

Springfield CONNECTION

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HOME LIFE STYLE

PAGE 6

Adat Reyim, which means “community of friends,” is a congregation which celebrates the diversity of Jewish beliefs, located in Springfield. They have received hundreds of letters in support of the Vindmans.

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CONGREGATION

adat reyim

Community Embraces Vindman

NEWS, PAGE 5

Animal Sweethearts Dance at
Hidden Pond Nature Center

NEWS, PAGE 10

Tremendous Needs
Still Not Funded

NEWS, PAGE 3

Herrity to Hold Community Meeting

Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) and Fairfax County Staff will hold community meeting regarding the County's proposed Agritourism Zoning Ordinance Amendment, changes to the requirements for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and the addition of a Rural Resort use. Supervisor Herrity will share his concerns on the impact of these changes on our residential neighborhood.

Community meeting, staff presentation, and question and answer session will inform residents and obtain feedback on the County's proposed Agritourism

Zoning Ordinance Amendment, changes to the requirements for ADUs.

The meeting will be held at the Clifton Town Hall, 12641 Chapel Road in Clifton, Wednesday, Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m.

The Code of Virginia permits agritourism by-right when associated with an agricultural operation. However, localities may regulate agritourism activities when there is a significant impact to the health, safety, or general welfare of the public. Agritourism activities are carried out on a farm for recreational, entertainment, or

educational purposes. County staff has proposed definitions for agritourism and use limitations to provide thresholds for a predictable and consistent path for future agritourism activities. Also, the County is considering proposing a new land use, "Rural Resort" as a special exception use in certain zoning districts on 20 acres or more. This would allow for the hosting of events such as weddings and corporate retreats on rural properties. Supervisor Herrity has significant concerns with the proposed Rural Resort use especially in the Occoquan Watershed (R-C). Staff is also proposing revisions

to standards for ADUs. Currently, all ADUs require special permit review before the Board of Zoning Appeals. Staff is proposing a more streamlined process that would allow administrative approval of an ADU when located within the principal dwelling. Staff is also proposing to limit the size to 1200 square feet. Currently, an ADU is only allowed if someone on the property meets certain age or disability restrictions, but the Board and staff are looking to eliminate those constraints which may result in an increase of these units in our residential neighborhoods. Supervisor Herrity supports

easing the requirements for ADUs with the current age and disability restrictions but opposes eliminating these restrictions. Eliminating these restrictions would give most residential housing the ability to add an additional dwelling unit and has the potential to significantly increase the density in our residential neighborhoods.


Supervisor Herrity plans to inform the community of the details of these proposals and get its feedback. Staff will be making a brief presentation on these proposals followed by a questions and answer session and an opportunity to provide feedback.

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			1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9 10
11	12	13	14	15	16 17
18	19	20	21	22	23 24
25	26	27	28	29	30 31

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Tremendous Needs Still Not Funded

FXCO School Board adopts \$3.2 billion budget seeking \$172.2 million increase.

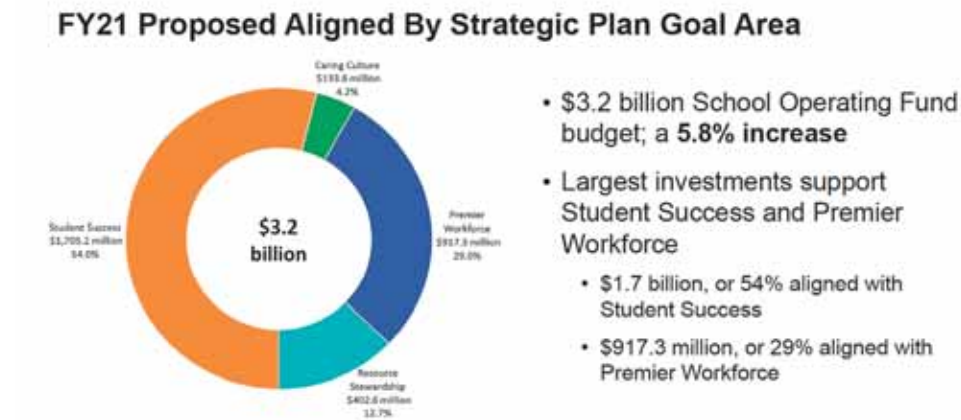
BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

“I am happy to see the Superintendent’s Proposed FY 21 budget focuses on many of the things I feel strongly about, such as increasing our student health and wellness efforts, workforce development, market competitive compensation for our teachers and instructional assistants, and serving our special needs families. Adding money for activity directors, counselors, on-time graduation coordinators, substance abuse prevention specialists and behavior intervention specialist training can make sure we are providing students and families some of the supports they need to be successful. Our Trades for Tomorrow program is just one way to make sure we are providing students with the opportunity to enter our Northern Virginia workforce, and I would like to see that expanded,” said Elaine Tholen, Fairfax County School Board Member, Dranesville District.

During the Thursday, Feb. 6, 2020, School Board Meeting, the FY 21 budget for Fairfax County Public Schools reached a key milestone on its pathway to final approval by the Board of Supervisors in May. The Board approved a motion to adopt the Advertised Budget of \$3.2 billion, which represented an increase of \$172.2 million, or 5.8 percent, over the FY 20 Approved Budget. The motion carried unanimously with School Board Representatives Karen Corbett Sanders, Chair (Mount Vernon), Tamara Derenak Kaufax, Vice-Chair (Lee), Elaine Tholen (Dranesville), Megan McLaughlin (Braddock), Melanie K. Meren (Hunter Mill), Karl Frisch (Providence), Stella Pekarsky (Sully), Ricardy Anderson (Mason), Rachna Sizemore Heizer (Member-at-Large), Abrar Omeish (Member-at-Large) and Karen Keys-Gamarra (Member-at-Large) voting yes. School Board Representative, Laura Jane Cohen (Springfield), was absent.

MCLAUGHLIN introduced the motion. “I’m hopeful the Board of Supervisors will consider full funding for this Fiscal Year 21 budget... Later on, we will be discussing the amendments that so many of the board members have brought. It simply reflects the fact that there are tremendous needs that have still not been able to be funded due to the recent recession,” she said.

While Sizemore Heizer agreed with the tenor of the budget and its themes in terms of staff support and serving the school system’s “neediest kids,” she wanted to make sure the Board first focused on supporting all its students and staff. “That should be the primary focus,” she said. For Anderson, “all of it” was important. “It’s just a matter of how to balance our needs with



The \$3.2 billion The School Operating Fund Fund budget by Strategic Plan Goal areas.



