpayer as the state General Assembly has not revised state tax law to reflect the federal changes.

The situation we are in is not new. Anytime the Congress makes changes in federal tax policy the state must adjust to those changes and decide whether to adopt the federal policy or to put in new state provisions. As a conformity state Virginia has generally followed federal policy allowing taxpayers to file state returns using the information on their federal form. The difference this year is that the federal changes are so massive that conformity is not realistic without major changes in the way state forms are filed.

Adding to the fact that the forms may be different is the fact that there are major differences between the way deductions and credits have been handled and what will constitute taxable income. High income taxpayers that



were the winners with the federal changes could significantly reduce monies to a state that is already struggling to meet its obligations to funding schools, mental health programs and other priorities.

Essentially Gov. Northam proposed that additional revenues be used for investments in education, workforce development, expanded broadband and targeted tax relief to those who work at the

lowest wages. Republicans have proposed a plan to return more money to taxpayers, but there is strong concern that the Republican plan will make big dents in the state budget. All agree that a decision needs to be reached soon for taxpayers to file their tax forms as soon as possible and as accurately as possible. In past years as many as 650,000 taxpayers have filed in the first ten days of February.

I am patron of a bill supported by Gov. Northam that would make a portion of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) refundable to taxpayers based on their income and family size. The current Virginia EITC set at 20 percent of the federal ETTC does not allow for a refund of its full value as is done in 23 other states. Under the bill I introduced it is estimated that as much as \$250 million would be returned to the pockets of hard-working Virginians who are at the lowest pay levels. This helps not only those workers but since lowincome residents typically spend that money on goods and services, it boosts the local economy as well.

There is a sense of urgency in the General Assembly that this issue be resolved as soon as possible because it impacts every household. Not only is there a great deal of confusion, but that confusion will be multiplied many times as people start to prepare their returns with incomplete directions. The challenge has been known for several months. Tax season is upon us. Our tax policy needs to resolved now.

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.

By email: south@connectionnewspapers.com

> Send to: Letters to the Editor The Connection 1606 King St. Alexandria VA 22314

LETTERS

Facing State Tax Increase

To the Editor:

During my time as a member of the House of Delegates I have worked to solve problems for my constituents, from fixing potholes to finding solutions on transportation in order to improve the quality of life for the people I serve and it has been my honor.

In this 2019 session of the House of Delegates, I've introduced legislation to tackle one of the biggest issues facing middle class families in Northern Virginia – taxes.

Due to our state's tax laws and recent changes in the federal tax code, many of our families in Northern Virginia, through no fault of their own, will be facing a significant increase in their state taxes. For example, absent legislative action, a newly married teacher and police officer who just purchased a home, could possibly end up paying more than \$800 in higher taxes. I firmly believe this is wrong and it is why I introduced HB 2529.

My bill contains three important provisions for middle class taxpayers that will ensure they keep more of their hard-earned money. First,

lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known

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lostdogandcatrescue.org

you will be able to itemize your taxes regardless of whether you took the standard deduction on your federal taxes or vice versa. Second, it doubles the standard deduction. Third, it does not cap state and local taxes protecting homeowners from another hidden tax increase.

Governor Northam proposes to keep your money and overwhelmingly increase the size of Virginia's government. I see things differently. You should decide how to spend the money from your wallet, not Richmond. Even after providing our hard-working teachers, first responders, and other bluecollar workers with tax relief, the state will still have more money for education, transportation and other key services than it did last year. As your delegate in Richmond, my office is always available at (703) 815-1201 or DelTHugo@house.virginia.gov.

Del. Tim Hugo (R-40)Clifton

Amending the 2019 Wish List

To the Editor:

I don't disagree with the to-do list Mary Kimm wrote for the state

legislature ("Wish List: Things this session of the General Assembly, beginning Jan. 9, could/should accomplish," Connection, Jan. 9), but, since she asked, I'll offer another idea: access to clean, affordable energy.

The Governor, state regulatory boards, lawmakers, interest groups, and energy firms are embroiled in a significant fight about natural gas pipelines. I will admit I don't understand the controversy. Our state traditionally has depended on coal for its energy. Natural gas burns a lot cleaner than coal. It's better for our environment. It's also been proven that underground pipelines are a safe way to transport natural gas—safer than by truck on our highways or by train on our rails.

The benefits go beyond the impact on clean air. Virginia has 125,500 "jobs supported" by natural gas and natural gas added \$11.9 billion to the state economy.

Kimm is right. We need more transparency. We need to fund education, but at the top of my list, is improving our environment and our economy by investing in natural gas infrastructure.

Michelle Gordon Springfield





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Public Hearing Scheduled on E-Bike Use on Park Trails

A public hearing will be held in Lorton, Va., on Thursday, February 7, 2019, on proposed changes to regulations on the use of Electrically Assisted Bicycles, or e-bikes, in Fairfax County and NOVA Parks.

The hearing will cover proposed changes to Park Authority Regulation §1.14 Motor Vehicles and Traffic. Under the proposal, the regulation would define an e-bike and clarify distinctions between e-bikes and mopeds. E-bikes would be allowed anywhere traditional pedal-powered bikes are allowed. Mopeds would be allowed only where motor vehicles are permitted.

