

Great Falls CONNECTION

SENIOR LIVING
PAGE 8

Getting a Close-Up View of Native Fish

NEWS PAGE 6

Ecologist Chris Ruck (center) uses an electro-fisher unit as team members Dionna Bucci and Eric Collins net and hand catch stunned fish.

Pressure Mounts on Return to School

NEWS PAGE 7

A Good Place for Affordable Housing?

NEWS PAGE 6

OPINION PAGE 4 ❖ CLASSIFIEDS PAGE 10

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NEWS

Volgenau Conservatory Opens

Meadowlark Botanical Gardens celebrates new feature, honors past director.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Meadowlark Botanical Gardens held two celebrations on the evening of Oct. 20: a ribbon cutting opening the Volgenau Conservatory; and a dedication of the dogwood tree planted in memory to the life of David Hobson, a respected career regional parks director.

The conservatory, fully funded by a donation from the Volgenau family, is beautifully situated on a knoll overlooking the park grounds. The climate controlled 1,200 square foot glass building, equipped with heaters and automated ventilation windows will be open for public entry with a focus on Mediterranean plants; plants that thrive in a warmer climate. Public school students are expected to visit frequently to learn about horticulture, geography, and the importance of plants in our environment. In the next couple of months, before taking up that education role, the conservatory will serve as the concession center for visitors during the park's "Winter Walk of Lights" event.

The Volgenau family and its foundation are well recognized for charitable giving and community support. George Mason University named its Volgenau School of Engineering in 2005 after a \$10 million gift to the school's Department of Bioengineering from Ernst and Sara Volgenau. The "Nature Conservancy", an internationally recognized conservation group, in August 2020 named its coast reserve on Virginia's barrier islands in honor of the Volgenau family's multiple gifts.

Jennifer Volgenau Wiley, who lives in Vienna near Meadowlark Gardens, one of the several family members who attended the ceremony, spoke of her delight with the project. "I can see it next door, and it's showing the next generation to see and appreciate nature." The project combined two of the Foundation's areas of targeted giving, which Wiley described as devoted to "60 percent conservation and land; 30 percent education; and 10 percent classical music."

The dogwood tree dedication, directed by resolution of the NOVA Parks Board of Directors, honored the career and work of long time manager and past executive director of the organization, David Hobson. He started working for the regional park authority in 1968, and became involved in capital acquisition, the main function of the organization, in 1976; in 1996 rising to executive director and overseeing the 19 regional park system. He was lauded during the dedication for his skill in securing grant funding.



Ceremonial ribbon cutting for conservatory attended by Andi Pearl, Exec Director, Volgenau Foundation; Jennifer Volgenau Wiley; Lisa Volgenau; Paul Gilbert, Exec Director NOVA Parks; Michael Nardolilli, Board Chairman NoVA Parks; Mark Chandler, NOVA Parks Board of Directors.



Volgenau Foundation represented at the ceremony by Executive Director Andi Pearl and Ernst and Sara Volgenau daughters, Lisa Volgenau, Lauren Volgenau Knapp, and Jennifer Volgenau Wiley.



New conservatory will house Mediterranean plants in a climate controlled environment for aesthetic and educational purposes.

The authority received over \$80 million in grant money during his tenure and amassed land holdings over 10,000 acres. He was best known for his work in acquiring and developing the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad Regional Park, a 45 mile rail to trail project, stretching from Alexandria to Purcellville, now enjoyed by millions of users annually. Hobson, who retired in 1999 after a 31 year career, died in August 2020. The tree, an American Dogwood, is significant as the official state flower of Virginia.

Meadowlark Botanical Gardens boasts 95 acres of ornamental display and native plants as part of the NOVA Parks system. The property includes lakes, woods and walking

trails, with a restored 18th century log cabin. Another gem is their formal Korean Bell Garden and bell tower. The only one of its kind in the Western Hemisphere. Installed in 2011, the pavilion was built in the traditional way of Korean craftsmen without use of nails or screws. All pieces fit together precisely in a technique that has been shown to withstand the destructive force of earthquakes in Asia. The tower contains the "Bell of Peace and Harmony" which stands nearing seven feet tall and weighs 6,000 pounds; engraved with traditional symbols, it mirrors designs used in the Silla Dynasty, 57 BCE-935 AD. The bell garden provides a cultural link for the area's Korean Americans,



Smoky the screech owl on-hand to illustrate the Park's nature education mission.