Karen Keys-Gamarra,
Fairfax County
School Board
Member, Mem-
ber-at-Large



Abrar Omeish,
Fairfax County
School Board
Member, Mem-
ber-at-Large



Megan
McLaughlin,
Fairfax County
School Board
Member,
Braddock



Dr. Scott S.
Brabrand,
Division Super-
intendent of
Fairfax County
Public Schools

SCREENSHOTS VIA FAIRFAX COUNTY VIDEO

our finite resources,” she said. McLaughlin said that the budget represented the Superintendent and his team’s best thinking and would put them “on a good path forward.”

“I’ve highlighted my priorities and will be sending in amendments when we look at this again. I just want to put in another plug for...the importance of identifying areas of savings and reapportioned means of our funds to give us confidence in the budget we are moving forward with. I would have loved to have had that in advance of tonight’s vote,” said Omeish. Although the Approved Budget for the School Operating Fund represented an increase over the FY 20 Budget, it came as little surprise. According to the 2021 Budget forecast presented by Fairfax County Public Schools representatives on Nov. 26, 2019, to a joint meeting of the Board of Supervisors and School Board, expenses had continued to increase and the School Board budget needed to address Board and community priorities and school enrollment growth.

The FY 21 Approved Budget purposefully aligned with four stated Strategic Plan Goals. The most significant investment, \$1.7 billion or 54 percent of the budget supported Strategic Plan Goal 1: Student Success, to reach, challenge, and prepare every student for success in school and life. The largest changes from FY 20 included funding for enrollment and student demo-

graphics at \$28.8 million and centralized instructional resources at \$9.4 million.

The second most significant investment, \$917.3 million or 29 percent of the budget supported Strategic Plan Goal 3: Premier Workforce. The largest changes from FY 2020 included step increases for eligible employees at \$50.1 million and a market competitive compensation scale adjustment of 1 percent at \$25.3 million. The FY 21 budget also included a Classroom Instructional Support (CIS) salary scale enhancement at \$2.7 million for the second year of a three-year plan to bring the salaries of instructional assistants and public health training assistants to 50 percent of teacher salaries in the salary scale for teachers with a bachelor’s degree.

The approved budget allocated \$601.6 million for special education, an increase of 7.5 percent over the FY 20 Approved Budget to support nearly 1000 additional special education students by funding teachers, assistants and attendants. It also included multiple special education and preventive investments. A total of \$3.5 million was allocated to elementary special education chair positions at elementary schools with large special education populations and \$0.9 million for substance abuse prevention positions.

“In FY 20, we completed a multi-year plan to bring teacher salary scales to the market

average,” said Dr. Scott S. Brabrand, division superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools. “The proposed FY 21 budget continues to prioritize market competitive compensation for our teachers and staff. My goal is to have FCPS leading the way in teacher compensation in our region. We recognize that teachers have the power to change lives and deserve salaries commensurate with the critical work they do each day in our classrooms. Our focus is achieving success for each of our more than 189,000 students, and that can only be accomplished by ensuring that we have the ability to recruit and retain the very best teachers,” he said.

“We recognize that teachers have the power to change lives and deserve salaries commensurate with the critical work they do each day in our classrooms.”

— Dr. Scott S. Brabrand,
Division Superintendent of
Fairfax County Public Schools

In a separate action, the Board also approved a motion to defer consideration of all budget amendments to the April 30 and May 14, 2020 work sessions as well as additional meetings as they became available before the Board took its final action on the budget for May 21, 2020. McLaughlin introduced the motion and provided the first comment. “Our Fairfax County family knows this Board was recently seated together just a little over 30 days ago. When you are looking at a \$3.2 billion budget and a board of 12 that are so deeply dedicated to ensuring that this budget spends the money in the most effective and efficient manner possible to meet the needs of each and every child and also honor our hard-working employees, it will take more time for this Board to review over the next several months what are the various areas of funding priorities different board members would like to propose,” she said.

McLaughlin said passage of the amendment meant that the Board would be able to revise and change

SEE SCHOOL BOARD. PAGE 7

Realizing Dreams and Filling Jobs

BY ANNE M. KRESS, PHD AND
TODD ROWLEY

This session, General Assembly members are considering a proposal that would help close the Commonwealth's skills gap by providing workforce scholarships to individuals without access to the community college education required to gain these skills. This proposal is a win-win-win: assisting students, growing businesses, and developing our communities.

We are describing Governor Northam's "Get Skilled, Get a Job, Give Back" (G3) budget initiative. G3 is a last-dollar workforce scholarship program designed to create opportunities for low and middle-income families. The support it provides would make-up the difference between what financial aid covers and the actual cost of tuition, fees, and books for targeted programs in high demand fields.

Qualifying students must select a career field in which employers cannot find enough qualified candidates. In Northern Virginia, these include IT, Cybersecurity, and Healthcare. In other words, G3 is an investment in continued and accelerated regional economic growth.

Because of Northern Virginia's historically low unemployment rate, it has become clear that we need to "Grow our Own" workforce through educating more people to fill high-demand and high-value positions. In fact, finding and developing talent has emerged as the top concern of members of the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce. For that reason, the G3 plan has already earned the official endorsement of the Chamber.

Our initial estimate is that approximately 12 percent or 8,400 Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) students could be eligible to participate in G3, and our data show that 60 percent of NOVA students work part-time while pursuing college. They want to and need to work but lack the credentials needed to find full-time employment in high demand fields. Many cobble together multiple part-time jobs, which makes them take much more than two years to complete an associate degree. This workforce-based initiative would make it easier for our students to place a priority on quickly completing their education and finding sustaining wage careers. These graduates can stay in our region, building their families and contributing to their communities.

The Commonwealth wants G3 recipients to understand their responsibility to those who are supporting their education, so in return for this financial support, G3 students will be asked to "give back" to our state by completing two hours of community or public service for each credit hour in which they are enrolled.

Through offering more NOVA students a chance at the American Dream, we do much more than help individual students; we assure a competitive business climate, continued regional growth, and graduates connected to the communities they serve. NOVA is committed to assuring that every student succeeds, every program achieves, and every community prospers. G3 supports this mission, and we encourage you to voice your support for this transformational program.

If you would like to let General Assembly members know you support the Governor's G3 initiative, please let them know. If you are unsure who your delegate and senator might be, you can access whosmy.virginiageneralassembly.gov, then enter your address and find out.

Anne M. Kress, PhD is Northern Virginia Community College's new President. Todd Rowley is Chair of the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce.