As part of the proposed change in regulation, draft guidelines for the use of e-bikes within Fairfax and NOVA Parks' will be presented. These guidelines outline the type and level of performance for e-bikes that are suitable for use within Fairfax and NOVA Parks. Draft guidelines define e-bikes as a "wheeled vehicle equipped with (i) pedals that allow propulsion by human power and ii) an electric motor with an input of no more than 750 watts that reduces the pedal effort required of the rider. This applies to both road and mountain style (e/MTB) e-bikes." These use guidelines will be recommendations only and will not be enforceable by law.

The guidelines for e-bike riders would call for them to yield to pedestrians and equestrians and keep e-bike speeds below 20 miles per hour. In addition, e-bike riders would be strongly encouraged to operate only in areas where traditional bicycles are allowed and to not disturb wildlife, livestock or domesticated animals on park property. E-bike riders would be expected to follow the same regulations and rules regarding access to the parks as other visitors. Riders would assume responsibility for the safe and respectful operation of their e-bike. For more information, visit online at https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/e-bikes

The joint hearing to be held by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority Board and the Fairfax County Park Authority Board will begin at 7 p.m. at The Jean R. Packard Center at Occoquan Regional Park, located at 9751 Ox Road, Lorton, VA.

Please contact the NOVA Parks Operations office at 703-359-4612 or NOVAParks@nvrpa.org to sign up to speak at the public hearing, or the Fairfax County Park Authority Public Information Office at 703-324-8662 or via email at Parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov All speakers are welcome; it is not necessary to sign up in advance.

Written comments must be received by March 11, 2019 to be included in the official public record. Please send your feedback to either the Fairfax County Park Authority or NOVA Parks: Email (preferred): Parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov or NOVAParks@nvrpa.org



To request reasonable ADA accommodations, call 703-324-8727, TTY 711, at least 10 working days in advance of the registration deadline or event.

Senior Living

Weight Lifting in the Golden Years

When done properly, strength training can have tremendous benefits for seniors.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

ichard Foley of McLean says he hits the gym at 7:30 five mornings a week. He spends about 40 minutes lifting weights followed by 40 minutes of walking on the treadmill and 10 minutes of sit-ups and crunches.

"I've always been physically active," he said. "I've actually slowed down a little, but it's important to me to keep going for as long as I can."

A National Institutes of Health (NIH) study of Americans over the age of 60 showed that strength training, such as lifting weights, reduced the risk of osteoporosis and chronic conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. It also found that strength-training exercises has the ability to increase muscles strength and mass and allows seniors to stay mobile longer, while also combating weakness and frailty.

"Improving and increasing the muscles in your legs for example, makes them stronger, which means that you'll be able to maintain your ability to walk without assistance longer than you might otherwise," said Rita Days, RN, a gerontological nurse in Falls Church who was not involved in the study. "For seniors who enjoy traveling, shopping or any activity that requires walking, hav-

ing strong quadricep and hamstring muscles means that you'll be able to enjoy those activities longer. It also means that you'll have the strength and endurance to navigate difficult terrain during vacations and other activities that involve walking.

Strength training can lead to a sense of independence for everyday activities like grocery shopping or even getting up from a chair, says Jay Rader, a private health and fitness coach based in Arlington. "When you strengthen the muscles around your joints, you can prolong and even improve your range of motion," he said.

Weight training for seniors, says Days, comes with caveats. "Just because it's beneficial doesn't mean that an 89-year-old should go out and start trying to lift 50 pound weights so that he can regain the ability to walk up three flights of stairs like he could 30 years ago," she said. "The benefits of strength training are tremendous, but they also come with risks and must be done safely. You should definitely consult with a doctor before beginning any kind of exercise program, and it would be my strong recommendation that any one over the age of 50 hire a personal trainer if they're starting any kind of exercise program."

In fact, David Schwartz, a personal trainer in Bethesda says that he has four clients who



Strength-training exercises has the ability to increase muscles strength and mass and allows seniors to stay mobile longer.

are over the age of 60, and while he personalizes each client's workout, there are specific exercises that are particularly beneficial to seniors. "I have one client who is 72 and began training with me when she was 68," he said. "The workouts that I do with her include lunges and squats which

strengthen the quadriceps, or the muscles in the thigh area. It's been interesting to watch her gain leg strength and be able to walk longer distances. But strengthening the quads can also protect your knees and prevent injuries and other problems."

The bicep and tricep muscles of the arm are also important to building strength. "All you need are a pair of light to medium weight dumbbells," said Kat Chetrit, a personal trainer in Fairfax. "Two great exercises, that are also relatively simple are bicep curls where you hold the weight in your hand and bend your arm at the elbow and curl the weight in the direction of your shoulder; and hammer curls, which are very similar except that you hold the weight like you would a hammer. Those are both great exercises for maintaining arm strength."

Days however, underscores the fact that there are risks involved "You can strain a muscle or drop a weight on yourself or even fracture a bone," she said. "With the elderly, these injuries can take a longer time to heal than they would in a person who is much younger. The benefits definitely outweigh the risks, but you want to be safe and smart. That includes talking with your doctor and getting help from a personal training, especially if you've never or rarely exercised before."

How To Best Meet Needs of Older Residents?

County-wide survey seeks public input.

The material in these notes and calendar listings comes from the Golden Gazette. To subscribe to the Golden Gazette or update an address, call 703-324-5633. Send email to

birendra.kunwar@fairfaxcounty.gov. Go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OlderAdults. Click on the Golden Gazette.

n February, thousands of adults — 50 and over — will find yellow postcards in their mailboxes inviting them to participate in Fairfax County's first 50-plus Community Survey for Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church.