Winter Walk of Lights Begins Nov. 11

The park is known for its annual "Winter Walk of Lights", a spectacular holiday light show which draws 80,000 visitors during the Fall and Winter event. Described as "magical and dazzling" in the past, this year it may be better described as "enchanting and safe." The event provides masks required, six foot distancing outdoor experience along a half mile plus, one-way trail, with increased sanitary practices observed by park staff to keep common areas clean. Timed tickets for the light show, which runs nightly from Nov. 11 through January 3, 2021, 5:30 - 10 pm, may be obtained through the park authority web site: <https://www.novaparks.com/events/winter-walk-of-lights>.

and owing to a partnership with the Republic of Korea, includes plant species typical in a Korean garden, for a natural plant ascetic which tends to a wilder aspect than other oriental gardens.

Mark and John and Amendment One

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

When the then underdog Mark Warner, whose only experience in political life had been to chair the Democratic Party of Virginia and manage the successful campaign of Doug Wilder for governor, had the courage in 1996 to take on senior senator John Warner in his re-election bid, Mark Warner's bumper sticker read, "Mark, not John." While the phrase may have helped voters differentiate the two candidates who are not related, it was not enough to cause voters to change their senator. Republican Senator John Warner went on to serve a total of 30 years in the United States Senate, the second longest of any Virginian. Mark Warner went on to be elected governor of Virginia in 2001 and ran in 2008 to succeed Senator John Warner when he retired.

Too often overlooked in times of political rancor is the admiration and respect that develops among persons of different political parties even though they may differ on policy issues. Such was the case with the two senators Warner. As governor, Mark Warner regularly con-



COMMENTARY

sulted with then Senator John Warner to the advantage of the Virginia economy particularly as it related to the military presence in Virginia. When Democrat Mark Warner had a strong challenge to his Senate seat in 2014, retired Republican Senator John Warner endorsed him for re-election over his challenger who had been chairman of the Republican National Committee.

The two men have tremendous political experience between them and a moderate, pragmatic approach to resolving issues. It is no surprise that both have endorsed passage of Amendment #1 on the ballot this year to end political gerrymandering. Former Senator John Warner said, "the passage of Amendment 1 is essential to achieving this goal and to further strengthen our state's political institutions. This referendum was drafted by a bipartisan group of volunteers from all walks of life and every corner of Virginia in order to give average citizens a stronger voice in the important process of redistricting."

Senator Mark Warner told the Richmond Times Dispatch that he has already voted for

the amendment. He said, "I believe in non-partisan redistricting, and it's an improvement over our current broken redistricting system. Voters should choose their elected leaders, not the other way around." Virginia's other United States Senator, Tim Kaine, who also served as Lieutenant Governor and Governor of Virginia supports Amendment #1 as does Congressman Don Beyer who was also Lieutenant Governor.

While there is opposition to the amendment by those who see a loss of partisan political power if the amendment passes, there is broad support among others including Common Cause, the Brennan Center for Justice, Princeton Gerrymandering Project, Campaign Legal Center, AARP Virginia, ACLU, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce, League of Women Voters, Virginia League of Conservation Voters, and political scientists in Virginia's colleges and universities. The editorial boards of the Washington Post and the Richmond Times Dispatch and all major newspapers in Virginia have endorsed it.

While there have been suggestions that a better amendment could be written, no one in the nearly four decades that I have worked on this issue has come forward with specific language that has the broad support of this one. I urge your vote for its passage. Send questions or comments to me at kenplum@aol.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Friends of Riverbend Park Strongly Support Park Bonds

To the Editor:

The Friends of Riverbend Park, Inc. (FORB) is an independent non-stock, non-profit corporation, established in the Commonwealth of Virginia on Aug. 5, 1999, with the purpose of protecting, enhancing, and preserving the physical, cultural and natural heritage of Riverbend Park by educating the public to the value of environmental protection generally and of the park's wildlife habitat specifically; providing volunteer services to the park; channeling donations of money, property, and materials to the park; providing citizen input to plans that may be proposed for the park; and performing any other activities or services necessary or convenient to carry out such purposes, to the extent permitted by Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