Natasha McKenna and the OneFairfax Imperative

One white man's journey to the cause of equity.

BY THOMAS G. GOODWIN

Natasha McKenna died five years ago today, [Feb. 8, 2015] naked, cold, frightened, shackled, muzzled, and Black, after a rough afternoon at Fairfax County jail. The social and racial inequities that contributed to her death still loom as the OneFairfax policy is extended throughout county government.

I wasn't thinking about racial inequity when I volunteered to help Sheriff Stacey Kinkaid manage what became a long hot summer of investigation, protests, and relentless adverse publicity. I wasn't even necessarily thinking about my civic duty: Here was a rare (unpaid) opportunity to work on a difficult case.

Natasha was a victim of several mental illnesses including depression. She died unexpectedly following a traumatic extraction from jail intended to enable her to get access to care, but that wound up with her being tased four times by a team of deputies. The entire episode was recorded. The Washington Post excoriated the Sheriff five (!) times editorially. I advocated a "let's-release-the-video-and-keep-our-heads-down" PR strategy that found a credible alternative villain in America's broken mental health system. An investigation found no wrongdoing.

But something very wrong obviously did happen, and my inability to grasp it fully in the moment will cause readers of color to shake their heads wearily at my clueless white privilege. I didn't get it: I believed (still do) the deputies involved meant Natasha no harm. I believed (still do) Sheriff Kincaid's human compassion matches her lifelong passion for public safety: The county's DiversionFirst program

she championed has become a national model.

Epiphany for me arrived in the form of the social theory of "intersectionality."

Well-known to people of color, intersectionality explains how categorizations such as race, class, gender, sex and disability create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

Natasha was the personification of Intersectionality: She was Black ... naked, an inmate, indigent, a woman, and her mental condition seriously had deteriorated. Had I been in Natasha's place, would the outcome have been the same?

OneFairfax recognizes that, five years after Natasha's death, we as a community no longer can afford to be unaware about how inequitable life is in Fairfax. Public policy in housing, zoning, transportation, hiring, and in public safety job opportunities has long been infested. Many in our ever-more-diverse community suffer from one or more disadvantages attributable to intersectionality.

There is much to work on:

- ❖ Our unsustainable school boundaries remain unchanged, heavily weighted in favor of under-capacity wealthier, whiter school districts, poorer districts strain at the seams.

- ❖ A person of color likely will not be hired as a school administrator here.

- ❖ Kids of color lag behind their white peers in academics, even as the schools become increasingly diverse.

- ❖ And, incredibly, in parts of our affluent community there is no reliable source of food.

- ❖ Five years after Natasha's death, and ten years after they started work, dedicated leaders, residents and businesses still seek an elu-

sive solution to the intractable shortage of affordable housing. Decades of discriminatory official government policy take time to reverse.

The research underlying OneFairfax reveals that when equity becomes part of the premise of public policymaking, positive results follow. This finding is all the more potent when we recognize that individuals who once were known collectively as "minorities" soon will be the majority in Fairfax: we need all hands on deck if we want to continue to thrive.

Fortunately, "equity" already is a routine component of county decisionmaking. The pursuit of equity does not require that people of color or underserved residents receive special treatment or quotas that reduce someone else's slice of the pie, only that they have an equal opportunity to pursue their own potential. Here in Fairfax we have lots of pies.

The question of how Natasha McKenna died will always be controversial. But we know why she died. Racial and social inequity, whether it is rooted in virulent racism or clueless white privilege, has long outlived its cruelty, or for that matter its usefulness, to Fairfax.

I will never be "woke," but at least I'm awake. Today I offer my volunteer time to citizens' groups including the OneFairfax Community Roundtable, the Human Services Council and the Council to End Domestic Violence. Many opportunities abound for residents – you, for example — to boost Fairfax County's future as a great place to live, work and play, by rallying around equity and fairness in public policy.

Natasha McKenna left behind a seven-year-old daughter. Let's do this for her.

The writer is a member of Human Services Council Fairfax County; Member, Steering Committee Council to End Domestic Violence; Chairman of the Board of Directors Shelter House, Inc. and Member OneFairfax Community Roundtable.

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News



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME

Adat Reyim, which means “community of friends,” is a congregation which celebrates the diversity of Jewish beliefs, located in Springfield.

Community Embraces Vindman

Vindman family’s small congregation, of about 250 members and families, overwhelmed by hundreds of letters in support of the Vindmans.

BY SUSAN LAUME

On Friday, Feb. 7, Lt Col Alexander Vindman was removed from his job on the National Security Council and escorted from the White House.

In a statement his counsel, Ambassador David Pressman said, “There is no question in the mind of any American why this man’s job is over, why this country now has one less soldier serving it at the White House. ... During his decades of service to this country, LTC Alexander Vindman has served quietly but dutifully, and he has served with honor. He came into the public eye only when subpoenaed to testify before Congress, and he did what the law demanded. ... The truth has cost ... his job, his career, and his privacy.”

Called a hero by many for his courage to testify, his faith community made a statement of support following his removal from the National Security Council position. “The Vindman Family is a valued member of Congregation Adat Reyim’s community of friends. We are proud to support Lt Colonel Alex Vindman during this challenging time.”

Vindman became a nationally known figure during his October 2019 testimony before the United States Congress. His testimony was part of the U.S. House of Representatives’ impeachment investigation of Trump. Vindman was the first White House official to testify who was actually on a July 25,

2019 telephone call between President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. His testimony corroborated previous testimony from foreign affairs official, Fiona Hill, and William B. Taylor Jr., Acting Ambassador to Ukraine. Though lauded for his professional testimony by many, he was also denounced by Trump and Republican lawmakers.

A career Army officer, Vindman will be reassigned within the Army. He is a Purple Heart recipient for injury sustained during the Iraq war in 2004.

Ambassador Pressman represented LTC Vindman during the Congressional impeachment trial. He served as ambassador to the United Nations for Special Political Affairs during the Obama administration. At the end of that appointment he entered a law practice.

Rebecca Geller, Synagogue Adat Reyim’s co-president, said, “If community members are seeking ways to show support, we are honored that the Vindman family has requested that donations be made to the synagogue via www.adatreyim.org in honor of LTC Vidman. We are accepting letters/postcards of support on his behalf...”

Though recently announced, the small congregation of about 250 members and families, has been overwhelmed by hundreds of letters in support of the Vindmans.

Adat Reyim, which means “community of friends” is a non-affiliated Jewish congregation which celebrates the diversity of Jewish beliefs, located in Springfield.

