

Great Falls CONNECTION

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Great Falls Author to Discuss His New Book

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“Everybody knows about southwest Virginia; it’s their problem. But look right here. This is where we are,” said Keynote Speaker, William Hazel, Jr. M.D., at the Operation Drug Prevention forum, Feb. 29, in Great Falls.

Opioids and Drug Abuse Escalate Locally

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William Hazel, M.D.

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Family, friends and loved ones pack the community center at the 2020 Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County.



Student Peace Awards Presented

Senior and junior high school students honored.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The 2020 Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County, held Sunday, March 1, recognized high school junior and senior students at 24 public and two private high schools in the county who made a positive contribution to their school or wider community by promoting mutual understanding and respect for all people. Held at the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center in Fairfax, sponsors, family and friends celebrated the accomplishments of the recipients at a public reception.

Last fall, organizers asked the schools' principals to nominate one outstanding student or student group for the award, proactively seeking a likely nominee. This year's recipients worked as peacemakers in a variety of settings according to emcee, Margaret Fisher, who during her remarks at Sunday's reception gave a brief overview of each student's accomplishment.

According to Fisher, in **Vienna at Cedar Lane High School**, Senior Sage Quick and Junior Will LaWalt volunteered to serve as peers in a Personal

Development class that taught social skills, decision-making, and coping strategies for difficult or confusing situations. "Peers model communication skills as they listen to students talk about their interests and concerns. They then help the students in the class remain calm and focused," Fisher said.

Sarah Gu is a Senior at McLean High School. When she visited her family in China there the last five summers, she offered the children free lessons in English and current affairs. According to Fisher, Gu eventually grew her program into an organization called "The Windows," which served over 600 children.

At Oakton High School, Fisher said that **Roudah Chaker** put in hundreds of volunteer hours packing meals, participating in back-to-school drives for orphanages, distributing needed items to the homeless, and raising \$3000 for Syrian refugees. "She is also active politically, working to correct policies that directly harm those who want to come to the U.S. for its promise of peace," said Fisher.

SEE PEACE AWARDS, PAGE 13

From left: Vice-Chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Penny Gross (D-Mason District), Chair of the Fairfax County School Board Karen Corbett Sanders (Mount Vernon), U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11), Fairfax County School Board Members Karen Keys-Gamarra (At-Large) and Melanie Meren (Hunter Mill District).



VIEWPOINTS

What Do Award Recipients Say?

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Daniel Mousavi, Senior, Langley High School is joined by his brother Aiden, Cooper Middle School:

Together (we) created a board game, Immigrant's Nightmare, to focus on the challenges faced by people seeking immigration in the United States. We live in a nation of immigrants. In a world torn by an increasing number of global migrants and not enough places willing to accept them. Our game helps teach the next generation of lawmakers our country's traditions of accepting others and not further dividing us. Ignorance of the root cause of the immigrant's crisis doesn't make it disappear!



Zamir Ticknor, Junior, George C. Marshall High School:

When I was nominated, the word "peace" really stuck with me, because it emphasizes the values I hold: encompassing inclusion, environmental protection, human rights, tolerance, and intercultural understanding. All of these concepts are what I value in this peace award...I sincerely believe that by helping others, encouraging tolerance, and mutual understanding shape society into a more welcoming environment that accepts everyone of all backgrounds. These are some of the elements that encourage peace.



Sarah Gu, Senior, McLean High School



Roudah Chaka, Senior, Oakton High School

OPINION

Work Is Not Yet Done

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



The General Assembly is in the final week of its scheduled 60-day annual session—scheduled to adjourn *sine die* on March 7. The session has already made history with the actions that have been taken, and that history will be added to in its last week. Resolution of remaining issues will determine just how historic the session will be and how strong the forces of “we have always done it this way” are.

A majority of both the House and the Senate members agree that the minimum wage should be increased—actually should have been increased years ago. The current minimum of \$7.25 is an embarrassment. But discussions continue to be held on how much the increase should be. Should there be incremental increases over time? Should increases be statewide or regional? What jobs should the increase cover?

Almost every member ran for office with a

promise to clean up the environment. How should we get to a cleaner economy in the state? What should be the timeline on environmental legislation as experts advise us on the impending climate change crisis? Are consumers willing to pay more to get cleaner electricity?

How strict should background checks be for firearm transfers? A slim majority support my bill to require a background check on all firearm transfers. Others are vehement about having background checks for only firearm purchases. Should compromises be made on gun safety measures designed to reduce gun-related violence?

Should public employees be allowed to bargain with local governments on the conditions and compensation for employment? Or should they only be able to meet and discuss their wages and conditions with local governments with no power to bargain? Should all employees be required to pay dues to unions that are representing their interests?

How often should vehicles have a safety inspection? For many years the requirement was twice annually. Most recently it has been once

annually. Most states have dropped the requirement. Would every other year be adequate?

With gasoline tax revenues declining as automobiles get more mileage per gallon, should the gas tax be increased to make up for the loss? Or should cars be taxed on the distance they travel in a year? And what about electric vehicles that do not burn any gas? Should we be making a greater investment in our transportation infrastructure?

Should a constitutional amendment be approved setting up an independent redistricting commission or is there another way to try make sure districts can be drawn fairly without incumbents alone picking their voters?

I have made my views public on these and other issues over the years. In a legislative session all views must be considered: urban, suburban, rural; Democratic, Republican, Socialist (there is one); conservative, moderate, liberal; etc. In most instances a compromise can be reached in conference committees such as those that are now meeting. Other issues will be put off for another year. Regardless of what happens with remaining issues, the 2020 session will go down in history as truly a remarkable one with the many tough issues that have already been resolved.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Coronavirus Update - Message from the Superintendent - March 2

Dear Parents and Staff,

FCPS is working closely with the Fairfax County Health Department to monitor the latest updates about the coronavirus (COVID-19). We are reinforcing the importance of ensuring students are following proper handwashing procedures before eating and after sneezing, coughing, or using the bathroom. We realize that time is a valuable commodity during the school day, and in today's environment, hand washing should be a priority, so we are encouraging staff to provide ample time for

students to wash their hands. We are reinforcing with our custodial teams the importance of following our standard cleaning protocols by using hospital-grade disinfectants on frequently-touched surfaces such as doorknobs, faucet handles, and handrails. Hand sanitizer is available in all schools and if a student is showing signs of a cold or the flu, they should stay home.

As indicated in my message to you last week, FCPS is in the process of reviewing and updating its existing pandemic influenza response plan. The plan addresses the specific activities necessary to

keep schools open and operating while providing a clean and safe environment during an outbreak and the essential functions that must be performed by FCPS if schools are closed. FCPS will continue to work closely with health officials to prepare for various scenarios that could develop.

Our overall goal would be to do all we can to maintain continuity of operations while minimizing student and staff exposure.

As of today, there are no confirmed COVID-19 cases in Fairfax County or the D.C. region. Updated information is being posted

to this webpage: FCPS coronavirus-update and additional information is available from the Fairfax County Health Department.

To date, FCPS has cancelled international field trips and short-term visitations to and from some countries, based on CDC guidelines.

We will continue to provide you regular updates as this situation continues to rapidly evolve.

Sincerely,

Scott Brabrand
Superintendent, Fairfax
County Public Schools

Making Virginia a Climate Leader

To the Editor:

We don't have time to waste in the face of the climate crisis. A recent climate report from the National Audubon Society revealed that two-thirds of North American bird species are vulnerable to extinction from climate change, including nearly 70 species found in Virginia.

From the coasts of the Chesapeake Bay to the forests of the Blue Ridge Mountains, birds like the Field Sparrow and Cerulean Warbler may lose nearly all of their seasonal habitat range. We need practical, ambitious climate solutions to protect our state's birds.

The Virginia Clean Economy Act

(HB 1526 / SB 851) can help by leading our state on a path to achieve a 100 percent carbon-free economy that will help our birds, our environment, and our communities thrive.