It is our strong conviction that the parks and parks facilities system in Fairfax County should be robustly supported by its citizens and voters in the upcoming 2020 General & Special Elections to be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2020. Specifically, the ballot contains a vote for or against approval of a Parks and Parks Facilities Bonds issue in the amount of \$112,000,000 to acquire

or improve the county's parks and parks facilities. Even more specifically, the detailed list of projects included in the Fairfax County Park Authority's priorities for this bond issue is a design study for a new Interpretive Center at Riverbend Park to replace the existing Visitor Center which is located on the Potomac River flood plain and subject to frequent flooding. It is simply a matter of time before the existing Visitor Center will be seriously compromised or swept away by the Potomac's flood waters. FORB believes that plans to replace that structure with a new Interpretive Center in accordance with Riverbend Park's Master Plan must begin as soon as possible, and we urge all voters to approve the Parks and Parks Facilities on the November 3rd ballot.

Hugh Morrow, President
Kevin Dillon, Treasurer
Eleanor Anderson, Vice President
Jack Bowles
Cynthia Fisher
Karen Hershey
John Hughes-Caley
Susan Keating
Kurt Laubinger
Frank Zeng
John Callow, Riverbend Park Manager, ex officio

Don't Waste Your Vote

To the Editor:

Maybe Joe Biden was not your preferred Democratic candidate and you would rather have supported Warren, Klobuchar, Sanders or Buttigieg. Or maybe you are a Republican who is dissatisfied with Trump's presidency and wish other Republicans would have run in the primary so that you could have had other Republican choices.

But the fact of the matter is that the only two candidates who have a mathematical chance of winning this election are Biden and

Trump. Don't waste your vote on a Green Party candidate. Don't waste your vote by writing in a third name in order to "make a statement." Don't stay at home and refuse to vote because you are not 100 percent satisfied with the two choices.

If you want things to change you have to specifically vote for Joe Biden, even if you have to hold your nose while doing it. If you sit out of the election or vote for a write-in candidate, you are voting for four more years of mayhem.

Barbara Glakas
Herndon

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A Good Place for Affordable Housing?

Proposal could be a step toward 5,000 unit goal.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION



Board Matters: James Walkinshaw

“We have an opportunity to provide high quality housing in an area where there are thousands of employment opportunities, transit access, commercial offices nearby, retail nearby, and an elementary school in walking distance.”

— Braddock Supervisor James Walkinshaw

Braddock Supervisor James Walkinshaw located prime real estate to create 200-250 family units of affordable housing: two parking lots of the Fairfax Government Center.

“It has been a priority of this Board since before I was elected to identify county owned land to devote to the construction of affordable housing. I don’t know that there is a better location in the county than this,” said Walkinshaw, at the Board of Supervisors meeting Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2020. “We have an opportunity to provide high quality housing in an area where there are thousands of employment opportunities, transit access, commercial offices nearby, retail nearby, and an elementary school in walking distance.”

The Board of Supervisors reports that at least 15,000 net new affordable housing units are needed during the next 15 years to help meet the housing needs of residents at all income levels.

“The market is obviously not providing low income housing. It’s up to us to figure out a way to do it,” said Dranesville Supervisor John Foust

THE COST OF HOUSING, including rentals, in Fairfax County is out of reach for many who work in Fairfax, said Lee Supervisor Rodney Lusk. “Housing is foundational,” he said.

“There are people working here in this building right now who need affordable housing,” said Chairman Jeff McKay.

“It absolutely cannot be overstated what a need we have for housing in our community,” said Providence Supervisor Dalia Palchik. “It’s not the easiest to find opportunities, I appreciate the opportunity to see what can be done here.”

“The Board made a commitment,” said Sully Supervisor Kathy Smith. “This is a

good place to see what could happen.”

Environmentally, taking existing parking lots at office parks to create housing in the county, is better than open space projects that require the destruction of trees.

“The idea of taking our parking lots which are underutilized [and] in some cases utilize them for public housing particularly when they are publicly owned is a no brainer. This is something we need to look at in a number of other different places in the county,” said Hunter Mill Supervisor Walter Alcorn.