The survey is part of a county-wide initiative to create a more aging-friendly community. Survey recipients will be randomly-selected throughout Fairfax County and the cities of Falls Church and Fairfax.

"More than 25 percent of Fairfax County residents are 50 and over, and we can expect to see that number dramatically increase in the coming years," said Bryan Hill, Fairfax County Executive. "We want to learn more about the experience of aging in Fairfax County so that we can better meet the needs of our 50-plus community."

The local governments conducting the survey hope to learn more about the lifestyles of individuals among the 50-plus

community including opportunities to work, socialize and volunteer; issues facing these adults such as retirement, housing and caregiving; and their usage of community services like public transportation and senior centers.

"The survey is a unique opportunity for us to make our voices heard in a powerful way," said Carolyn Sutterfield, chairman of the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging. The commission, the citizens advisory council for the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, oversees and promotes the five-year Fairfax 50plus Community Action Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2014. Sutterfield strongly encourages those who receive the survey to take the time to complete it, whether online or by mail. "The 20 minutes you spend on this have the potential to improve the quality of life for older adults in the Fairfax community for years to come," she said. Survey results will play an important role in planning the next 50-plus Community Action Plan.

The county has contracted with the National Research Center to conduct the survey. All responses are anonymous.

SURVEY TIMELINE

❖ Week of Feb. 4: 22,000 randomly-selected adults – 50 and over – will receive a yellow postcard in the mail indicating that they have been randomly selected to par-

ticipate in the survey.

❖ Week of Feb. 11: Selected respondents will receive their survey materials to be completed online or in writing and returned.

❖ Spring: Staff will review and analyze survey results and post the findings online along with next-steps in the process.

While not everyone will receive a survey, everyone is encouraged to make their voice heard. The public is welcome to contribute suggestions and comments to the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging by email at dfscommissiononaging@fairfaxcounty.gov

or during the public comment period of their regular monthly meetings (for a schedule of upcoming meetings go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/ older-adults/fairfax-area-commission-onaging

You can follow the county's progress on this survey initiative and find additional ways to share comments and suggestions on aging online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/50-plus-community-survey.

Ouestions?

Call 703-324-4444 or submit questions by email to OSMDataAnalyticsosm@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Seniors Calendar

- Feb. 4, 10:15 a.m.-2 p.m. AARP Free Tax Preparation Services. AARP is offering free tax help with a preference given to older adults. Arrive at least one hour before the session closes. Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria. For information and additional dates, call 703-765-2645.
- Feb. 6, 9:30-11:30 a.m. LLI/NOVA Forum: Will we have enough money to manage well in our retirement years? Hear about how to manage money in retirement years and how to avoid serious pitfalls at each stage of retirement. Free and open to the public. Free parking. Ernst Cultural Center, NOVA Annandale Campus, 8333 Little River Tnpk., Annandale. Call 703-503-0600.
- Feb. 9, 2-3:30 p.m. Floral Design Workshop: Valentine Topiary. Branch out for Valentine's Day by making a topiary arrangement with

- assorted flowers and Valentine trim. You get to keep the beautiful topiary for yourself. Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Rd., Alexandria. To register, call 703-642-5173 or 703-222-4664
- Feb. 11, 10-11 a.m. Assisted Living: Can I Afford It? Find answers to how much assisted living costs and what expenses Medicare/Medicaid cover. In addition, discuss planning to pay for expenses and how this influences your retirement and legacy goals. Free. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St. SE., Vienna. To register, call 703-255-7801.
- Feb. 12, 7-8 p.m. Register for Fairfax County's free Family Caregiver Telephone Support Group. Call in to join this month's discussion "Prevention and Problem Solving." Discuss how to use problem solving and prevention techniques to avoid the crisis trap. To register, call 703-324-5376.

News



Burke Scouts Complete Service Work at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum

Scout Troop 1965 of Burke recently assisted the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum in clearing the Station property of sticks and debris. The project was organized by Cameron Adams (back row, center, with hat and hand on chin), a member of the Troop. The project helped the Scouts to fulfill requirements for community service merit badges. The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum is located at 11200 Fairfax Station.





New Year. New Plan. Fresh Start. Fairfax Divorce Workshop.

What everyone needs to know about divorce.

Start the New Year off with a plan. Empower yourself with knowledge! Join us for our Second Saturday Divorce Workshop and get the information, support and guidance from a family law attorney, a financial advisor, an estate planning attorney, and a family therapist (speakers vary for each workshop).

Saturday, February 9, 2019 Date:

Saturday, March 9, 2019 Saturday, APRIL 13, 2019

9:00-9:30a.m.-Registration

9:30-1:00 p.m.-Workshop

Place: Duff & Kronfeld, P.C.

Fair Oaks Commerce Center 11320 Random Hills Road/Suite 630 Fairfax, VA 22030

Pre-registration recommended as space is limited.

Online Registration

www.secondsaturdaynova.com

Email: nduff@secondsaturdaynova.com

Call: (703) 591-7475





OPEN HOUSE & TOUR

Tuesday, February 12, 2019 11am to 2 pm

Join us to taste some great chocolate treats, find out why we say "innovative memory care" through our SimpleC program, activities, layout and gardens and how we plan to make a difference in the fight against Alzheimer's disease.