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HOME LIFE STYLE



PHOTO COURTESY OF PATINA POLISHED LIVING
Textiles in vibrant colors like these throw pillows, can brighten the day of your Valentine.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PICKET FENCE
A set of Swedish towels can be a game changer for those who are environmentally conscious.

Valentine's Day Gifts for the Home

There's still time to give the gift of style.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Boxes of chocolates and bouquets of flowers are ideas that might come to the minds of those who are still on the hunt for the perfect gift to give on Cupid's Day. Though we celebrate St. Valentine in just two days, home décor aficionados come to the rescue with a few chic gift ideas for the home design enthusiasts in your life.

"Whether you love to cook or you just love to eat take-out, a pop of color on the countertop will bring a smile to your face every time you walk into your kitchen," said Anne Walker of Anne Walker Design. "For a gift that will bring joy for years to come, surprise your significant other with a bright red Kitchen Aid Stand Mixer and a set of red silicone spatulas for Valentine's Day. Such a joy to use and a delight for the eye."

A set of Swedish towels can be a game changer for those who are environmentally conscious and obsessively clean, says Courtney Thomas of the Picket Fence a home décor and gift boutique in Burke, Virginia. "You can use Swedish towels to clean anything you'd clean with a paper towel," she said. "But they're reusable and you can throw them in the dishwasher when they get dirty."

Eco-friendly and made entirely of biodegradable cellulose or a combination of wood pulp and renewable cotton, Swedish towels can be used for household cleaning projects that range from spills on a counter tops to water spots on a mirror.

For a gift that does double design duty, a candle in

a reusable vessel is an option that Thomas suggests. "We have some candles that come in a pottery container and once the candle is gone, you can still use the pottery," she said. "It's like a two-for-one. Pottery is food safe and can go in the oven and dishwasher if you want to make a dip or something in them."

For those who decide to give flowers on Valentine's Day, add a vase for displaying those buds, suggests Walker. "Instead of spending more than \$100 on roses for your sweetheart, spend under \$100 on [an] unbelievably gorgeous cocoon Vase by Danish design house, Holmegaard," she said. "Fill it with a beautiful selection of fresh flowers [and] instead of having the roses for a few days, your beloved will have this gorgeous, stylish vase for a lifetime."

Those who want to give a gift that offers a luxurious night's sleep should consider a silk pillow case, says Amanda Mertins of Patina Polished in Alexandria.

"They're a wonderful gift because they're good for your hair," she said. "And silk stays cool which might be good for those who get hot at night."

There's nothing more classic than a silver picture frame adorning one's side table or book case, suggests Mertins. "When we are designing a living room, we often walk into someone's house and see photos of their loved ones displayed in a hodgepodge of frames like wooden frames and ceramic frames. Giving silver frames allows photos of your family or children to be displayed tastefully in classic silver frames"


Bursts of color in the form of textiles can brighten them home of one's valentine, advises Mertins. "Tablecloths, runners and napkins in silk, velvet and cotton by Ardmore Design make a beautiful table setting," she said. "There are some wonderful, washable throws in all different colors that make great gifts. People love because their pretty and washable."

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Karen Corbett Sanders,
Fairfax County School
Board Chair, Mount Vernon



Rachna Sizemore Heizer,
School Board Member,
Member-at-Large



Tamara Derenak Kaufax,
Fairfax County School Board
Vice Chair, Lee District.

SCREENSHOTS VIA FAIRFAX COUNTY VIDEO

School Board Adopts \$3.2 Billion Budget

FROM PAGE 3

any portion of the Advertised Budget before the final vote on May 21. “It is not restricted simply to the \$6 million line item for staffing initiatives. Instead, board members can continue to propose budget questions and additional amendments beyond those submitted tonight. Currently, we have 23 proposed amendments that have been posted to board docs... “I know you’ve spent countless hours looking through this incredibly complex budget to try and determine again how do we honor our students and employees in the best manner possible,” she said. McLaughlin added she looked forward to continued conversations on school nurses, middle school start times, class size relief, substitute pay, challenges in attracting substitutes and equitable pay raises for Fairfax County Public School employees that mirror county government employees. “We are one Fairfax family. I feel it’s going to be extremely important that whatever pay raises the county executive to determine through the revenue can be afforded to county employees. I hope they will recognize and honor that same amount of funding needs to be identified and provided to the school system so we can honor our same hard-working employees,” she said.

Anderson said that as they continued to look at the budget and talk about priorities, she would bring to this work, the lens she brought to her previous work. “How do we advance all of our groups; how do we balance finite resources again to advance every single stakeholder that we have, students, teachers and all of the other groups ... I’m also looking forward to having some conversations regarding equity. For me, that is the lens through which I take a look at this budget. How do we ensure that we are closing the gaps wherever they exist,” Anderson said referencing future discussions on the amendments.

Frisch asked for clarification if, during the future work sessions, they would be able to discuss program budgets as well the advertised budget. Sanders said that the Board would be having a retreat on March 9. “Strategic Plan and individual programs will be reviewed with the board so that we can take a deeper dive on how each of the individual programs contributes towards the strategic objectives and provide you with the opportunity to influence that going forward,” Sanders said.

AMONG ITS FINAL ACTIONS, the Board approved a motion in a vote of 9-2 related to the budget introduced by Meren. It directed the Superintendent

to update the security plan to include a plan for installing vestibules in schools providing secured visitor access space where none currently existed by April 30, 2020. During the discussion, Pekarsky said she would not be able to support this at this time unless she had an idea of the monetary. Keys-Gamarra said, “We had extensive conversation with our security review, and as I recall these vestibules were part of that, so I am not understanding why we need this, particularly, when it is not in this year’s budget, and we don’t even know how much money we are talking about.”

Vice-Chair Derenak Kaufax said she was “still very much struggling; that this was a capital improvement plan putting vestibules in a school for security,” and how did that equate putting in this budget. Marty Smith, Chief Operating Officer Fairfax County, said, “When we look to any changes to our buildings we think of those as renovations to our buildings. But the CIP is for overall building renovations, and the CIP is used for new construction. So, when we look at these types of renovations to buildings we have used operating funds in the past to support these types of renovations, while it has an impact on our facilities, it’s not necessarily coming from the same funding stream.”