The Redevelopment Housing Authority in 2017 created 270 units at Residences at Government Center. Walkinshaw recommended advising the housing authority that this could be another viable project.

CHAIRMAN, Jeff McKay reminded everyone about the necessary land use process that includes the requirement of public in-

put. He said the Board’s action Tuesday simply advises the Redevelopment Housing Authority of the possibility, not that the Board has approved any specific project.

Mason Supervisor Penny Gross and Springfield Supervisor Pat Herry voiced concerns.

“I understand there’s no plans for this to be senior or disabled low income housing; those are my thresholds for approving certainly workforce housing,” said Herry.

“I have mixed feelings on this one. This gives me pause,” said Gross. “I do not object asking the question, and support this Board matter for asking the questions but do have concerns for the location.”

“We need to be very careful about the public space that we have here at the government center and the opportunities for large events that we don’t have any place else,” she said.

Getting a Close-Up View of Native Fish

Fairfax County waters are home to 14 of Virginia’s 24 scientific ‘families’ of fishes.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Big Rocky Run, at Eleanor Lawrence Park in Chantilly, was the stage for a recent demonstration of stream monitoring and fish identification for Virginia Master Naturalist trainees during a day of field study. The demonstration was conducted by Fairfax County’s Stormwater Planning Division, which regularly monitors the species of fish in area streams as a direct measure of stream health.

The naturalists’ field trip, on Oct. 24, followed an earlier lecture on ichthyology (the study of fishes) by Fairfax County Ecologist Chris Ruck. During the field trip, Ruck, and members of his Stormwater Planning team, used a specially designed electro-fisher unit, which temporarily stuns fish within a limited range charge-line between two portions of the



Stormwater Planning Division Ecologist Chris Ruck, and team members monitor Fairfax County urban streams - identify fish.

equipment. Air in the fish bladders causes them to rise to the surface where they can be netted for study, then released.

Fairfax County includes more than 800 miles of streams. Monitoring assesses their water and natural habitat quality and gives a picture of the overall health of our waterways. It also is required by state and federal regulations. Our County is part of the watershed for the Chesapeake Bay, a water body protected by environmental regulations.

These efforts are not related to our drinking water since stormwater is not treated and runs through a separate drainage system. Rating following a 2019 sampling found 88 percent of county streams were

rated in fair to poor condition. According to the Public Works and Environmental Department, this means our streams are impaired and lack biodiversity.

The portion of Big Rocky Run through the park is considered to be in better condition than many other streams. On this occasion, the team netted 16 of the 210 species of fish common to Virginia waters. Fairfax County is home to 14 of the 24 fish families, found in the Commonwealth, which includes for example, eels, minnows, perches, suckers, and sunfish.

“Virginia Master Naturalists” is an all-volunteer organization which provides education, outreach, and service for the beneficial

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



The Rosyside Dace is a member of the same scientific family as carp and goldfish.

management of natural resources and natural areas in the Commonwealth. The organization, its training program and projects are jointly sponsored by the following state agencies and departments: Virginia Cooperative Extension; Game and Inland Fisheries; Forestry; Conservation and Recreation; Museum of Natural History; Environmental Quality.

For more information on stream monitoring or the Virginia Master Naturalists Program, readers are directed to these sites: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/publicworks/stormwater; www.vmnfairfax.org.

Item	Total Device Counts	Total Cost
Teacher Replacement Laptops	4,500	\$4,275,000
Estimated Grade 3 Computer	14,300	\$7,132,670
Estimated Grade 4 computer	14,800	\$7,381,120
Estimated Grade 5 computer	8,300	\$4,151,270
Grand Total	41,900	\$22,940,060

The Board approved the purchase of teacher replacement laptops and expansion of FCPSOn with student laptop purchases for grades 3, 4, and 5 as shown.

Pressure Mounts on Return to School

School Board members face sensitive voting items.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The week of Oct. 19 held important information for Fairfax County Public Schools families. Superintendent Scott Brabrand held a virtual town hall Monday during which he gave updates to his Return to School proposal. In a continued phased-in process, Brabrand presented that pre-K and kindergarten students are tentatively scheduled to go to school on Nov. 16. First and second-grade students are expected to return on Nov. 30. Grades 3-6 will tentatively return on Jan. 4, and grades 7-12 are scheduled to return on Feb. 1.