This bill is not the only step Virginia should take to address climate change—but it's a great first step. I urge Senator Barker and the

General Assembly to make cutting carbon emissions a top priority. We must act now to make Virginia a climate leader and prevent another year of inaction.

Nikka De Mesa
National Audubon Society
Springfield

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 length, libel, grammar, civility, good taste and factual errors. Send to:

Letters to the Editor
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By email: editors@connectionnewspapers.com

Great Falls
CONNECTION

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NEWS

Stuff the Truck for Share

New Dominion Women's Club is sponsoring a food drive for Share, Stuff the truck, with donations to fill the Share food pantry. The drive is scheduled for Saturday, March 14, at Giant (1454 Chain Bridge Road), 9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Share serves more than 200 families in the 22101 and 22102 zip codes who need food, clothing, or housing assistance. Middle school and high school students are welcome to volunteer and will receive service hours. A maximum of three students may volunteer for each shift. For more information/sign-up, go to NDWC.org



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

SATURDAY/MARCH 7

Recycling Day. 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Town of Vienna's first 2020 Quarterly Recycling Day takes place at the Northside Property Yard, 600 Mill Street NE, Vienna. Load up electronics, used motor oil, antifreeze, and discarded car batteries. Televisions and hazardous waste products, such as insecticides, paint, and other chemicals, are not accepted. As a reminder, to ensure that glass products get recycled, the best option is to dispose of clean jars and bottles in one of Fairfax County's new, large, purple glass recycling dumpsters; one is located in the Town of Vienna on Mill Street NE next to Capitol Building Supply. Fairfax County picks up the glass weekly and recycles it for use as a substitute for stone in county projects.

TRAFFIC SIGNAL COMPLETE

A new traffic signal aimed at improving safety for drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians is complete at Westpark Drive and Westbranch Drive in Tysons, according to the Virginia Department of Transportation. The project's other safety improvements include:

- ❖ Four Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS) crossings (expected to be active in the coming weeks);
- ❖ Bicycle detection;
- ❖ Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant curb ramp upgrades;
- ❖ Pavement markings;
- ❖ Signage.

DEMENTIA CONSULTATIONS

Caring for a person with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia is a life-encompassing experience that spans generations. Everyone has a role: spouses, siblings, children of all ages, and friends each play a part on the care team. It requires thought, strategy and, most importantly, a plan. Care consultations with the Alzheimer's Association are a free Chapter service that offers SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15

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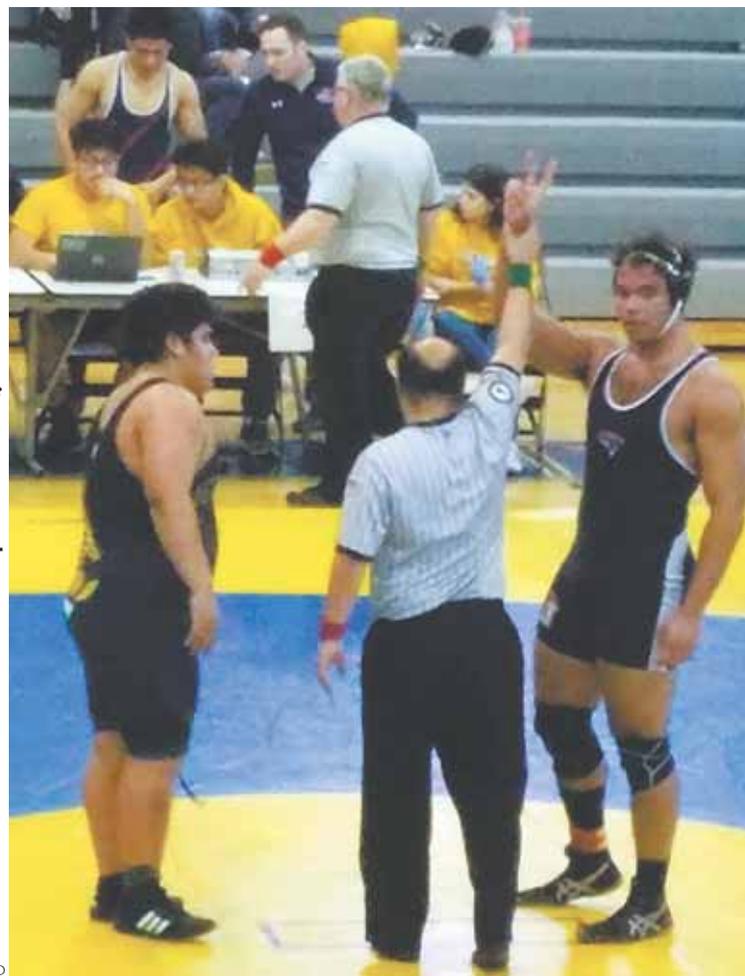
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PEOPLE



Caleb O'Cain of Great Falls, right, won first place in both District and Regional Championship 2020.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

District and Regional Champion, Third in State

Caleb O'Cain, Great Falls resident who attends TJHSST has won first place in both the 2020 District and Regional Championships and third in the State. He walked away from basketball in his sophomore year only to join wrestling the same afternoon. Then got a fractured hip after his first tournament in his first season ever of wrestling. He came

back the next season in 2019 to overcome adversity and place sixth at States only after several ER visits after the District and Regional Championship tournaments and a hospital visit days before the State Championships. And, this year 2020 he had a career record of 70-11 and captured third in his senior year at the State Championship.

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Caleb O'Cain of Great Falls, right, won third place at the State Championship held at Rock Ridge High School in Ashburn.

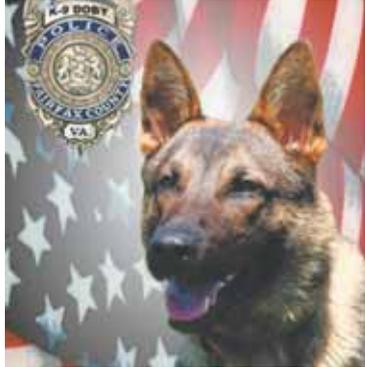
NEWS

K9 Doby-End of Watch: Feb. 22 Police canine served alongside law enforcement officers.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

K9 Doby, Fairfax County Police Department, Virginia, died after suffering a medical emergency while on an active track of two robbery suspects in the 2000 block of Arlington Drive in the Mount Vernon area of the county. K9 Doby, a Belgian Malinois-German Shepherd mix, was two years old and served a tour of 11 months.

According to Officer Down Memorial Page, Remembering All of Law Enforcement Heroes, fallen officers and K9s, "(K9 Doby) and his handler had tracked the suspects several buildings away and were attempting to reacquire their scent when K9 Doby suddenly collapsed. His handler immediately initiated CPR before transporting him to an emergency veterinary clinic. K9 Doby was not able to be revived." K9 Doby served with the Fairfax County Police Department for 11 months and was certified in patrol and narcotics detection.



FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

K9 Doby is remembered by Fairfax County Police after he died unexpectedly due to an undiagnosed medical condition while responding to an armed robbery.

Like other fallen K9s, K9 Doby gave his life to ensure his handler, fellow officers and citizens stay safe. "Today, we remember K9 Doby, our four-legged brother who died unexpectedly while responding to an armed robbery due to an undiagnosed medical condition. We honor K9 Doby today and every day. Rest in peace, Doby," tweeted @FairfaxCountyPD.

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Opioids and Drug Abuse Escalate Locally

Three NOVA communities, six organizations host Public Forum-Operation Drug Prevention in Great Falls.

By MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

PART ONE OF THE TWO-PART SERIES

The opioid and drug abuse epidemic is not “there;” it’s here in Northern Virginia. The abuse knows no demographic or socioeconomic boundaries. Six organizations, all stakeholders in three Fairfax County communities, Great Falls, McLean and Herndon, took on opioids and drug abuse at the primary level, education. They co-sponsored a 90-minute, four person-panel featuring state, regional, and local experts. The goal was to educate the public about the epidemic plaguing Northern Virginia, share novel ways to control it, and ultimately eradicate the problem.