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renaissancesnnandale.net | III facebook.com/renaissanceannandale

ENTERTAINMENT

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

ONGOING

Founding Artists Exhibition.

Through Feb. 3 at The Workhouse Arts Center, Vulcan Muse Gallery, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Workhouse Arts Center presents a group exhibition highlighting Studio and Arches artists that have been a part of the organization for its 10year span. In honor of their dedication and support, the exhibition will survey their works in various mediums including painting, sculpture, fiber, glass, precious metals, and mixed media. Visit www.workhousearts.org.

Workhouse Student-Faculty Exhibition. Through Feb. 10 at Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. The Workhouse Arts Center Student and Faculty Exhibition will survey works from course instructors, faculty and their students. Explore the numerous paintings, drawings, glass works, clay works and fiber art created in Workhouse's classes and workshops. Call 703-584-2900 or visit workhousearts.org.

Art Exhibit: Amazing Art Jam.

Through Feb. 24, gallery hours at the Vulcan Gallery, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Workhouse Arts Center hosts the third iteration of the Amazing Art Jam. This pop-up exhibition offers fresh perspectives by exploring several young, contemporary themes including street art, anime, Marvel iconography and hip-hop culture. Curated by Ackshun Jackson, the show will feature works in various mediums including interactive, sculpture, murals, paintings and works on paper from over 40 regional artists. Visit www.workhousearts.org/event/ amazing-art-jam.

Exhibit: Purchased Lives. Through Feb. 28, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily (except major holidays) at the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center, 10209 Main St., Fairfax. Purchased Lives is a traveling exhibition from the Historic New Orleans Collection. The exhibit examines a complex and divisive period of American history and educating about the far-reaching economic and heartbreaking personal impact of the domestic slave trade. Look for The Washington Home of the Philippine Suffrage Movement March 3-31. Call 703-385-8414.

THURSDAY/JAN. 31

Adults' BYOG Night. 7-8:30 p.m. at Kings Park Library, 9000 Burke Lake Road, Burke. BYOG = Bring yourOwn Game - come to the library with your favorite board game or card game to share. Adults only. Free.

suzanne.cross@fairfaxcounty.gov, call 703-978-5600 or visit librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/ event/4741919.

FRIDAY/FEB. 1

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Enjoy free coffee, entertaining callers, a friendly atmosphere, \$1,000 guaranteed jackpot, treasure chest progressive raffles, and good food available for purchase. All proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue ent Vicit www fairfayyfd or call 703-273-3638.

SATURDAY/FEB. 2

Dog Park Grand Opening. 9 a.m. at the Fairfax City Dog Park, 11000 Berry St., Fairfax. City residents, both two-legged and four-legged, are



invited to the grand opening ceremony for the Fairfax City dog park on the former Westmore Elementary School site. The new dog park will be open daily from dawn to dusk. All dogs with current licenses are welcome. The park will include a fenced exercise/run area (fence is a gift from Affectionate Pet Care), park benches, and trash and recycling receptacles. Waste bags and a receptacle will be provided at the dog park. Call 703-385-7858.

Chinese New Year Festival. 10 a.m. 6 p.m. at Luther Jackson Middle School, 3020 Gallows Road, Falls Church. The 12th Annual Chinese New Year Festival hosted by the Asian Community Service Center featuring live performances, including Dragon and Lion dances, Han Costume Fashion show, Asian food, the writing of Chinese names, language, craft and business booths, children world, and also a lunar new year dragon parade. Free admission.

www.ChineseNewYearFestival.org. Winter Music and Dance Festival. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Workhouse Arts W3 Theatre, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Next Reflex Dance Collective presents the Winter Music and Dance Festival featuring performances from area musicians and dancers culminating in a one night collaborative performance of diverse creativity, live music and dance. \$10-\$25 (reserved seating). Visit insidenovatix.com/events/nextreflex-dance-collective-winter-musicand-dance-festival for tickets.

Fairfax Symphony Orchestra. 8 p.m. at the GMU Center for the Arts Concert Hall, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. The program includes: Mendelssohn - Hebrides Overture; Mendelssohn – Violin Concerto (Chee-Yun, violin); and Schumann -Symphony No. 2. Charming, charismatic, and deeply passionate about her art, Chee-Yun continues to carve a unique place for herself in the ever-evolving world of classical music. Before the concert (7 p.m.), enjoy a discussion with the artists and music director Christopher Zimmerman. \$15-\$65. Visit www.fairfaxsymphony.org.

SATURDAY/FEB. 3

thor Event: Tiffany Fo

Noon-3 p.m. at Barnes & Noble-Fair Lakes, 12193 Fair Lakes Promenade Drive, Fairfax. Tiffany Foo-Garcia will be holding a reading and signing for the first book of her new middle grade culinary adventure series, "Ruby Foo and the Travelling Kitchen: Finding the Foo Identity."

Visit rubyfookitchen.com.

Make a Valentine Card Craft. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum will have a Valentine's Day Make and Take event. Visitors will create their own Valentine's cards to take home with them. The cost of supplies is included with admission.. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, or call 703-425-9225.

TUESDAY/FEB. 5

Parktykes: Explore the Natural

World. 1:30-2:15 p.m. at Lake Accotink Park, 7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield. Adults with toddlers are invited to join a naturalist in the classroom and outdoors to discover the wonders of the natural world. The program is designed for young explorers, age 1-3, and an adult. \$9 per child. Meet at the visitor center. Call 703-569-3464 visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ lake-accotink.