“We are not committing funds, we are asking for a plan,” said Chair Sanders. According to boarddocs.com, the approved amended motion read, “...move approval of a follow-on motion to direct the Superintendent to bring an update of the security plan to include a plan for installing vestibules in schools to provide secured visitor access space where none currently exists by April 30, 2020. Specifically, compile data about the frequency of schools having entryway vestibules that serve as security checkpoints before visitors gain access to areas with students; compared with schools that, due to design features, allow visitors to cross open space or hallways before checking in to the main office. The plan will include the timeline and cost to outfit all schools with needed vestibules or improvements that will create visitor holding spaces before entering spaces where students are.” McLaughlin, Anderson, Meren, Sizemore Heizer, Tholen, Sanders, Keys-Gamarra and Omeish, Frisch voted yes. Derenak Kaufax and Pekarsky voted no.

“As a board, we have a lot that we want to accomplish. In the weeks ahead, we hope to gain a better understanding of what we can anticipate in state aid and what the transfer will be from Fairfax County,” said Tholen.

Community Events to Celebrate Black History Month

February is Black History Month (also called African American History Month), a national tribute recognizing the achievements of African Americans throughout history, and Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) is joining the celebration with special events at our Community Centers, Senior Centers and Teen Centers.

The events include:

❖ **Black History Celebration in Alexandria**

Held Saturday, Feb. 8, 2-6 p.m. at Gum Springs Community Center

Featuring entertainment plus an entrepreneurship-focused presentation on the principles of starting and maintaining a business.

❖ **Black History Panel Discussion in Lorton**

Thursday, Feb. 20, 11 a.m. at Lorton Senior Center

Featuring African American leaders from diverse industries.

❖ **2020 Black History Program at the Government Center**

Friday, Feb. 21, 6 p.m at the Fairfax County Government Center Forum

Featuring a keynote by County Executive Bryan Hill and a special performance by the South County Teen Center Step Team. Lincolnia Senior Center in Alexandria is providing transportation to this event for members.

❖ **Black History Program and History Gallery in Falls Church**

Saturday, Feb. 22, noon at Bailey’s Community Center
History Gallery opens at noon; program featuring music, dancing, poetry and guest speakers begins at 2 p.m.

❖ **Black History Dinner Program in Alexandria**

Thursday, Feb. 27, 6-8 p.,. at South County Teen Center

❖ **Black History Reception in Falls Church**

Date to be announced at James Lee Community Center

To view activity calendars and addresses for individual centers, visit the NCS website.

RSVP-Northern Virginia Hosting ‘Art of Volunteering in Retirement’

RSVP-Northern Virginia, the region’s largest volunteer network for those 55-years-old or better, is offering a free seminar titled “The Art of Volunteering in Retirement,” Thursday, March 12, 2020, at 10:30 a.m., at the offices of Northern Virginia Family Service in Oakton. The one-hour event is free and open to the public.

To sign up for the March 12 event, email RSVP Volunteer Specialist Shannon White swhite@volunteerfairfax.org, call RSVP at 703-403-5360 or sign up online at <http://bit.ly/RSVPoakton>. Northern Virginia Family Service is located at 10455 White Granite Drive, Suite 100, in Oakton.

Several of RSVP’s nonprofit partners offer opportunities in the Oakton Area including Oak Marr RECenter, JA Finance Park and the Shepherd’s Center of Oakton-Vienna.

RSVP provides free personalized support to seniors and retirees who are seeking convenient, social, fun and meaningful service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria.

RSVP offers more than 300 meaningful opportunities that include helping seniors age in place, assisting local food pantries, and teaching financial literacy.

RSVP members enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings.

To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org. RSVP-Northern Virginia is a program of Volunteer Fairfax, Volunteer Alexandria and Volunteer Arlington.

CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

The Beauty of Wood. Feb. 4 thru March 2. At Artists' Undertaking Gallery, 309 Mill Street, Occoquan. The Artists' Undertaking Gallery presents "The Beauty of Wood". This exhibit features photography and digital paintings by David and Jane Ernst of Springfield, and wooden boxes by Jon Kaufman of Fairfax Station. A Meet the Artists Reception will be held on Saturday, Feb. 8, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The exhibit runs Feb. 4 through March 2. Contact the gallery at 703-494-0584 or at info@artistsundertaking.com. Visit the website www.artistsundertaking.com

Funday Monday. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Mondays now thru March. At Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Play, paint, sing and dance at Funday Monday in the City of Fairfax. This season they are bringing back My Gym to help everyone move and play together, Oh Susannah! with her guitar to sing some old songs and have just as much fun with new ones, and Good Gollie it's Mollie will be coming 'round with more games and playtime fun. They would like to welcome some new friends as well like Drew Blue Shoes, a magician whose magic will leave you mystified and a kids' nature puppet show will come to teach us about the jungle in our backyard. This season they have the local animal shelter and local Spanish emersion group Mi Chu Chu Train coming with specially made programs. Visit the website: <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts>

All You Need is Love. Now thru Feb. 16. At Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic, 2905 District Ave., #105, Fairfax. In celebration of Valentine's Day, Torpedo Factory artists are tackling one of society's most complex human emotions — Love. In its newest exhibit titled All You Need is &e, the gallery is presenting a selection of original paintings, photographs, jewelry, scarves, ceramics and more, that reflect its artists' interpretations of love. Open Wednesday thru Sunday 11 a.m. – 7 p.m.

St. James Intramural High School Basketball League. Now thru March 10. At the St. James Sports, Wellness and Entertainment Complex, 6805 Industrial Road, Springfield. The St. James invites you to participate in its Middle School Basketball League for Boys & Girls (8th to 12th grade), Now thru March 10, in the new 33,000 square foot Basketball Courthouse on four high school regulation sized courts. The TSJ Intramural High School Basketball League registration fee is \$250 per player and \$600 per team. All games are officiated and statistics provided. The TSJ Intramural High School Basketball league also includes a Playoff round where top teams in the league will meet. Visit <https://www.thestjames.com/sports/basketball/sessions/8/courses/tsj-basketball-winter-team> or contact Alpha or Pele with any questions at 703-239-6841.

NOW THRU MARCH 30

Monday Exercise Classes. 9:30-10:30 a.m. At Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Road, Fairfax. Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke offers exercise classes for older adults designed to build strength and improve balance and flexibility. All levels of ability are welcome. Call the SCFB office, 703-426-2824, for class information.