“This isn’t about crime-fighting; it isn’t about prescribing; it isn’t simply about medicine. It’s about how we work together to solve problems in ways that we don’t normally do,” said Keynote Speaker, William Hazel, M.D. at the Public Forum-Operation Drug Prevention held Feb. 29, in Great Falls, organized by Rotary Club of Great Falls and Great Falls Citizens Association.

Hazel, an orthopedic surgeon, served two terms as the Commonwealth’s Secretary of Health and Human Resources, first appointed in 2010 by Gov. Robert McDonnell (R) and then reappointed in 2014 by Gov. Terry McAuliffe (D). Currently, Hazel is the Senior Advisor for Innovation and Community Engagement at George Mason University, where his initial focus was to spearhead a multidisciplinary initiative to fight the opioid epidemic in Northern Virginia. “We need to understand; this is not simply a moral failure; it’s a disease. It’s not simply about opioids; it’s a number of substances amongst them...We need to think a little bit about how people with substances can come back into their community and have hope and have a life. We need to think about those types of things if we’re going to solve this. And we need to make new relationships,” he said.

HAZEL did not mince words describing opioids and drug abuse that is running rampant in Northern Virginia. “People talk about substance use addiction as a disease of despair,” said Hazel. He referenced statistics dating back to 2013 and southwestern Virginia. “We were losing more people to opioid overdoses than car accidents and gun violence...That has continued into 2019...And Fairfax County has a similar path with the emergence of fatal opioid overdoses as the leading cause

of unnatural death in Fairfax County,” he said, citing data from the Chief Medical Examiner, 2007-17.

According to Hazel, one of the things people in Northern Virginia have to change in their thinking is “that this happens to them, but it is actually us.” Hazel said while some may consider current drug abuse a heroin problem, it’s not. “They’re dying from prescription drugs; WE are dying from prescription drugs,” said Hazel Trends in opioid deaths since 1999 show three waves. Wave 1-1999: Rise in prescription opioid overdose deaths; Wave 2-2010: Rise in heroin overdose deaths; and Wave 3- 2013: Rise in synthetic opioid deaths.

According to Hazel, opioids are not a single drug but a class of drugs. The class includes natural and semi-synthetic opioids, like oxycodone and hydrocodone, and synthetic opioids like fentanyl, 80-100 times stronger than morphine, according to a DEA.gov fact sheet, and fentanyl analogs like carfentanil used to sedate elephants. It is estimated to have 10,000 times the potency of morphine, according to Suzuki J, El-Haddad S. in a review: Fentanyl and non-pharmaceutical fentanyls (2016). “Very, very potent stuff, even to come in physical contact with,” Hazel said, referencing first responder exposure to the powder form. Then there were other substances like Pentazocine and Valium, as well as Cocaine, a drug of the affluent.

Using data science, Hazel displayed maps of Virginia, color-coded to indicate numbers and types of drug-related deaths. One slide showed the rate of methamphetamine overdoses, 2016-18 by locality, with high markers clustered up and down the western state line of the Commonwealth. “Anyone know what this is,” Hazel asked—(the I-81 corridor.) Hazel said following a leveling off of opioid deaths in Frederick County and Winchester, they then saw increased methamphetamine and cocaine deaths as the drug(s) traveled eastward. Drug distribution networks, patterns of traffic mattered.

While certain age groups such as 18-25-year-olds were more likely to experiment with and abuse prescription and illegal opioids, no age group in Fairfax County was immune. “We all think about perhaps younger folks, but it does happen in older folks,” Hazel said, calling attention to the health crisis of rising older adult drug overdoses. A lot of prescription medications out there, and that matters,” Hazel said.

“We have data from surveys, which show that kids are using opioids more or misusing prescription medications, at a very high rate and young age... It’s that

available out there,” Hazel said. He described pill parties (pharming parties) with their peer pressure. “You bring a handful of pills; you put them in the bowl. You take some, and that’s your admission to the party on Friday night,” he said. “Where are the pills coming from,” asked Hazel. Over 50 percent of opioid-misuse, in the U.S. in 2016, got them from someplace else, not through a prescription, stolen or bought according to Hazel. “You know, we prescribe it, and it sits in the medicine cabinet, and someone else takes it,” he said.

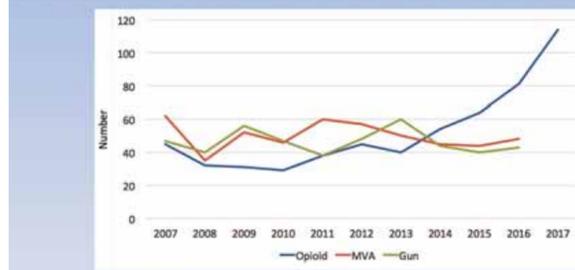
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ACCORDING TO HAZEL, when he was Secretary, they had to put in rules about people coming in to refill prescriptions for deceased relatives; they had to have the drug. The drive to get narcotics once addicted was significant; however, addiction is a disease, like other diseases such as breast and lung cancer. Physicians know the cells are different in individual responses to treatment. “There will be some people that will respond to absence treatment and 12-step programs that work (for addiction), but others won’t.” Hazel showed slides of decreased metabolic activity in a healthy brain vs. a diseased brain of cocaine abuser and said, “Your brain changes... We know that when you come in and have surgery, and I give you narcotics, within 48 hours, your body begins to adapt to those, and you begin to develop tolerance...We know that somewhere along the line, some people become habituated, even addicted, even that early. And we know that when you withdraw it, it creates symptoms... “dopesickness...At some point, the craving for the substance is no longer to get high; it’s to avoid feeling awful - the most miserable feeling of the world...when you talk to people who have had it, they’ll do anything to avoid it.” Hazel said how people committed the crime of breaking and entering to get pharmacological treatments like Suboxone to prevent that feeling. He added that as Secretary, regulations were put in place to prescribe such medications to treat people in jail, “to meet them halfway... so they would feel more comfortable with the treatment.”

As for who gets addicted and why Hazel said it might be genetic, environmental, a host of other factors. “We don’t know, and we also don’t know today who needs how much medication and for how long. We do know whether it’s in the criminal justice population, or the non-criminal justice-involved population that medically-assisted treatment gets a much, much higher rate of stay in recovery for longer periods.”

In addressing Virginia’s Response to

Emergence of Opioids as the Leading Cause of Unnatural Death, Fairfax County, 2007-17

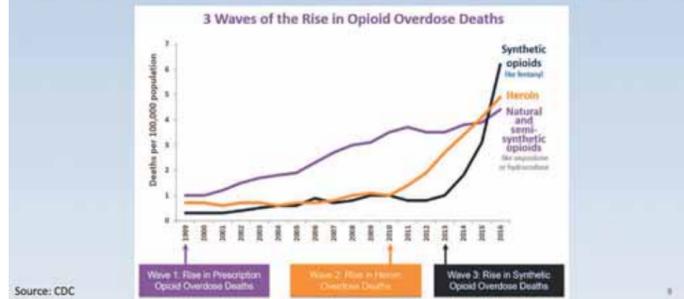


Source: Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

DRUG PREVENTION PUBLIC FORUM

Opioids became the leading cause of unnatural death in Fairfax County in 2014 and the numbers are skyrocketing, outnumbering deaths by motor vehicle accident and gun violence

Trends in Opioid Deaths

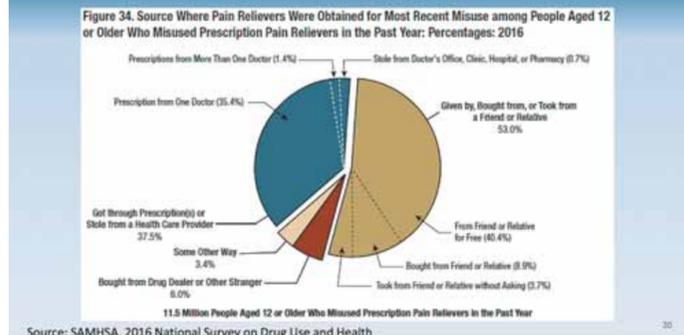


Source: CDC

DRUG PREVENTION PUBLIC FORUM

1999 saw a rise in prescription opioid overdose deaths, 2010 saw a rise in heroin overdose deaths; 2016- current sees an escalation in synthetic opioids overdose deaths.