Burke Historical Society. 7-9 p.m. at Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Local authors, Mary Lipsey and Cindy Bennett, will share their experiences and tips on the process of researching, writing, and publishing a historical book. Free. Email slawski_brian@yahoo.com or visit www.burkehistoricalsociety.org.

TUESDAYS/FEB. 5-26

Try Girl Scouts. 6-7 p.m. at West Springfield Elementary School, 6802 Deland Drive, Springfield. Make new friends, learn about Girl Scouts, and meet the requirements for two new cybersecurity badges. \$25 for four weeks. Email cosborne@gscnc.org or call 703-372-4341.

FRIDAY/FEB. 8

Gunston Hall Game Night. 6-9 p.m. at Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Mason Neck. Gunston Hall is opening its doors after-hours to welcome game enthusiasts to immerse themselves in a variety of 18th-century card, board, and dice beverages and heavy hors devours, including some items made from 18th-century recipes. Visit www.gunstonhall.org.

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Enjoy free coffee, entertaining callers, a friendly atmosphere, \$1,000

Choreography **Festival**

Small Plates creates a growth environment by holding guided Q&A feedback sessions with the audience after each performance. Local dance and artistic professionals are encouraged to attend as audience members and bring their voices to this conversation, and to provide choreographers with valuable feedback and networking opportunities. This artist/audience interface is what makes Small Plates special. The Friday performance will feature pre-professional dance created by student choreographers, or by professional choreographers performed by students. Saturday's performance will mainly feature professional artists with limited space for pre-professional work. Friday-Saturday, Feb. 8-9, 8 p.m. at Building W-3 (Theatre), Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. \$15-\$20. 703-584-2900 or workhousearts.org.

guaranteed jackpot, treasure chest progressive raffles, and good food available for purchase. All proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com or call 703-273-3638.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/FEB. 8-9

Small Plates Choreography

Festival. 8 p.m. at Building W-3 (Theatre), Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Small Plates creates a growth environment by holding guided Q&A feedback sessions with the audience after each performance. The Friday performance will feature preprofessional dance created by student choreographers, or by professional choreographers performed by students. Saturday's performance will mainly feature professional artists with limited space for preprofessional work. \$15-\$20. Call 703-584-2900 or visit workhousearts.org.

SATURDAY/FEB. 9

Animal Sweetheart's Dance. 2-4 p.m. at Hidden Pond Nature Center, 8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield. Dance, laugh, and learn at the social event of the winter season. Space limited, register online (tinyurl.com/y9nz9q48) or call 703-451-9588 to save a spot. \$9. Email casey.riley@fairfaxcounty.gov or call

703-451-9588. **Lorton Community Blood Drive.**

3:30-7:30 p.m. at the Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Register online to donate. The INOVA Donation Bus which will be located right outside Workhouse Building W-16. After donating, stay for the monthly, free Second Saturday Art Walk, with the chance to meet nearly 100 Workhouse artists. Make an appointment at tinyurl.com/y7q7samt.

Create + Sip: Recreating Escher.

4-6 p.m. at the Workhouse Arts

Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Monthly afternoons of wine and fun offer more than just painting. Each Create + Sip is taught by one of Workhouse's studio artists, offering techniques, plus fiber, glass and clay. With Workhouse artist Wendy Anderson, explore the unique world of tessellation via its modern will be created on wooden art palettes with paint. \$35. Visit insidenovatix.com/events/create-siprecreating-escher for tickets.

Winter Wonderland Family Dance. 5-8 p.m. at Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Bring the whole

family for an evening of magic and wonder with dinner, special guest characters, crafts, dancing and more. All families are welcome. \$30 per adult, \$20 per child. Visit fairfaxva.gov/parksrec or call 703-385-7858.

Chili Cook Off and Bingo Night. 6-9 p.m. at Historic Pohick Episcopal Church, 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton. The Ann Mason Guild of Pohick Church will hold their annual Chili Cook Off and Bingo event. Tickets are \$10 per person (without a chili entry) and \$5 per person (with chili entry). Children 10 and under are free. Hot dogs will also be available. Contact: Wendy Remaly at wendy.remaly@gmail.com or Angela Edgemon at Aedge619@aol.com, or call 703-339-6572 or visit

SUNDAY/FEB. 10

www.pohick.org.

T-TRAK Scale Model Train Show.

1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Northern Virginia T-TRAK members will hold a N gauge Model Train Display. Ages 16 and older, \$4; 5-15, \$2; 4 and under, free. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, or call 703-425-9225.

 $\textbf{Handbell Dessert Concert.} \ 3 \ and \ 6$ p.m. at St. Matthews United Methodist Church, 8617 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Be serenaded by handbell choirs at their fundraising event while enjoying dessert at a candle lit table. Adults, \$15; ages 7-17, \$12; age 6 and under, \$8. Tickets at Shawn.Guth@verizon.net. Email mb.brooke@verizon.net.

FRIDAY/FEB. 15

B-I-N-G-O. 7 p.m. at Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Enjoy free coffee, entertaining callers, a friendly atmosphere, \$1,000 guaranteed jackpot, treasure chest progressive raffles, and good food available for purchase. All proceeds go to purchasing fire and rescue equipment. Visit www.fairfaxvfd.com or call 703-273-3638.