On Thursday, Oct. 22, eleven of the twelve Fairfax County School Board members met virtually for a regular meeting and took action on multiple agenda items. First, the Board approved in part the school reassignment appeal of a student who possessed a firearm during the virtual instructional program in which other students were participating. The Board also approved modifying the Division Superintendent's disciplinary decision.

Next, School Board members addressed systemic issues that impact student diversity at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology. According to U.S News and World Reports, the school is ranked first in National and Virginia rankings, yet Black and Hispanic youth are poorly represented, each at 2 percent. The Board voted unanimously, directing Superintendent Brabrand to "establish a plan for student talent development and put into action means for student potential identification and outreach."

According to Schools online voting records, the plan might include but not be limited to: "1. Strengthening the equity of access to advanced academic

curriculum and strategies for all students regardless of AAP (Advanced Academic Programs) ... 2. Establishing a plan to have full-time Advanced Academic resource teachers in all remaining ES (elementary schools) and a .5 in each middle school; 3. Increasing administrator and teacher awareness of our Young Scholars program in FCPS and strive to ensure it is administered uniformly and with fidelity with the goal of expanding it to all schools; 4. Developing a communications plan to help parents understand how their children can benefit from participation in AAP and invest in family engagement to facilitate participation of historically under-represented students in advanced academic programs;(and) 5. Providing an analysis of math and science curriculum offering in all elementary and middle schools; Providing an analysis of extracurricular STEM opportunities in all elementary and middle schools."

THE BOARD approved the FY2021 Revised Budget acting on Gov. Northam's Oct. 8 announcement of new allocations of the CARES Act dollars, allotting \$32.2 million to Fairfax County Public Schools. The total is based on a formula of \$175 per pupil for fall enrolment. Fairfax City's allocation of \$0.52 million will run through FCPS. The figure for Fairfax County, the highest in the Commonwealth, is just under 1 percent of the County's school budget of \$3.2 billion for this year. According to the release by the Office of the Governor, "The funding will support COVID-19 preparedness and response mea-

SEE ADMISSIONS. PAGE 9



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SENIOR LIVING



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Researchers at Marymount University helped establish programs to reduce the number of falls and resulting injuries among seniors.

Preventing Falls

Physical exercise and home safety reduce risk.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

One of the leading causes of fatal injuries in older adults is falling. In fact, every 19 minutes an older adult dies from a fall and emergency room visits related to falling occur every 11 seconds. A group of researchers at Marymount University in Arlington is teaming with senior service organizations to lower those statistics locally. The coalition has won more than \$1 million in federal grants to create falls prevention programs that are available to seniors.

“It was a real academic-community partnership to provide a needed service to our community,” said lead researcher Rita Wong, Ed.D., Associate Vice President for Research at Marymount University. “Through the grant, we established the Northern Virginia Falls Prevention Alliance. This Alliance brings together senior-serving communities for advocacy, education, networking, and expansion of falls prevention initiatives.”

Three falls prevention programs were designed based on research by Wong; Sara Pappa, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Health and Human Performance and coordinator of the Northern Virginia Falls Prevention Alliance; Uma Kelekar, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Healthcare Management; and faculty from the Physical Therapy program: Diana Venskus, Ph.D.; Cathy Elrod, Ph.D.; Julie Ries, Ph.D.; and Jade Bender-Burnett, DPT.

The research team created a regional training office for falls prevention at Marymount. “We train lay leaders to run these community falls prevention programs and we help organizations and senior community centers set up falls prevention programs,” said Wong. “Once they’re established, the centers take on primary responsibilities for sustaining the programs.”

Designed to address the needs of seniors at three levels of functioning, the team created three programs: SAIL (Stay Active and Independent for Life), which is a balance and strengthening exercise program geared to fairly active older adults. A Matter of Balance (AMOB) focuses on independent seniors who are worried about falling and want to learn preven-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Rose Robinson, instructor and Senior Services Recreation Therapist at ServiceSource, Inc., leads a virtual SAIL (Stay Active and Independent for Life) class for strength and balance.

tion techniques. And Otago Exercise Program (OTAGO), which is toward those who are frail and need closer supervision and an exercise program that is tailored to their specific needs.