Opioid Misuse, U.S., 2016



Source: SAMHSA, 2016 National Survey on Drug Use and Health

DRUG PREVENTION PUBLIC FORUM

Where are the pills coming from for people aged 12 and over? Doctors prescribe them; they sit in medicine cabinets, and people are taking them from a friend or relative.

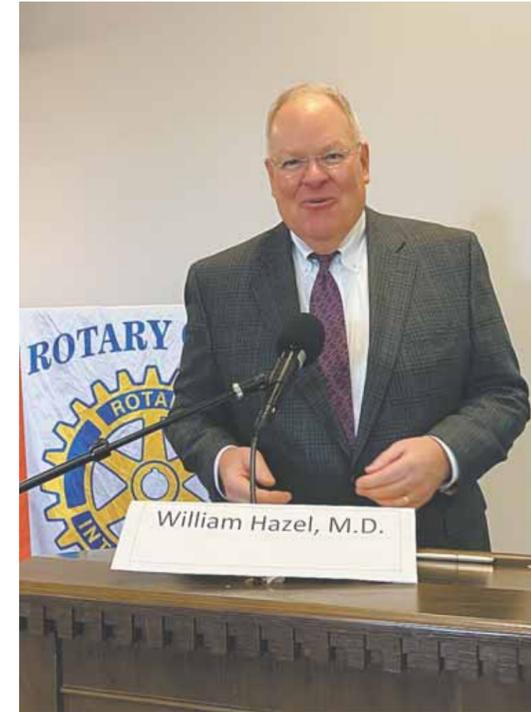


PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

“Everybody knows about southwest Virginia; it’s their problem. But look right here. This is where we are,” said Keynote Speaker, William Hazel, Jr. M.D., Operation Drug Prevention, Feb. 29, Great Falls.

taking on Opioids and Drug Abuse, Hazel discussed five areas.

The first, Harm to Addicts and Others, beginning with the addict. “Oh, you’re going to give needles to addicts. Right? Well, the reason you think about that is so that you’re not transmitting hepatitis and HIV and endocarditis,” he said. There are now four sites in Virginia that have chosen to do that. Law enforcement and the community agreed that this would be the case. According to Hazel, incarceration became a major place for people with substance use and mental illness to reside, but that brought inherent harm-to-self dangers. Thirty days of drug absence was not thirty days of treatment; thirty days of absence reduced the tolerance to drugs by abusers. When they went back out, since abusers had burned bridges with their families, they turned to people they associated with before and got the same substance. “The first 14 days out of jail are one of the highest rates of fatal overdose. We don’t think about that as well as we can probably in incarceration,” he said.

According to Hazel, it was a physician’s responsibility to practice “good medicine,” and if the patient was substance use disorder with treatment not available, and they needed the medication, “far better for

them they have a prescription medicine than go to the street.”

AS FOR “OTHERS,” Hazel said that the leading cause of children coming into the foster care system was substance abuse. Eventually, the numbers overwhelmed the system. Addiction harmed others, children impacted by ACEs, Adverse Childhood Experiences.

“This may be the most important thing I mention today... We know...children exposed to certain non-physical traumas, develop physical symptoms earlier in life, children exposed to three or four and what we call Adverse Childhood Experiences- homelessness, hunger, family violence, substance use, incarcerated parents, those types of things. Great stresses in the growing body, which creates changes in the brain... And we know that those... kids who are exposed to this will develop the earlier onset of cardiovascular disease and diabetes...They don’t have a chance.”

The second Virginia Response centered on Prevention-getting prescriptions out of medicine cabinets, especially for first-time users. Disposal boxes such as the ones countywide accept drugs no questions asked, making it easier for community

“This isn’t about crime-fighting; it isn’t about prescribing; it isn’t simply about medicine. It’s about how we work together to solve problems in ways that we don’t normally do.”

—Keynote Speaker, William Hazel, M.D.

residents to dispose of unused medicines from their homes.

The third Virginia Response, Initiating and Maintaining Recovery, meant not treating in jails, especially with all the contraband issues there. “When you’re an officer... you take them to booking... It is hard in most places to get people into treatment... we have to think about making that more available... The best treatment is medically assisted.

The fourth Virginia Response was to Interdict the Illegal Supply. “We have to work with our law enforcement because the bad guys are out there and they’re predatory. We need to get it stopped. This flow of fentanyl that comes in can be delivered to your house from Mexico or China. It’s there. International treaties are involved. The same groups do drugs, human trafficking, money laundering, huge complex webs of crime. We can’t deal with that, but we have to separate the criminals, the bad guys,” he said.

According to Hazel, the fifth and final Virginia Response was there had to be a Culture Change, and we had to get rid of the stigma. He said, “It ain’t okay, to put stuff in your body that you shouldn’t...If it hurts, it’s going to be okay...Understand narcotics don’t work any better than ibuprofen or Tylenol for most things. Stop demanding drugs. If someone is in recovery, comes back into the community, and they’re not accepted - they can’t get a job. They can’t take care of themselves... their family pays for that. We need our people back and being productive. So we have to think about how we welcome people in recovery. We have to get rid of the stigma. That is the biggest front we face.”

CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

Hogwart's Vacation Bible School

Registration. At Holy Comforter Episcopal Church, 543 Beulah Road, NE, Vienna. The camp dates are June 22–26, 2020 for morning or afternoon sessions. Children 5 through 11 years old are invited to participate in this popular and unique summer camp experience which explores the Christian themes and lessons in the Harry Potter stories. Holy Comforter Episcopal Church in Vienna is magically converted into Hogwarts School where children attend “classes” taught by favorite professors including Professors McGonagall, Snape, Hooch, and Binns. Teenage prefects lead age level groups to their activities and all students share a closing snack in the Great Hall. This year's theme will be based on book 2, Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. Registration forms will be in the Church Office and online. More information: http://www.holycomforter.com/Children/Vacation_Bible_School/

The Golden Girls of Northern Virginia, a senior women's softball league, is looking for players. Any woman over the age of 40 is encouraged to join. All skill levels are welcome. They play on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in Vienna. For more information, visit the web site www.goldengirls.org

ReelAbilities Film Festival. Now thru March 1. The 8th Annual ReelAbilities Film Festival: Northern Virginia, powered by the Pozez Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, will present a lineup of 17 films in select venues across Northern Virginia, Maryland, and the District from Feb. 20–March 1. The festival is comprised of contemporary international films and post-film programs as well as a fine arts exhibit, all selected to be engaging, empowering, and championing the lives, stories, and artistic expressions of people with different abilities. Visit the website <https://www.thej.org/reel-abilities/reelabilities-film-festival-northern-virginia/>

FEB. 26 TO APRIL 12

21st Lenten Devotional. At The Church of the Good Shepherd (United Methodist), 2351 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna. The church is publishing its 21st annual Devotions for Lent. The publication will be available on the church's website at www.GoodShepherdVA.com, beginning on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 26, through Easter on April 12. The church also will post each day's devotion on its Facebook page at www.facebook.com/goodshepherdvienna. Printed copies will be mailed to neighborhoods surrounding the church, and a limited number of copies will be available at the church. Additionally, the church plans to hold weekly gatherings in members' homes to discuss the devotionals. Free. Visit the website: www.GoodShepherdVA.com

SUNDAYS: 3/1, 3/8, 3/15, 3/22, 3/29, 4/5

Discover Who You Are with LifeKeys. 12:30-2:30 p.m. At Holy Comforter Episcopal Church, 543 Beulah Road, NE, Vienna. LifeKeys is a program designed to assist you in exploring the gifts God has given you—life gifts, spiritual gifts, personality, values, and passions. Different tools illuminate the ways in which you are unique and wonderfully made, encouraging you to go deeper as you seek to discover what God may be calling you to do. All can benefit from this journey of exploration. Register by February 23. The materials fee is \$30. Light snacks provided. Bring a bag lunch. For more information and to register, email wellspirit@holycorforter.com. Visit www.HolyComforter.com.