SATURDAY/FEB. 16

Pet Adoption Event. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at Pet Supplies Plus, 11054 Lee Highway, Fairfax. Find a new forever animal friend with the help of the City of Fairfax Animal Control and Animal Shelter. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov/government/ police/programs/animal-control/ adopt-a-pet.

Valentine's Day Banquet. 6:30-11 p.m. at Waterford Receptions at Springfield, 6715 Commerce St., Springfield. The Family Ministry of the Greater Little Zion Baptist Church in Fairfax is sponsoring their Annual Valentine's Day Banquet. All couples and singles are invited to fellowship and to enjoy an evening of fine dining, music, dancing and featured entertainment. \$60 per person (payment deadline is Feb. 10). Contact Anthony or Terri Bazemore at 703-239-9111.

Art for the Heart. 7-10:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall at Church of the Nativity, 2400 Nativity Lane, Burke. The Knights of Columbus Fr. Sikora Council 7992 is holding their Annual Art Auction. Join in a festive evening of viewing and bidding on a variety of fine art, memorabilia, and collectibles while enjoying complementary wine and specialty hors d'oeuvres prepared by A Bit More Catering. \$15 per person. For tickets contact Tom Savage at 512-983-5641 or tomkc7992@gmail.com.

News

Area Road Projects Get \$1 Billion Investment

By Owen FitzGerald Capital News Service

irginia and private partner Transurban will invest over \$1 billion in four transportation projects in Northern Virginia and Fredericksburg, state officials announced Tuesday, Jan. 29. The projects are designed to reduce traffic congestion and improve connectivity on Interstates 495

"Creating opportunity for all Virginians no matter who they are or where they live depends on having a safe, reliable transportation network," Gov. Ralph Northam said. "People need good transportation - be it road, transit or other options — to get to work and businesses need it to move goods."

Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine said the projects include a two-and-a-half mile extension of the express lanes of I-495 north to the American Legion Bridge and the Maryland border. The Capital Beltway Express Lanes Northern Extensions, or Project NEXT, will require no public funding from the state, Valentine said.

She said the project will address one of the "worst bottlenecks in the region" and reduce cutthrough traffic in nearby McLean neighborhoods.

Valentine, who oversees the Virginia Department of Transportation, said Project NEXT will connect Virginia to Maryland by creating direct access to the American Legion Bridge, the George Washington Parkway and the Dulles Toll Road.

Officials also announced a new auxiliary lane that would seek to reduce bottleneck traffic on the Occoquan Bridge.

"The I-95 bottleneck at the Occoquan Bridge has been a source of personal frustration and 123 ramp onto I-95 with the westtime stuck in traffic — valuable time that could be spent with family," said Sen. Jeremy McPike of Prince William County. "With funding now in place, VDOT will begin the design and construction that our community has sought for

The Occoquan Auxiliary Lane will connect the southbound Route

bound off-ramp of Prince William Parkway. Also announced was the addition of a new reversible ramp that would improve access Potomac Mills and Sentara Virginia Medical Center. The ramp would connect existing I-95 express lanes directly to Opitz Boulevard where the facility is located.

Lastly, a plan was finalized to

extend the I-95 express lanes in Fredericksburg — a 10-mile extension expected to increase the highway's capacity by 66 percent during peak hours. The Fredericksburg Extension Project, or Fred Ex, was initially announced in January 2018. Construction will begin later this year and is expected to be finished by the fall of 2022.

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Seeking Racial Reconciliation Bipartisan group launches initiative.

BY BENJAMIN WEST Capital News Service

our centuries after enslaved Africans were brought to Virginia, a diverse group of public officials, business executives and religious leaders has opened a yearlong dialogue about racial justice and healing.

The group, Virginians for Reconciliation, detailed its plans at a press conference last week with words from Democratic Gov. Ralph Northam; his Republican predecessor, Bob McDonnell; and Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney.

The goals are straightforward: "To get people to know, respect and care for one another, to break down racial barriers of prejudice and mistrust, and build a stronger basis to solve problems for the common good," McDonnell said. "But talk is cheap, and results matter."

The initiative comes as the Virginia General Assembly marks its 400th anniversary, which began when the House of Burgesses convened in Jamestown in 1619 the first European legislative body in the American colonies.

Northam said Virginians must reflect on the grim part of history as well. "Talk about what was good about our history — the pursuit of liberty — and what was not good — the pursuit of enslavement," said the governor, who recently proclaimed 2019 the Year of Reconciliation and Civility.

"This is an opportunity for us to review that and move forward together."

The organization has proposed more than 20 activities, including encouraging Virginians to read "The Color of Law," which shows how government contributes to racial segregation.

"Slavery didn't end, it just evolved," said David Bailey, quoting the lawyer and activist Bryan Stevenson.

Bailey is executive director of Arrabon, a Christian group promoting reconciliation. He said the Christian faith community has an important role to play in racial reconciliation because much of slavery was carried out "in the name of Jesus."

As part of a clergy pulpit exchange, Virginians for Reconciliation will encourage pastors to preach at "churches of different faiths/races." The group also will urge Virginians — including members of the General Assembly to walk the Richmond Slave Trail, which includes sites where slaves were imprisoned, bought and sold.

"The physical chains are gone," Stoney said. "But we all know that many people of color today are still bound by the chains of poverty, inadequate access to health care and shut out from opportunity by the criminal justice system."

"This is a start," McDonnell said. He said the organization's work could "hopefully be a model for America."