As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, programs are now offered virtually. “Our SAIL classes are structured so we can provide strength, balance, and fitness classes,” said Rose Robinson, instructor and Senior Services Recreation Therapist at ServiceSource, Inc. “We have two SAIL leaders in every class. One instructs while the other adapts.”

Those adaptations, based on ability, are categorized as “Level 1” and “Level 2,” says Robinson. “Level 1 is seated exercise with a steady pace and same routine as Level 2. Level 2 is standing exercise with a higher pace,” said Robinson. “The routine starts with a warm-up and about 20 minutes of aerobics. Then we do balance exercises and strength training exercises. We end the class with a cool down like stretching.”

The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service reports that half of all falls happen at home, and they encourage home safety. “Remove clutter from your home or least areas where you walk a lot like the hallway or living room,” said occupational therapist, Brittany Ferri, of Simplicity Health. “Remove throw rugs, excess cords, and other items that can be tripped on; get non-slip surfaces for the bathroom like padding under the bathmat, grippies for inside the tub, and similar mats for catching water on bathroom tile.”

For more information in Virginia:
<https://www.novafallsprevention.com/>

For more information in Maryland:
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcfrs-info/tips/seniors/falls.html>



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Bob Mathews and Colleen Delawder visit with their new best buddies who occupy the front yard of their home from early September until late fall.

COVID Can't Stop the Spirit

Historic Haunted Herndon House staged for the season.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Bob Mathews and Colleen Delawder are the perfect couple, at least when it comes to their customized Herndon Halloween House on Spring Street. Mathews admits he is not the creative one; he’s the grunt man. “I pull out the decorations and wait for the directions,” he said.

Delawder, on the other hand, is the design scene genius. She envisions the vignettes, breaths life in her staged sets and Mathews builds them to suit the personalized annual theme. No year is like the last; each feature different accessories and key figures telling a one of a kind story: 2020 is the year of the pirate skeletons,

According to Mathews, each year, it looks like nothing until it gets toward October, and it all comes together as Delawder provides the magic. “I’m the ultimate ‘skeleton fluffer.’ I am just as amazed as the people that walk by,” Mathews said.

This year visitors have been quite different. Most mention to Mathews that they discovered the house when making deliveries in the surrounding neighborhoods and then decide to bring their children and grandchildren to see it. “Yeah for Amazon and FedEx,” said Mathews.

When it comes to taking everything down, though, Delawder is nowhere to be seen. “I find every excuse possible to become unavailable,” she said. Mathews said the number one question he receives each year when decorating is where he stores everything. “My answer is it all goes in the attic of the garage, but of course, it takes some creative packing skills to get 45 skeletons and everything else packed and backed into this tight space.”

Mathews shared a small unknown fact. He and Delawder installed electrical outlets on the fence and under the porch years ago to limit the extension cords. “This year, 2020, we realized we need more outlets,” he said.

NEWS

Admissions Debate Continues

FROM PAGE 7

asures for the 2020–2021 school year, including testing supplies, personal protective equipment, sanitization, and technology for distance learning.” Tamara D. Kaufax, Lee District Representative, said, “Time is of the essence,” referencing that funds must be spent by Dec. 30. The Board unanimously approved the funding and allocated it toward the Corona Relief Fund (CRF) with proposed expenditures to be determined.

The Board also approved the purchase of teacher replacement laptops and expansion of FCPSOn with student laptop purchases for grades 3, 4, and remaining to 5 up to the dollar amounts noted in the agenda item.

On the Return to School Timeline, motion on the final resolution carried. Still, Laura Jane H. Cohen, Springfield District Representative, Tamara D. Kaufax, Lee District Representative and Karl V. Frisch, Providence District Representative voted no, with Elaine V. Tholen abstaining. Cohen said, “We must get this right, and when our principals tell us it cannot be implemented properly, especially with the new concurrent model if we try to speed this timeline up, I think we have to listen...I will be voting against this.”