MONDAY'S 3/2, 3/9, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30, 4/6

Centering Prayer with the Rev. Jon Strand. 1:30-2:30 p.m. At Holy Comforter Episcopal Church, 543 Beulah Rd, NE, Vienna in the new Contemplative Prayer room on the third floor. Contemplative prayer is a form of prayer in which one may experience God's presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself. This method of prayer is both a personal relationship and a discipline to deeper foster one's relationship with God. Visit www.HolyComforter.com.



Reston Chorale

Reston Chorale presents Mendelssohn's "Elijah" on Sunday, March 8 at St. Luke Catholic Church in McLean.

SUNDAY/MARCH 8

Reston Chorale. 4-6 p.m. At St. Luke Catholic Church, 7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean. The Reston Chorale presents Mendelssohn's "Elijah" featuring Baritone James Martin and Organ Virtuoso Adam Brakel. Cost: \$0-\$30. Tickets/information at restonchorale.org.

TUESDAY/MARCH 3, 10, 17 AND 31

Toddler Tales. 10:30 a.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Have fun with your child and build early literacy foundations for reading success. Age 18 months-3 years with an adult.

TUESDAY/MARCH 3, 10, 17 AND 31

Canasta Group. 12:30 p.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Enjoy socializing while you play Canasta. Beginners welcome. Adults.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 4, 11 AND 18

Preschool Storytime. 10:30 a.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Have fun with your child and build early literacy foundations for reading success. Age 3-5 with adult.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 4

Chair Yoga. 3 p.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Learn relaxation and exercise techniques through Chair Yoga. Adults.

Best Spring Brunch. 7-10 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Enjoy timeless brunch classics, including eggs, sausage, home fries, fruit salad and coffee cake. Instructor: Chef John Bauhs. Cost is 1 lesson @ 3 hrs, \$80/\$65 MCC district residents.

THURSDAY/MARCH 5

Teen Advisory Board (TAB). 6 p.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Gain leadership experience and discuss what the library can do for you. Grades 7-12.

FRIDAY/MARCH 6

Free Bird-Watching Class. 8-10 a.m. At Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls. Birding is a hobby that can last a lifetime, and Riverbend Park is a great place to get some of the basics down as you start your adventure. The park is offering a free class that covers information a beginning birder should know. Pick up tips on how to use binoculars for bird watching. Learn the importance of having a field guide and discover other ways to identify different types of birds. The class is designed for participants age 14 to adult. Be an early bird and head to the park. The program runs from 8 to 10 a.m. Call 703-759-9018 or visit Riverbend Park.

Bilingual Storytime. 10:30 a.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Bilingual Storytime in English and Hindi. Enjoy stories, songs and activities. Birth-5 with adult.

Singer Gina Chavez. 7 p.m. At Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave., East, Vienna. Visit GinaChavez.com.

MARCH 6-8

Tyson's Library Book Sale. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Tyson's Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Hours are Friday, March 6,

2020, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Saturday, March 7, 2020, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Sunday, March 8, 2020, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. Half Price / \$10 per Bag Sale. Large selection of books and media for all ages and interests. Email: tysonslibraryfriends@gmail.com, or call 703-790-4031 or 703-338-3307.

SATURDAY/MARCH 7

Family Storytime. 10:30 a.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Stories and songs for the whole family. All ages.

Norooz. 1 p.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Celebrate the Persian New Year and day of the vernal equinox, marking the beginning of spring, symbolizing rebirth and renewal. Please join us to enjoy music, crafts and delicious sweets! Local author Arisa Rozegar will be reading an excerpt of his children's book series, "Shahnameh for Kids". For all the family.

Explore the Night Sky. 6-8 p.m. At Turner Farm, 925 Springvale Road, Great Falls. Observatory Park at Turner Farm will be hosting an "Astronomy Festival." Enjoy activities such as guided star gazing, looking through a telescope, and listening to ancient stories about the constellations as you warm up around a campfire. There will be activities and games throughout the evening. Hot chocolate and snacks will be available for purchase. The cost is \$10 per person, and the event is designed for participants age 3 to adult. This festival will be canceled in the event of rain or snow. Call 703-324-8618 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/turner-farm.

SUNDAY/MARCH 8

Women's Choral Festival. 4-6 p.m. At Community of Faith United Methodist Church, 13224 Franklin Farm Road, Herndon. Join in an afternoon celebrating International Women's Day featuring the voices of Capital Harmonia and Freedom High School Bella Voce. Premiering local composer Lee Larson's "A Winter Dawn." Free. Visit the website Capitalharmonia.org.

MONDAY/MARCH 9

Legos in the Library. 6:30 p.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Build anything with Duplos and Legos! Age 2-12.

TUESDAY/MARCH 10 AND 17

Code Club. 6:30 p.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Learn Scratch programming with our team of experts! Ages 9-11.

TUESDAY/MARCH 10

Money Matters Financial Book Discussion. 7 p.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Monthly group discussion focuses on personal finance and investing. The March

selection is "Bogleheads' Guide to the Three-Fund Portfolio: How a simple portfolio of three total market index funds outperforms most investors with less risk" by Larimore Taylor. Adults.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 11

Mystery Book Club. 1 p.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Join in the monthly unraveling of a whodunit or thriller. The March selection is The Janus Stone by Elly Griffiths. Adults.

THURSDAY/MARCH 12

Dungeons and Dragons. 5 p.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Play the Dungeons and Dragons game. Beginners welcome! Age: 12-17.

SATURDAY/MARCH 14

Craft Show. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Park View High School, 400 W. Laurel Ave., Sterling. The show includes 75 vendors in the school's gym with a variety of jewelry, accessories, soaps, candles, wreaths, pet treats, and more. There is something for everyone. Proceeds from vendor fees benefit Park View's Project Graduation. Free. Email: ParkViewCraftandVendorShows@gmail.com. Visit the website: <https://www.facebook.com/ParkViewCraftShow/>

SATURDAY/MARCH 14

Read to the Dog. 10:30 a.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Gain reading confidence by reading to one of our therapy dogs. Age 5-11.

SATURDAY/MARCH 14

The ABC's of CBD and Medical Marijuana. 2 p.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Learn from a medical expert about the benefits of medical marijuana, how to obtain it legally and whether it can help you or someone you know. Adults. No registration required.

MONDAY/MARCH 16

Handcraft Club Open House. 7 p.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Drop-in anytime and bring your favorite project or start a new one. Beginners welcome. Learn from other handcrafters about skills like crochet, knitting, weaving, and jewelry making. Teens-adults.

TUESDAY/MARCH 17

Job Club. 4 p.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Have questions about finding or excelling in a job? Receive one-on-one help from a specialist. Presented by Service Source. Age 16-Adult.

THURSDAY/MARCH 19

Oakton Book Discussion Group. 7 p.m. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. The March selection is "The Overstory", a novel by Richard Powers. Everyone is welcome to join! Adults.

FRIDAY/MARCH 20

Free Bird-Watching Class. 8-10 a.m. At Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls. Birding is a hobby that can last a lifetime, and Riverbend Park is a great place to get some of the basics down as you start your adventure. The park is offering a free class that covers information a beginning birder should know. Pick up tips on how to use binoculars for bird watching. Learn the importance of having a field guide and discover other ways to identify different types of birds. The class is designed for participants age 14 to adult. Be an early bird and head to the park. The program runs from 8 to 10 a.m. Call 703-759-9018 or visit Riverbend Park.

MARCH 25-28

Oakton Friends Book Sale. At Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Members Pre-Book Sale—March 25 at 2-5:30 p.m.; Book Sale—March 26 at 1-8 p.m.; March 27 at 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; and March 28 at 10 a.m-3 p.m.