NOW THRU MAY 27

Wednesday Exercise Classes. 9-10 a.m. At The Lutheran Church of the Abiding Presence, 6304 Lee Chapel Road, Burke. Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke offers exercise classes for older adults designed to build strength and improve balance and flexibility. All levels of ability are welcome. Call the SCFB office, 703-426-2824, for class information. (20 weeks @\$2.50/class = \$50)

NOW THRU FEB. 29

Fairfax City Golden Ticket. 12 p.m. Fairfax City's Economic Development Authority has partnered with the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce to host the 2nd Annual Fairfax City Golden Ticket contest in support of the 2020 Chocolate Lovers Festival. The Fairfax City



18th-Century Game Night at Gunston Hall

Gunston Hall will host 18th-Century Game Night on Friday, Feb. 21 in Lorton.

FRIDAY/FEB. 21

18th-Century Game Night. 6-9 p.m. At George Mason's Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. Guests are invited to delve into the past and discover the origin story of games like Life, Craps, and Poker. Finger foods and seasonal adult beverages are part of this 21+ evening event. Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased online at www.gunstonhall.org or at the door. Cost: \$35; \$25 for members. Visit the website www.gunstonhall.org.



Lesson Zero

Lesson Zero will perform at The Mixing Bowl on Feb. 15 in Springfield.

SATURDAY/FEB. 15

Lesson Zero. 8 p.m. At The Mixing Bowl (formerly J W and Friends), 6531 Backlick Road, Springfield. Music and dancing with Oasis recording artist Lesson Zero. Visit www.youtube.com/lessonzero or www.reverbnation.com/lessonzero for more information.

Golden Ticket Contest features three golden tickets hidden within 1,200 chocolate bars made by local chocolatier Cameron's Coffee & Chocolates. The chocolate bars are available for purchase at participating Fairfax City businesses beginning Jan. 31 for \$3 each while supplies last. The contest offers three lucky winners who find the golden tickets a Chocolate Lovers gift basket featuring chocolate and items from participating Fairfax City businesses valued at \$200. To purchase a Golden Ticket chocolate bar, visit any of the businesses listed at fairfaxcityconnected.com/goldenticket2020.

FEB. 13, 14, 15

"Hate Mail." 7-8:30 p.m. At The Auld Shebeen, 3971 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax. A fast-paced, quick-witted comedic play about outrage, scandals, and falling in and out of love. Tickets on Eventbrite. Cost is \$20. Visit the website <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/hate-mail-a-comedy-play-tickets-90457752573>

FRIDAY/FEB. 14

Winter Beauty in the Garden. 4-5 p.m. At Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. This program is for dazzling winter. Winter offers its own special charm. Let Master Gardeners show you how to create visual interest with berries, seed heads, colorful branches, garden accents - even flowers. Presented by Green Spring Master Gardeners. Free. Visit the website: <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/6344889>

FEB. 14-APRIL 3

Friday Exercise Classes. 9:30-10:30 a.m. At Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Road, Fairfax. Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke offers exercise classes for older adults designed to build strength and improve balance and flexibility. All levels of ability are welcome. Call the SCFB office, 703-426-2824, for class

information. (8 weeks, \$20).

SATURDAY/FEB. 15

Kids Consignment Sale. 9 a.m. to 12 noon. At Fairfax Presbyterian Church, 10723 Main Street, Fairfax. Kids/baby/maternity consignment sale. Seasonal clothes, toys/games, baby equipment and more! Sale hours are 9 to noon. Discount period is 1:30-3 p.m. Cash or credit (small fee).

Coffee & Conversations. 10:30 a.m. to noon. At 3951 Pender Drive, Suite 130, Fairfax. Bob Silber will be presenting "Coffee & Conversations" at the Northern Virginia Resource Center (NVRCC) Meeting Room. Please bring a sweet treat for six people and enjoy the coffee, treats, and conversations. Everyone is welcome. Courtesy of NVRCC, the meeting room has CART and is looped. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to sign in at the door and update your email address or request to be included in the list to receive newsletters and notices. RSVP to info@hlcnova.org

Country-Western Dance. At Accotink Universalist Unitarian Church, 10125 Lakehaven Ct, Burke. 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. Trial memberships available at door for member level entry fee. Smoke-free, alcohol-free. BYO refreshments. Visit www.nvcwda.org

Valentine's Day Banquet. 6:30-11 p.m. At Waterford Receptions at Springfield, 6715 Commerce Street, 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 join with us and enjoy an evening of fine dining, music, dancing and featured entertainment. This is a great opportunity to treat someone special to a wonderful night of Christian fun and fellowship. Cost is \$60 per person (Payment deadline is Feb. 9, 2020). Tickets can be purchased on the church's website at www.glzbc.org.

Country-Western Dance. 7-9:30 p.m. at AUUC, Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church, 10125 Lakehaven Court, Burke. The Northern Virginia Country-Western Dance Association will hold a dance with lessons, 6-7 p.m. and open dancing, 7-9:30 p.m. A DJ provides music. Couples and singles of all ages welcome. Admission for members \$10; non-members \$12; children under 18 accompanied by a paying adult \$5. Smoke-free, alcohol-free. BYO refreshments. Visit www.nvcwda.org for more.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/FEB. 15-16

Virginia Opera's "Cinderella." 8 p.m. Saturday; 2 p.m. Sunday. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Gioachino Rossini's Cinderella (La Cenerentola) is one of his funniest and best-known comic operas. Following on his success of The Barber of Seville, Rossini and librettist Jacopo Ferretti worked day and night to create this opera in just three weeks. The story differs somewhat from the classic fairytale: there is no fairy godmother, magic pumpkin, or even a glass slipper! Even so, this enchanting tale delivers with all of the glimmering splendor, the comic characters, and the happy ending, of course. Best of all, it includes Rossini's effervescent score with the epic orchestral storm before the Prince finally finds Cenerentola, and the arias "Miei rampolli femminini," and "Nacqui all' affanno...Non piu mesta." Directed by Kyle Lang. Sung in Italian with English supertitles. Tickets are \$45-\$115. Visit the website: www.cfa.gmu.edu.

SUNDAY/FEB. 16

NTrak Model Train Show. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Northern Virginia NTRAK members will hold a N gauge Model Train Display. Admission: museum members, free; adults 13 and over, \$5; children 5-12, \$3; under 4, free. Seniors (65+ and military (active & retired), \$4. Call 703-425-9225. Visit the website www.fairfax-station.org.