The resolution read: “Consider bringing group 7 (ES 3-6, Secondary Public Day Programs-Spec. Ed; Burke MS, Cedar Lane, Quander Road, and students with targeted learner profiles at the Davis & Pulley Center) and group 8 (Middle and High School Students in Grades 6-12 and remaining students at the Davis & Pulley Career Centers) back earlier than the Superintendent’s proposed schedule presented to the Board on Oct. 15. The Superintendent will provide a recommendation to the Board on Nov. 12 to see if there is a way to bring back 3-6th graders earlier than Jan. 4 (including 6h graders from the Mason district) and bringing High School students back earlier than Feb. 1.”

The Board approved a second Return to School motion, directing the Superintendent to develop a clearly defined metric related to COVID positivity rates in the community. This metric would help dictate when schools would open or close. It needed to be easily understood and published regularly.



BACK THE BLUE

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.
-Werner Heisenberg

CALENDAR

NOW THRU NOV. 5

Haunted Wine Tours. 6:30 p.m.; 7:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. At The Winery at Bull Run, 15950 Lee Highway, Centreville. The Haunted Wine Tours are back for the fifth year in a row, in a new condensed version, so you can enjoy real ghost stories and award-winning wine all while staying safe. Due to the restrictive environment surrounding COVID, there are far less tickets available this year. Therefore priority access to tickets go to wine club members.

NOW THRU DEC. 7

MCC Fantastic Fall Scavenger Hunt. Join your friends, family and community for McLean Community Center's Fantastic Fall Scavenger Hunt. This exciting fall virtual event allows for you and your team to compete against others and win prizes. This is the perfect event to stay local and have fun with your friends and family. The Fantastic Fall Scavenger Hunt is a game played on a smart phone in which teams complete 75 missions (or challenges) both indoors and outdoors. Missions include answering questions, taking specific photos or videos, finding a specific item, geocaching or completing specific tasks as given in a list provided by the Game Master. The scavenger hunt will take place in and around McLean and from your own home. Participants work in small teams of 4-10 players. Team captains must be 16 years old or older. Visit the website www.McLeancenter.org.

NIGHTMARE ALLEY

The Workhouse Arts Center announces that "Nightmare Alley" Haunted Drive-Thru is coming to Lorton for this year's Halloween season. "Nightmare Alley" is the first immersive drive-thru Halloween experience in the region. Zombies, swamp creatures, creepy clowns, and scary dolls are among 13 different scary scenes taking up residence on the Workhouse campus. These new campus inhabitants will scare and entertain visitors experiencing the attraction from the safety of their cars. There will be 13 nights of fright, now through Saturday, Oct. 31. Fridays and Saturdays from 7-11 p.m. each weekend in October, and Sundays in the middle of the month (October 25) from 7-10 p.m. Visit <https://www.workhousearts.org/nightmare-alley/>

OCT. 26-31

Everything Christmas Sale. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mon.-Fri. and 9-2 on Sat. At First Baptist Church of Herndon, 681 Elden Street, Herndon. Get a head start on decorating and choosing unique gifts and help your community at The Closet's Everything Christmas Sale. You'll find a tremendous selection of holiday items and bargain prices. Many are one-of-a-kind items. Proceeds returned to the community in grants and scholarships. For more information about The Closet, see the website, <http://www.theclosetofgreaterherndon.org/>

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 28

Gallery Walks -- Live Stream (30 minutes). Presented by the Virginia Museum of History and Culture. Join the VMHC Education Team for the free virtual exhibition highlight tours! The topics covered during these 30-minute tours will change regularly, so mark your calendars



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

The blacksmith is scheduled to be at work from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 1

Hear the Clang, Clang, Clang of the Blacksmith at Colvin Run

Spend a Sunday afternoon exploring the grounds of historic Colvin Run Mill and enjoy a free demonstration of the ancient art of blacksmithing.

Watch as the blacksmith fires up his forge and works with hammer and tongs to make iron tools and utensils. This free demonstration is appropriate for all ages, and no reservations are required.

The blacksmith is scheduled to be at work from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 1, 2020. However, this activity is weather dependent, so call to confirm that a demo will be taking place.

Colvin Run Mill is located at 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls, Virginia. For more information, call 703-759-2771; or visit Colvin run Mill.

for the 2nd and 4th Wednesday each month. Each gallery walk will be streamed live on the museum's YouTube and VMHC Education Facebook page. Visit www.virginia-history.org/events.