SATURDAY/MARCH 28

Free Black History Concert. 3 p.m. At Historic Pleasant Grove Church, 8641 Lewinsville Road, McLean. Featuring the Washington Revels Jubilee Voices in a free concert celebrating African American musical traditions. This event

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 14

League of Women Voters Celebrates 100th Anniversary

The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA) celebrated the 100th anniversary of the League of Women Voters on Feb. 23, 2020. More than 100 LWV members attended the afternoon tea, held at the Country Club of Fairfax. The League was founded by Carrie Chapman Catt in 1920, just six months before the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified, giving all American women the right to vote after a 72-year fight for women's suffrage.

Vivian Watts, Member, Virginia House of Delegates, was the featured speaker and described her own more than 50 years as a League member, including as President of LWVFA (1975-77). She recounted the strong influence and encouragement of League mentors as she launched her political career and how greatly she benefitted as a delegate from the subject-matter expertise she had developed during her years as a League member. Watts described members as "engaged with energy and spirit" as they "not just ensured that people vote but that the voters are informed."

LWVFA Co-President Nancy Roodberg honored the 28 women who have been members of the League for 50 or more years. One of them, Leslie Byrne, former member of the U.S. House of Representatives and LWVFA President (1982-83) described the critical support she had received from Vivian Watts in starting her own political career. She also credited the League in providing her with her first experience in fundraising.

In a congratulatory letter read at the event, United States Senator Mark Warner praised the "extraordinarily important role" the League has played in U.S. democracy. "You have worked to empower citizens by helping them understand policy issues and through your advocacy efforts."

Capital Harmonia, a community women's chorus based in Northern Virginia, dedicated to bringing music written for women's voices, opened the event by performing songs that celebrate and inspire women.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan citizens' organization that has fought since 1920 to improve the government and engage all citizens in the decisions that impact their lives. The League operates at national, state and local levels through more than 700 state and local Leagues, in all 50



PHOTO COURTESY OF LWVFA

Del Vivian Watts (D-39) describes her own more than 50 years as a League member.

states as well as in DC, the Virgin Islands and Hong Kong. Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to anyone — men and women — age 16 and older. More at <http://www.lwv-fairfax.org/>

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Here's What's Happening at MCC!

Presented by The Alden

Chamber Music at the Alden
 Tysons McLean Orchestra
 String Quintet
 Saturday, March 7, 2 p.m.
 Free admission

Presented by The Alden

Movies for Children and Families
 Wednesday, March 11, 12:30 p.m.
 In the Community Hall
 Free admission

Making Memories

Father-Daughter Enchanted
 Evening Dance
 Friday, March 13, 7-8:30 p.m.
 \$25 per participant

The Old Firehouse

5th & 6th Grader Parties
 Glow Party
 Friday, March 13, 7-9 p.m.
 1440 Chain Bridge Rd.
 \$35/\$25 MCC district residents

Presented by The Alden

Danú "Saint Patrick's Celebration"
 Sunday, March 15, 3 p.m.
 \$50/\$45 senior
 \$35 MCC district residents

Presented by The Alden

Macdonald Scholarship
 Final Competition
 Wednesday, March 18, 8 p.m.
 Free admission

The McLean Community Center
www.mcleancenter.org
 Home of The Alden Theatre
www.aldentheatre.org
 1234 Ingleside Ave. McLean, VA 22101

@mcleanvcenter

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Inflicting Pain to Gain Relief

Self Injury Awareness Month is a time to learn about the condition and erase the stigma.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

March is self-injury prevention month, a time when mental health professionals work to raise awareness of the condition, recognize the signs and work to remove the stigma. Known by clinicians as non-suicidal self-injury, the behavior is described as intentionally harming oneself without intending to end one's life. The population most likely to engage in self-harm behaviors range from middle school through college, according to the American Psychological Association.

"When teens begin engaging in cutting behavior it is typically because they are feeling overwhelmed by intense feelings or emotions and don't have the coping skills to manage or respond to how they feel, said therapist Carol Barnaby, MSW, LCSW.

"Adolescents might self-injure to distract themselves from intense negative emotions of sadness or anger, or emotional numbness, added Jerome Short, Ph.D., Associate Profes-



Stacie Isenberg



Jerome Short

"Self-injury may be a sign of depression, anxiety, substance use, or post-traumatic stress disorders."

— **Jerome Short, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology at George Mason University**

sor of Psychology at George Mason University. "They may also want to punish themselves or express a need for help."

Cuts and burns on the wrists or thighs are among the most common signs of self-injury. "Parents may notice their children have unexplained cuts, burns, or bruises," said Short. "Adolescents may wear clothing or bracelets to cover themselves even in very warm settings. Parents may find knives or razors in their children's rooms or notice they are missing from the home."

"Other signs that your child may be cutting include marks on the skin from scratching, using a paper clip or skin picking, advises Barnaby. "Multiple similar marks on the skin in close proximity for which your child has no explanation," said Barnaby.

While cutting and burning oneself causes pain initially, that pain can evolve into relief. "Sometimes cutting can be habit-forming or become compulsive, said Barnaby. "This in simple terms, means that the more the person cuts the more they feel the need to do it and their brain associates cutting with relief."

Teens might turn to self-injury as a way of regulating their emotions. "For teens who are feeling a lot of strong and intense emotions,

self-harming releases the body's natural opiates and endorphins that help them manage their feelings," said Joanne Bagshaw, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology at Montgomery College. "On the flip side, a teen who is shut down or who feels numb might self-harm to feel their feelings. Alternatively, self-harm may be for the teen to communicate that they need help."

Several factors might trigger self-inflicted injuries. "Childhood abuse and conflicted parental relationships may trigger self-injury," said Short. "Self-injury may be a sign of depression, anxiety, substance use, or post-traumatic stress disorders."

Parents who suspect that their child might be engaging in intentional self-injury should avoid criticism and seek mental health treatment. "Parents should not ignore the problem," said Short. "If children engage in life threatening behavior, they should take them to a hospital."

Noticing those marks, however, could require careful attention. "Teens who self-injure often hide the marks that self-injury might cause," said Child Psychologist Stacie Isenberg, Psy. D. "For example, they may wear a long-sleeved shirt in hot weather if there are marks on their arms or multiple bracelets if there are marks on their wrists."

"If parents feel that their teen is engaging in self-harm behaviors they should show compassion for their child and get help, added Barnaby. "Self-harm behavior is very treatable with early intervention."

"Self-harm behavior is very treatable with early intervention."

— **Carol Barnaby, LCSW**

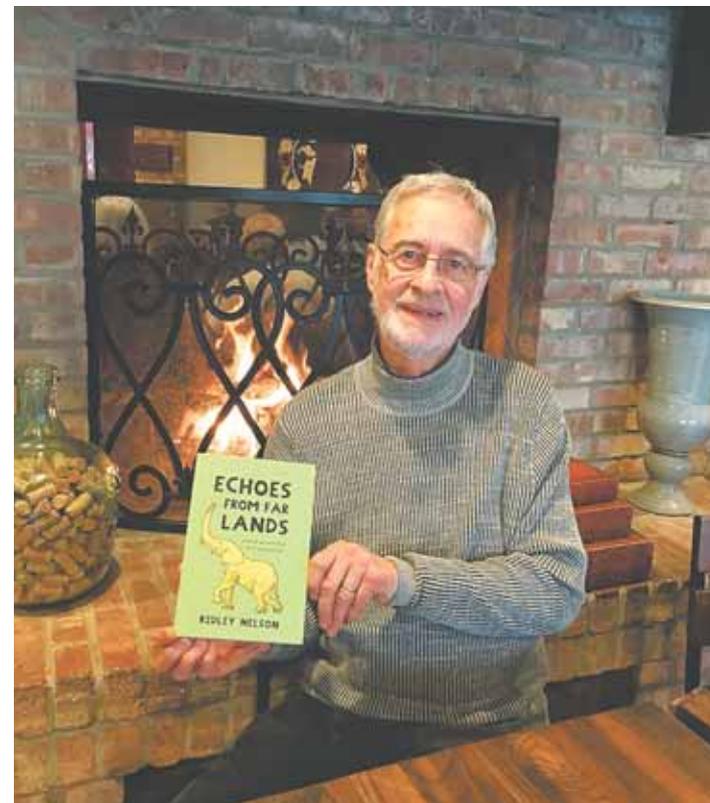


PHOTO BY KRISTIN CLARK TAYLOR

Great Falls author Ridley Nelson will discuss his new book on March 19 at the Great Falls Library.