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News

Pay Raise Promise Amid Protest

Legislators announce 5 percent pay raise for teachers.

BY CORRINE FIZER Capital News Service

s hundreds of teachers and supporters from around the state marched to the Virginia Capitol to call for higher salaries and more funding for public schools, legislative leaders announced Monday, Jan. 28, that they would include a 5 percent pay raise for teachers in the state budget.

Armed with red coats, scarves and signs, participants of all ages gathered in Monroe Park for a small rally. Then they marched to the Capitol as a girl riding in the back of a small red wagon used a microphone and handheld speaker to lead their chants.

The marchers gathered on the Capitol grounds to hear community leaders protest what they see as inadequate funding for public education.

Rodney Robinson, Virginia's Teacher of the Year, said Amazon will receive nearly \$3.5 billion in public subsidies from New York, Virginia and Tennessee to locate facilities in those states. Virginia's state government and Arlington County offered more than \$570 million in direct subsidies and about \$220 million in transportation improvements to entice Amazon to put an East Coast headquarters near Reagan National Airport in Crystal City.

Robinson said the money Amazon will get could "pay for more teachers, counselors and 21st-century school buildings that are not infested with roaches, rats and mold.'

The Virginia Education Association, which represents the state's teachers, organized the "Red4Ed" rally. The VEA says Virginia ranks 34th among the states in teacher pay. The average annual teacher salary in Virginia is \$51,265 — more than \$9, 200 below the national average, according to the asso-

According to the Richmond School Board, 1 in 5 educators must take a second job to make ends meet.

Liz Holmes, a second-grade teacher at Greenville Elementary School in Warrenton, said she has not had a raise in 11 years. Holmes came to the march to express her frustration over the lack of "fair compensation" in her workplace.

"We are losing qualified teachers every year to surrounding counties that pay higher wages," Holmes said, holding a picture of her and her students. "Enough is enough."

As the teachers held their demonstration, Republican lawmakers who control the House of Delegates announced that they would include a 5 percent raise for teachers in the state budget they plan to release on Sunday. Del. Steve Landes, R-Augusta, made the announcement in a speech on the House floor.

"Virginia has some of the finest teachers in the country and that has led to Virginia students consistently outperforming nationwide peers on standardized tests, college admissions, and graduate rates," said Landes, vice chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. "To maintain that success we must ensure our teachers are fairly compensated and know the hard work they do each and every day is greatly appreciated."

The committee's chairman, Republican Del. Chris Jones of Suffolk, said the proposed budget would increase teachers' salaries without raising taxes. "Un-



Photo by Corrine Fizer/Capital News Service

Teachers and supporters march in Richmond seeking more funding for education.

"Virginia has some of the finest teachers in the country and that has led to Virginia students consistently outperforming nationwide peers on standardized tests, college admissions, and graduate rates."

-Del. Steve Landes, R-Augusta

der conservative leadership in the House of Delegates, this will be the fourth teacher pay raise in the last six years," he said.

"I am proud of Chairman Jones and Vice Chairman Landes for the hard work and dedication they have shown to ensuring our teachers know how much they are appreciated in the Commonwealth," said House Speaker Kirk Cox, a retired high school government teacher.

"As a public school teacher for 30 years, I know how hard teachers work to educate Virginia's future leaders. We must make it a priority to keep great teachers in the classroom and that starts with making sure our teachers a fairly compensated."

Democrats are already on board with the 5 percent pay raise for teachers. In the two-year budget adopted by the General Assembly in 2018, teachers were scheduled to receive a 3 percent salary increase on July 1. In his proposed revision of the budget, Gov. Ralph Northam recommended awarding teachers an additional 2 percent raise.

Northam, a Democrat, reiterated that proposal at a meeting of the Virginia School Board Association last week, calling it "the largest one-time pay raise for teachers in over 15 years."

But Virginia teachers say that their salaries are more than 10 percent below the national average and that the planned raise does not close the gap.

"It's a start," Holmes said. "But it's not enough."

BULLETIN

From Page 2

display of unmanned aircraft followed by a presentation outlining the program. After the presentation, there will be an opportunity to ask questions. The formal presentation will begin at 7 p.m. To find out more about the UAS program go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/uas. Send feedback or questions to uas@fairfaxcounty.gov or through the link located on the UAS webpage. Written comments on the draft program must be received by the close of business Feb. 8, 2019, to be included in the official public record. • Wednesday, Jan. 30, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Braddock

Hall - Kings Park Library, 9002 Burke Lake Road, Burke.

TUESDAYS THROUGH FEB. 19

Workshop Series: Mind in the Making. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1 -Room 100, Dunn Loring. Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs by Ellen Galinsky, encompasses an evidence-based list of life skills that are essential for children to succeed socially, emotionally and intellectually in the short and long term. Participants may register for one or all of the workshops and do not need to attend the previous class. Registration is limited. Call 703-204-3941 or visit www.fcps.edu/resources/ family-engagement/parent-resource-center

- ❖ Tuesday, Feb. 5 Critical Thinking (part 5)
- ❖ Tuesday, Feb. 12 Taking on Challenges (part 6)
 ❖ Tuesday, Feb. 19 Self-Directed, Engaged
- Learning (part 7)

THURSDAY/JAN. 31

Poetry & Creative Writing Contest Deadline.