MONDAY/FEB. 17

George Washington Birthday Service and Breakfast. 8:30 a.m. At Historic Pohick

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 9

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 8

Church, 9301 Richmond Hwy., Lorton. The Brotherhood of Saint Andrew, Pohick Chapter, will sponsor a breakfast following a commemorative service celebrating the birthday of George Washington. The Service will follow the Order for Morning Prayer taken from the 1662 English Book of Common Prayer, which is the service Washington followed in his usual Sunday worship at Pohick Church. Following the service there will be a breakfast hosted by the Brotherhood of St. Andrew with a guest speaker. The Docent Guild will be conducting tours of Historic Pohick Church following the breakfast. Ticket are \$10 per person, \$25 per family group. Call the church office at 703-339-6572. Visit the website www.pohick.org

FEB. 19 TO MARCH 29

The Color Green. At Torpedo Factory Artists at Mosaic, 105 District Ave., Fairfax. In celebration of an early spring and St. Patrick's Day, Torpedo Factory artists are tackling one of nature's most ubiquitous colors, green. In its newest exhibit simply titled, Green, the gallery is presenting a selection of original paintings, photographs, jewelry, scarves, ceramics and more, that reflect its various artists' interpretations of the color. Torpedo Factory artists are chosen through a rigorous jurying process and enjoy a high degree of acclaim, both locally and nationally. Savvy shoppers know Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic as a place not only to enjoy fine art but also as a great place to purchase art at affordable prices.

THURSDAY/FEB. 20

Henna Workshop. 6-7 p.m. At Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Learn the history and art of henna design with local henna artist Anita Kundal. Attendees will learn how to use Henna tubes and create their own design. Materials provided by Pohick Regional Library. Free. Visit the website: <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/6225706>



LEGO Model Train Show

Monty's Trains Special LEGO Model Train Show will take place Feb. 29 and March 1 at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum.

FEB. 29 AND MARCH 1

Monty's Trains Special LEGO Model Train Show. 12-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Local modeling enthusiast, Monty Smith, will share his LEGO (R) model train layouts in a special two day event. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$3; ages 13 and older, \$5; seniors 65 and older and military, both retired and active, \$4. Visit the website www.fairfax-station.org, or call 703-425-9225.

SATURDAY/FEB. 22

Off the Wall. 2-5 p.m. At the Art and Design Building, GMU Fairfax Campus, Fairfax. Every year GMU opens its Art and Design Building to alumni, parents, prospective students, and the public for a showcase of the visual arts at Mason. Tour 15 open studios and hands-on exhibits with student and faculty artists, enjoy the music, plus create your own works of art -

it's a great party. Cost is \$30/regular; \$20/Mason alumni, faculty and staff; \$10/ages 14-18. Ticket and sponsorship proceeds support arts scholarships and guest artist residencies. Sponsorship opportunities begin at \$500. Contact Emily Rusch at 703-993-3872 or erusch2@gmu.edu. Visit the website: offthewall.gmu.edu.

Peace, Love & Art. 6:30-10:30 p.m. At

Workhouse Art Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Fundraiser for Workhouse; tickets are \$90/door. Psychedelic cocktails and delicious nibbles; dancing Woodstock-style and casino games; hippie and groovy outfits encouraged. Artwork for raffle.

National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Celebrating their Jubilee 100th concert season, the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine (NSOU) presents a concert of Eastern European delights, including a showpiece for cello by Tchaikovsky, Sibelius' first symphony which displays his unique Nordic style as well as his admiration for Tchaikovsky, and Ukrainian composer Borys Lyatoshynsky's symphonic ballade composed as a tribute to the Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz on the centenary of his death. Considered one of the finest symphony orchestras in Eastern Europe, NSOU has achieved international recognition with its extensive touring schedule and more than 100 acclaimed recordings, including Lyatoshynsky's Symphonies No. 2 and No. 3 named The Best Recording of the Year by the Australian Broadcasting Company. Under the direction of Volodymyr Sirenko, the orchestra is joined by world-renowned cellist Natalia Khoma as the featured soloist. Tickets are \$60, \$51, \$36. Visit the website: <https://cfa.gmu.edu/>

SUNDAY/FEB. 23

Hands On Day Activities. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Hands On Days, suitable for both adults and children, feature a variety of educational activities involving history and train modeling. Mini-workshops or activities focusing on artifact restoration and preservation might also be featured. Cost of crafts or materials for Hands On Day activities are included in the price of admission. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$3; ages 13 and older, \$5; seniors 65 and older and military both active and retired, \$4. Visit the website www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

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Employment

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-Werner Heisenberg

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Announcements

Announcements



**Brown v. Board of Education
SCHOLARSHIP
COMMITTEE**

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS
THROUGH MARCH 20, 2020

The Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Program was established by the Virginia General Assembly in 2004 to provide educational opportunities for persons who were denied an education in Virginia due to the closing of the public schools during Massive Resistance between 1954 and 1964. The program is open to new eligible applicants for the 2020-2021 school year. For applications and information on eligibility, visit:

BROWNSCHOLARSHIP.VIRGINIA.GOV

or contact Lily Jones, Division of Legislative Services, at (804) 698-1888.

Announcements

Announcements

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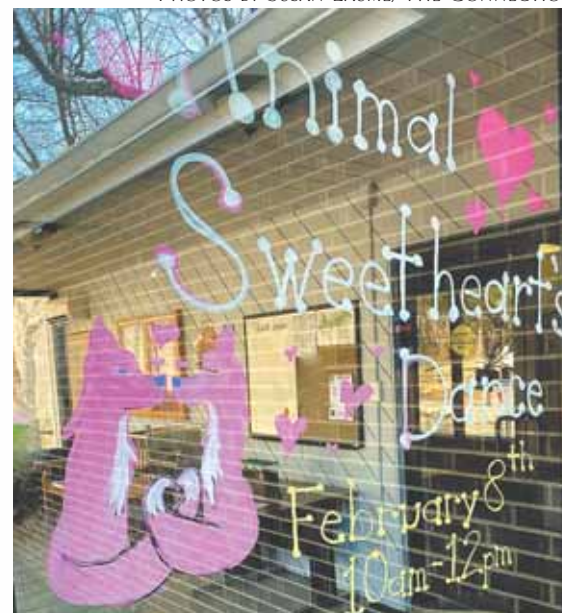
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News



Head cat Sophia O'Connor leads dancers in the macarena at the Animal Sweethearts Dance.



Hidden Pond Nature Center holds children's dance.

Animal Sweethearts Dance at Hidden Pond Nature Center

The Hidden Pond Nature Center held its Annual Animal Sweethearts Dance on Saturday morning, Feb. 8. Young would-be dancers and animal lovers, between the ages of three and five, were invited to participate in dancing, refreshments, crafts and seeing live animals.