Great Falls Author to Discuss His New Book

BY KRISTIN CLARK TAYLOR

Great Falls author Ridley Nelson will discuss and sign his newest book, "Echoes from Far Lands: Stories on Culture, Farming, and Life," on Thursday, March 19, at 7 p.m., at the Great Falls Library in Great Falls.

The idea for the book itself, Nelson says, was first born in the basement of his Great Falls home, when, taking a break from his gardening, the semi-retired agricultural economist stretched out on the sofa and reached for the nearest book off of his bookshelf, which turned out to be an Australian anthology of poems. Nelson says the pages of the book opened to these words from Judith Wright's, "South of my Days": "Seventy years of stories he clutches round his bones. Seventy years are hived in him like old honey."

Wright's words resonated deeply with Nelson, as he recounts in the opening paragraph of his book: "It occurred to me that I, too, felt 'hived' full of stories, and, as it happened, about seventy years' worth, too. So, unable to hold them in any longer, I started writing."

Nelson, who has both British and Australian citizenship and lives in Great Falls, has lived in England, Australia (his place of

birth), Egypt, India, Tanzania, and Kenya, and has visited ninety-five countries. Many of these global encounters – all richly-textured and meticulously crafted – are woven into the fabric of his book.

"I appreciate the opportunity to discuss my work at this great community forum," Nelson says with enthusiasm. "I'm looking forward to an active dialogue and discussion," he says.

Nelson's book, published by Mascot Books in Herndon, is powerful and compelling. With heart, humility, and often with humor, the author guides the reader on a globe-trotting journey from the halls of his English boarding school to the sheep stations of his native Australia, from a dimly-lit English pub to a peaceful village church, and even on an exciting lion-hunting expedition in Africa.

During the March 19 event, which will be hosted by the Great Falls Writers Group and the Great Falls Library, Nelson will discuss his writing process, engage in Q&A with the audience, and read from his work. Copies will also be available for signing and purchase. The event is open to the entire community and free to the public.

Because a capacity crowd is expected and seating is open, an early arrival (6:45 p.m.) is recommended.



PHOTOS BY TOM MANNING/THE CONNECTION

The massive crowd assembled at The St. James listens to Sanders.

Bernie Sanders Rallies with Thousands At St. James Sports in Springfield

Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) held a rally with U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar (D-MN) in Springfield on Saturday, Feb. 29. Sanders addressed the thousands of supporters packed onto the indoor field at The St. James Sports, Wellness, and Entertainment Complex as he made a final push for votes before the Super Tuesday primaries.

Rep. Ilhan Omar energizes the crowd before introducing Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders.



Sen. Bernie Sanders delivers his speech to the thousands in attendance.

Peace Awards Presented

FROM PAGE 3

South Lakes High School in Reston is where **Lindsey Hirshfeld** goes to school and is a senior. “Hirshfeld feels empathy for classmates who are struggling to overcome a variety of issues that make them feel isolated. She helped raise money for children with brain tumors, organized cultural festivals to showcase diversity, and helped stage a school-wide silent protest against gun violence,” said Fisher.

At South County High School in Lorton, Siedeem Ahmed, Senior founded South County’s Interfaith Club to provide a safe space for student-led discussions. “She is also the President of Stallions with Refugees. Her goal is to spread the message that all students, including immigrants and refugees, are welcome and valued,” said Fisher.

One after another, Fisher read profiles of youth who made a difference, some locally like **Catherine Soto, Senior at Lee High School in Spring-**

field. “Soto helped create the Best Buddies chapter at Lee High School. Soto and her fellow Best Buddies leaders were responsible for recruiting general education students who wished to build a relationship with the special needs students who might not otherwise have had the opportunity to engage with the student community,” said Fisher.

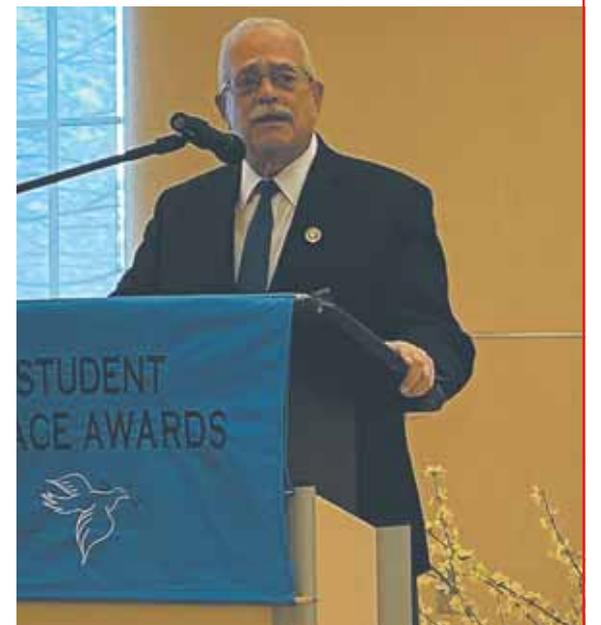
Others made differences to world neighbors, like **Betsabe Pardo, Senior at Mountain View High School in Centreville.** Pardo raised money to bring safe drinking water to communities around the world.

Dignitaries acknowledged the achievements of the recipients. U.S. Rep. Gerry Connelly (D-11) said, “I congratulate this year’s recipients of the Student Peace Awards. Their leadership and commitment to being peacemakers and fostering mutual respect for our differences are bringing positive change and inclusivity to our community.”

Supervisor Penny Gross (D-Mason District) shared a letter from Chair of the Fairfax County Board



Margaret Fisher emcees the 2020 Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County held at the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, Fairfax, on Sunday, March 1.



U.S. Rep. Gerry Connelly (D-11) offers his congratulations to the recipients of the 2020 Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County.

of Supervisors, Jeffery McKay. She read: “I am always proud to see the level of commitment our students in Fairfax County put toward improving our community. It is this inspiring energy and action, combined with Fairfax County residents’ diverse experiences that allow us to consistently strive toward creating a better community

for all.”

In her remarks, Guest Speaker Kendyl Crawford, Director of Virginia Interfaith Power & Light addressed the effect of climate change on peace.

Crawford said she was amazed at the students’ efforts to care not only for their neigh-

bors but to repair relationships with Mother Earth.

The awardees received \$250, plus another \$100 to be given to any nonprofit organization of their choice that operated in the spirit of the Peace Awards. The students also received the book, *Sweet Fruit* from a Bitter Tree by Mark Andreas.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

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WEST VIRGINIA

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

will take place in a quaint 1895 church setting, now an historic site. For information, see www.HistoricPleasantGrove.org.

SATURDAY/APRIL 18

32nd Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup

9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Hosted by the Alice Ferguson Foundation, 2001 Bryan Point Rd, Accokeek. The Annual Potomac River Watershed Cleanup has become a catalyst for progress that ignites people's interest and passion for the environment and community action. The largest regional event of its kind, the Cleanup provides a transforming experience that engages residents and community leaders and generates momentum for change. The Potomac River Watershed Cleanup has grown from a small shoreline cleanup at Piscataway National Park to a watershed wide network. What started as a few cleanup events along the Potomac River is now a regional event spanning Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. If you can't make this date or location check out PotomacCleanup.org to find another cleanup near you.