The Fairfax County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. announces its 4th Annual Poetry Contest for Middle School Students and Creative Writing for High School Students. Visit www.fcacdst.org/creativewriting-contest for contest details and to download the applications. Email artsandletters@fcacdst.org with questions.

FRIDAY/FEB. 1

High School Success. 10 a.m.-noon at Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1 – Room 100, Dunn Loring. Ann Dolin, M.Ed., educational consultant and author will presents "High School Success: A Strategic Transition for Teens Moving to Higher Grades," on helping teens finish middle school strong, build positive habits for the future, shift from guided to independent learning, effective time management, and manage their social life so it doesn't interfere with school. Call 703-204-3941 or visit www.fcps.edu/resources/familyengagement/parent-resource-center

Public Comment Deadline. The Fairfax County Park Authority has scheduled its annual public comment period on the agency's proposed fee adjustments. The public is invited to share their perspectives on the proposals with the Park Authority Board via correspondence or by email. Information outlining all proposed fee changes is available online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ parks/feemeeting, at the Park Authority's main office in the Herrity Building and at staffed park facilities. Parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov, or send written comments to: Attention Public Information Office/Fee Comments, Fairfax County Park Authority, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 927, Fairfax, Va 22035.

Scholarship Application Deadline. The Optimist Club of Central Fairfax is sponsoring the Optimist International Essay Scholarship Contest. The purpose of Optimist International is "Bringing Out the Best In Kids." The contest is open to any student under age 19 as of Oct. 1, 2018 and not enrolled in a degree seeking program at a post-secondary institution. sharon.debragga@gmail.com.

MONDAY/FEB. 4

Town Hall Meeting. 1 p.m. at South County High School, 8501 Silverbrook Road, Lorton. State Sen. Scott Surovell and Del. Kathy Tran will host a town hall meeting. Individuals will have the opportunity to hear about progress in Richmond and ask questions about legislation

Sibshops. 9 a.m.-noon at Providence Community Center, 3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax. The Sibshop workshops are for children in grades 2-5 who have siblings with special needs enrolled in Fairfax County Public Schools. Meet other siblings in a fun, recreational setting; celebrate siblings; share sibling experiences and receive peer support; play games and more. Visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/ parent-resource-center or call the FCPS Parent Resource Center at 703-204-3941

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Cat It Again



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As my white cat, Twinkle, continues to walk left to right and right to left across my writing pad with various stops in between for scratching, nudging, belly-rubbing and paw patty cakes, I can't help wondering if there's a method to her non-madness. She doesn't appear to be the least bit agitated. She's not meowing her presence or seemingly demanding anything - other than attention, that is. In fact, she's purring and seems quite pleased with herself.

What's puzzling to me is exactly what the attraction/need is here? I don't have any treats. Her food and water bowls are not here. Neither is her litter box. It's in the adjacent room. Yet here she sits and rolls and scratches herself with what appears to be not a care or concern in the world. She seems extremely content with her situation.

I would have expected her to be sleeping in the house somewhere like our other four cats. I mean, it is 2:15 in the afternoon, many hours after her 6:30 breakfast and hours still to go before her 5:30 dinner. Heck, I've even dozed off myself for a bit before I sat down to try and write this column. But here she is, wide awake, and back and forth.

My wife, Dina, maintains that cats and dogs have a sixth sense when it comes to people being sick, and tend to hang around those afflicted with something or other, providing aid and comfort, if you will.

And so, she gets nervous when multiple cats surround me when we're sitting on the couch watching television: a black cat, usually "Sleeky," lays on top of the couch behind where I'm sitting; Twinkle, sits on the couch next to me and cuddles up against my left thigh; and Biscuit (one of our two buff-colored brothers) "sphyinxs" on the coffee table staring at me while I'm having to stare through him to watch television. The other two cats, "Chino" and Andrew are usually sleeping in their spots, out of sight, but never out of mind

A shift change, apparently. "Chino" has just jumped on my desk and Twinkle has jumped off, no doubt to find a warm spot to sleep perchance to dream. Chino is now laying on his side/back - partially on my writing pad, with his rear end pressed up against my left forearm with all four paws raised up in the air not exactly in my direction but definitely in my proximity.

This cat exchange sort of reminds of how my brother and I would alternate our visiting time with our parents on Sundays, splitting the day so that one of us was always present and accounted

But I'm not sick (OKAY, diseased then), and I don't feel as if I need 24/7-type cat companionship. Though I am home alone a lot – and left with my own thoughts, I don't view the cats shifting around me as anything more than there considering me as a big toy.

A toy whose movements and appearance are stimulating to them, sort of like a giant scratching post infused with catnip. A combination they couldn't possibly ignore, like peanut butter and chocolate is to me.

So as much as I feel nurtured and loved and comforted by this cat behavior, I don't feel it's because I'm sick, or rather about to be sick (again, their sixth sense at work), I feel simply that we have some very affectionate cats whose indoor-only lives have caused them to become dependent and appreciative of those who feed and water them. (We won't mention that we're also the ones who stuff them into cat carriers and drive them to the vet, an experience which they collectively hate.)

But if I do get sick (I guess I should be honest: get sicker, I do have cancer) I know I can count "Chino" Riscuit Twinkle Andrew and "Sleeky" to always keep me company. I don't know how much better their presence will make me feel, but I do know their presence will keep me from feeling worse.

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

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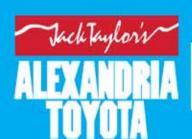
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