The Center, tucked into the woods at the end of Greenley Boulevard in Springfield, offers a regular calendar of indoor and outdoor events to educate all ages on area wildlife, streams, and woodland ecology through the seasons. Registration fees support the Park Authority.

Upcoming events include animal feeding with worms on the menu, and campfire talks on tracking, pelts, and skulls.

Information on upcoming events and pre-registration is at <https://fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/hidden-pond>, or at 703 451-9588.

—SUSAN LAUME

Announcements

Announcements

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Be a part of our **Wellbeing** pages, the first week of every month.

Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

Questions? E-mail sales@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9431

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Announcements

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BULLETIN

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

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 12

TBI Recovery Group. 10:30-12 p.m. At Brain Injury Services, 8136 Old Keene Mill Road, Suite B-102, Springfield. Educational group for survivors, families, and caregivers, to answer questions about mild TBI or concussion. February Speaker: Dr. Alec Lebedun Topic: What happened to my brain? How does brain biology affect me? Free. Visit the website: www.braininjurysvcs.org

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 19

Fairfax County Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary Meets. 10:30 a.m. at The Fairfax Salvation Army Corps Office, 4915 Ox Road, Fairfax. Ladies interested in attending this meeting are welcome. Call Lori Smith, 301-717-3029 or Meg McLane 703-750-3568.

SUNDAY/FEB. 23

Town Hall Meeting. 1 p.m. At 8390 Laurel Crest Drive, Lorton. Sen. Scott Surovell and fellow legislators will host town halls throughout the 36th District in February. The legislators will discuss their legislative agendas and take questions from the audience. Some topics will include: Transportation, Education Funding and Reform, The State Budget and Tax Reform, Redistricting, Medicaid Expansion, Marriage Equality and LGBTQ Rights, Firearm Violence Prevention, Civil/Criminal Justice Reforms, Consumer Protection/Predatory Lending, Investing in Green Energy, Reproductive Choice Issues, Protecting Environmental Interests.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthyminds/fairfax or www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html. **Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke** sponsors a monthly meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, noon-1:30 p.m., for caregivers to learn and to share with others experiencing similar challenges. Before attending, contact the facilitator, Eileen Thompson at 703-451-8626 or eileen.thompson1@gmail.com. **Haven of Northern Virginia** provides support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. To become a Haven volunteer, please call 703-941-7000 to request an orientation. Volunteers must complete a 30-hour training and commit to one year of service answering Haven phones (2.5 hours weekly). Next training is scheduled for fall 2017.

ONGOING

STEM Professionals Needed. Volunteers are needed to assist K-12 STEM teachers in northern Virginia as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, stemvolunteers.org, during the 2019-20 school year, beginning in September. Please contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488 or donaledge@aol.com. **Docents Needed.** Sundays 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Greet museum visitors and tell them about the exhibits, the museum and the its railroad and Civil War history. Ideal for those interested in railroads, the Civil War and Northern Virginia history. Training and orientation provided. Other volunteer opportunities are gardening, publicity and exhibit planning. Call 703-945-7483. **Haven of Northern Virginia** is committed to offering, support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. Volunteers provide individual and group support to those suffering from a loss. Volunteers must participate in a 30 hour training. Training will be offered in October 2018. To volunteer, call Haven at 703-941-7000.

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All Gowned Up



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

All Gowned UpAnd somewhere to go, or so I thought. I had checked in at the front desk. I was given a number, and almost immediately, it was called. I said good-bye to Team Lourie and was led back to a staging area (beds, curtains, doctors, nurses) where I was told I would see them both before surgery. There I was given a gown, no-slip socks and a hair net to change into, and instructed to place all my clothes (underwear, too) into two plastic bags and then told to pull back the privacy curtain and lie back on the bed.

Within a few minutes a female nurse, part of a very attentive and conscientious staff, began to attend me. She started an I.V. in my left forearm, wrapped a blood pressure cuff around my right bicep and then stuck half-a-dozen or so EKG contacts over the front me and down my legs to monitor my heart. In addition, the typical other vitals: oxygen, pulse and temperature were taken. At that point, it appeared that I had passed muster. My surgeon stopped by for a brief visit and all was progressing normally. Until that is when the anesthesiologist came by for what I thought was the final step. It was the final step alright. She said that "due to an abundance of caution," she was uncomfortable proceeding with the surgery. She explained that the facility (not a hospital) where I was to undergo the surgery, was not fully equipped to respond to certain potential complications which might occur which involved a breathing tube, a ventilator and the weakness of my lungs, so she sent me packing (unpacking actually). Disappointed, as you might imagine, we all left the facility and waited for further instructions.

By the end of the day, arrangements had been made to reschedule my surgery at a local hospital on Wednesday, a mere two day delay. I could live with that. At home, I resumed my post-shower, pre-surgery, infection-preventing scrub as I had for the previously scheduled surgery. This time surgery was scheduled for 1:30 pm instead of the 10:50 am it had been on Monday. Still, if all went well, I could be released that same day, under someone else's recognition of course, given the late hour, but likely recuperating at home in my own bed. On Wednesday, I arrived at the hospital two hours before surgery as directed and began the now familiar process. Once again I was prepped and ready. This time there were no slip-ups. Around 2:15 I was wheeled into the operating room and introduced to the staff on hand. I was asked my name, date of birth and the reason for surgery that day. Answering correctly, the next step involved an oxygen mask coming down over my nose and mouth and being asked to breathe normally, which I did, and the rest, as they say, is history.

It turned out that the anesthesiologist was right to be cautious. My four-hour outpatient surgery turned into a seven-hour admission-to-the-hospital major surgery with complications. Due to my "Adam's Apple" tumor being embedded into/under my collarbone, a thoracic surgeon was brought into consult about possibly cracking open my chest to get at the remaining cancer. Fortunately, a decision was made not to do so and I was wheeled back to recovery and eventually to my room for the night where at 12:35 am, while lying in my bed, my eyes opened and I saw my wife, Dina and close friend, Rita, who had stayed into the wee hours in an amazing show of support.

The next day, after an uncomfortable night in my hospital bed, I was discharged, four hours after the process began. (As you may or may not know, getting discharged from the hospital is hardly a straight line from your hospital room to your curbside pick up.) I was given instructions, prescriptions and follow-up appointments. My thyroid gland, parathyroid, "Adam's Apple" tumor and a few lymph nodes stayed behind. Can't say that I miss any of them. Still, my body may miss them so I'll likely have some post-op work to do at home. Nevertheless, progress has been made for which I'm grateful.

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

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