SATURDAY/APRIL 25

Order Spring Native Plants. 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. At Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls. Do something good for yourself and the environment. Put your shopping list together for the annual Native Plant Sale sponsored by the Friends of Riverbend Park (FORB). Choose from native plants, ferns and shrubs that are suited for the climate in Fairfax

County and benefit local wildlife. Proceeds from the sale benefit Riverbend Park, too. You can pre-order online through March 21, 2020, and the plants will be available for pickup at the park's Outdoor Classroom on Friday, April 24, the day before the sale for the general public. Go to FORB's website (<http://www.forb.wildapricot.org/Native-Plant-Sale>) for all the details. The public sale takes place on Saturday, April 25 from 8 to 11 a.m. Call 703-759-9018.

ONGOING

Drop-in Mah Jongg. Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m.-noon at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Players should have a basic understanding of the rules and should bring their current American MJ League card. For McLean District residents. Email emvarner@verizon.net for more.

Camp Grow Registration Open. Camp Grow at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, in Vienna, invites children to explore nature through hands-on activities, gardening, discovery walks, crafts, music, storytelling, and animal programs. Camp Grow is designed to engage, challenge, educate and encourage a sense of community. Camp Grow values and encourages inclusion of all campers in every activity. Visit www.novaparks.com/things-to-do/camps/ for more.

The Golden Girls of Northern Virginia, a senior women's softball league, is looking for players. Any woman over the age of 40 is encouraged to join. All skill levels are welcome. Games are on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in Vienna, April-October. Other

activities during the year. Visit www.goldengirls.org.

Free Tai Chi. Through Oct. 26, Saturdays, 7:55-9 a.m., meet on the outdoor basketball court located directly behind the Dolley Madison Public Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Ave., McLean Central Park, McLean. Introduction and beginners' practice. All are welcome. Moves indoors for fall and winter. Call 703-759-9141 or visit www.FreeTaiChi.org for more.

Trivia Night. Tuesdays, 7 p.m. at Lost Dog Cafe - McLean, 1690 Anderson Road, McLean. Trivia featuring multiple winners and fun door prizes. Free to play. Visit www.facebook.com/EarthTriviaDc/ for more.

The Freeman Store & Museum Wednesday through Sunday noon-4 p.m. 131 Church St. NE, Vienna. The Freeman Store & Museum is dedicated to Preserving and promoting Vienna's heritage through the identification, preservation, and interpretation of history significant places, events, and persons. Historicviennainc.org

Bingo Night. Sundays. 4 p.m. Flame Room, Vienna Volunteer Fire Department, 400 Center St. S, Vienna. \$10. www.vvfd.org/bingo.html.

Gentle Yoga. Thursdays, 6:30 p.m. Emmaus United Church of Christ, 900 E Maple Ave. E., Vienna. Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Gentle Kundalini Yoga, one free introductory session, senior discounts. Increase flexibility, improve breathing and health, reduce stress. Ravi Kaur has 15 years experience teaching yoga. \$15 per session. Visit www.edimprovement.org or call 571-213-3192.

Announcements

Announcements

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THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 5

in-depth, personalized care planning, education and support. A consultation is more than just a meeting with a dementia expert. Highly trained staff help to develop a road map to navigate through the thoughts, emotions and questions that family members, care partners and the diagnosed person may have, including:

- ◆ Assessment of the functional status of the person with dementia;
- ◆ Navigating difficult caregiving decisions and role changes in the family;
- ◆ Information and resources to assist with legal and financial matters;
- ◆ Available community resources;
- ◆ Partnering with the physician and/or health care provider;
- ◆ Safety concerns.

To schedule a consultation, call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 800-272-3900.

TUESDAY/MARCH 31

GFES Kindergarten Orientation. 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. At Great Falls Elementary School, 701 Walker Road, Great Falls. Children who are five by September 30, 2020 are eligible to enter kindergarten for the 2020-2021 school year. To confirm Great Falls Elementary School serves your particular address, please visit the FCPS website, click on the boundary link, and type in your address. Parents and eligible children are invited to an overview of the Great Falls Elementary School kindergarten program. Rising kindergarten students will meet our kindergarten teachers in the classroom for a special welcome and activities. Parents will meet in the cafeteria to receive an overview of the kindergarten program, including curriculum and the daily schedule. This is an excellent opportunity for parents unsure of whether or not their child is ready for kindergarten to come, listen, and make an informed decision. Registration packets are available online www.fcps.edu

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/healthymindsfairfax or www.namir-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html.

Shepherd's Center of Oakton Vienna Caregivers' Support Group takes place first and third Thursday of each month, 10-11:30 a.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax (UUCF) - Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. For caregivers to adult family members with dementia. First and third Thursdays of every month. Hosted by Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna, scov.org. Contact facilitator Jack Tarr at 703-821-6838 or jtarr5@verizon.net.

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, www.havenofnova.org or havenofnova@verizon.net.

Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group Meets from 1:30-3 p.m. the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW. 703-532-4892.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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.

Assistance League of Northern Virginia, a volunteer nonprofit, invites community members to join the organization to participate in its Reading Express program. Mary Gronlund at gronbiz@aol.com or Program Coordinator Lynn Barron at lynnieb517@verizon.net.

Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed. Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriendA-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil at Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-4547.

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Money For What, Exactly?



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Kenny is currently out of the office. Please enjoy this previously written article from July 2019:

Presumably, most of you readers are aware that many supermarkets have a rack located somewhere near the rear of the store that is stocked with off-price merchandise: discontinued items, items with damaged packaging, out of season products, etc. Over the years, I have been a regular checker of this rack looking for such bargains. I have purchased breakfast cereal, soup, cookies, candy, and miscellaneous other non-perishables. I've even purchased two bags of Kingsford charcoal. In addition, I've seen household products, health and beauty, school supplies; and everything else you can imagine, running the gamut from "A" to "Z," for sale. Recently however, in this rack I saw a product I'm not sure I even thought was available to the general public, and if it was, would not have thought buying it from the discontinued merchandise rack at the supermarket would not have been the way to go. But what do I know? As has been proven many times: not much.

The item? A DNA Paternity Test Kit. I guess I thought, if this test was necessary, it would involve a physician or at least be administered by a health care professional and/or involve witnesses/legal representation (at least a notary). Going to the supermarket or even the drug store? And then testing yourself without necessarily knowing the precautions and proper procedures appropriate for the task at hand? There seems as if there's a bit more at stake here than an at-home pregnancy test, a test with which many of us are familiar. But DNA testing at home? What is this, the Maury Povich Show?

Having not traveled down this particular road myself, perhaps I'm unaware of the realities. All I know is what I've seen on television or read about in the papers. I guess I just assumed (generally a bad thing), that the steps one takes to verify/confirm/resolve paternity-type issues were a bit more involved than a visit to the supermarket. Apparently, this subject is just another where I know very little about, like tools and how to use them, automobile repair, home maintenance, lawn and garden, cooking, and on and on and on. But enough about me.

What about those wanting answers to extraordinarily important questions: Who's the father? And is that my child? Looks can be deceiving so a professional, or so I thought, incorrectly, is brought in to oversee the process. Nope. No professional need apply. Just go to your local "chemist," as they say in England. No need to visit "the surgery," as they also say over there. Just find a box with the right letters on it and go back to your home/work and swab, stick, pin-prick or whatever and the results will be known soon enough if you or someone else is whomever they claim to be or not to be. That is the question which begs an answer. Shakespeare notwithstanding

It seems only fair that one's birthright should be gotten wrong. And not that home-testing can't be trusted. Just the opposite. Nevertheless, some things, like circumcisions, though they can be performed at home (see "Shaky the mohel" from a long ago Seinfeld episode). I would have thought, a DNA Paternity test, given the need/want of a resolution/clarification which could possibly impact multiple individuals/families over generations, be similarly performed in the most careful of conditions. This kind of test has no margin for error - or humor. "Bought the kit in the discount rack at my local supermarket." Is that the answer you want to give when all eyes are on you? And saying how much you saved over regular price is unlikely to endear you to any and all of the interested parties on hand. After all, money really isn't the issue.

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

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