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 28

The Unruly Theatre Project's Virtual Improv Show. 7 p.m. Virtual show. Free; registration is required. Join (the) Unruly Theatre Project's virtual fall improv show from the comfort of your couch! Register here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/UTPFallShows>. A Zoom link and password for the show will only be emailed to those who register for it. Sponsored by The Alden

THURSDAY/OCT. 29

Introduction to Astronomy Webinar. 7:30-8:30 p.m. Webinar at Riverbend Park, Great Falls. Now that the days are getting shorter and the nights are getting longer, it's a great time to learn some astronomy basics to better enjoy those extra hours of dark skies. Learn some fundamentals of astronomy and the universe around us. The webinar will cover basic types of astronomical objects from small to large, the motions of the planets and stars, and interesting phenomena in the night sky.

This virtual program will be hosted in an online Zoom meeting by staff and volunteers of the Analemma Society. The cost is \$6 per person. Call Riverbend Park at 703-759-9018.

FRIDAY/OCT. 30

Spooky Virtual Family Bingo. 7 p.m. Virtual. Join OFC on a Zoom call and enjoy an evening of fun and

prizes. Families are encouraged to dress in Halloween costumes for the video call. Prizes will be awarded to the winner(s) of each round of bingo and the family with the best costume(s) as voted by OFC staff will win a prize. Cost \$5 per device; registration is required. To register or for more information, call MCC at 703-790-0123, TTY: 711, or visit: www.mcleancenter.org.

OCT. 30-31

Kiddie Trick or Treat Drive-Thru Halloween Event. The first-ever Kiddie Trick or Treat Drive-Thru event will be held October 30 and 31 from 3-6 p.m. at Workhouse Arts Center. This event will allow children to enjoy the holiday in a safe and socially distant way. Put on your favorite family-friendly costume and drive through 10 different Halloween scenes to experience trick or treating like never before. Visit <http://workhousearts.org/>

OCT. 30-31

Haunted Mini Golf. 5-7:30 p.m. At Oak Marr RECenter, 3200 Jermantown Road, Oakton. Oak Marr RECenter is welcoming all werewolves, vampires and goblins for a howling good evening of mini golf on Halloween weekend. Wear your favorite costume to play a round of "Haunted Mini Golf." Challenge yourself on the mini-golf course, trick or treat, and win various goodies at every hole. It's fun for family members of all ages!

Sign up for a time slot through the Park Authority's on-line ticketing system. The last ticket will be sold at 7 p.m. on each event day. The cost is \$9 per person. Call 703-281-6501.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR CANCELLED

The Halloween Spooktacular that is usually presented by Celebrate Great Falls at The Village Green is cancelled this year due to Covid-19. After much discussion, the organizers determined that there was just no way to offer the Spooktacular events in a safe and compliant manner.

FRIDAY/OCT. 30

Boy Scout Troop 55 will host The Halloween Haunted Trail on Friday, Oct. 30 from 6-8 p.m. on the Great Falls Village Field (behind the Post Office) by reservation only. All participants will be asked to wear masks that cover both mouth and nose, to arrive no earlier than 10 minutes before your appointed time and depart shortly thereafter. Groups of no more than 10 people will enter the trail every 5 minutes to facilitate social distancing. Everyone entering the Haunted Trail must have a reservation (including any parents and younger siblings who choose to participate). This activity is ideal for ages 5-10 yrs old but all ages are welcome! It will be a similar "level of scary" as the Haunted House under the green and white striped tent in years past. The event is free but donations are welcome to help offset expenses. Email to Erin Lobato at erinlobato@celebrategreatfalls.org

SATURDAY/OCT. 31

Virtual 5K/1K Walk-Run-Roll. 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Join in the Unity Halloween Virtual 5K/1K Run, Walk, and Roll. Sign up, dress up for Halloween (optional), and move your body! Then post your pictures on the Facebook Event page for all to see #Unity5K1K #UnityWalkRunRoll #UnityVirtualHalloween. Cost is \$25. Visit the website: <https://virtual5k-1k-walk-run-roll-halloween.eventbrite.com/?aff=cnnews>

PUMPKIN DECORATING COMPETITION FOR CHARITY

Over 20 businesses in Northern Virginia and D.C. are participating in VK Pediatric Dentistry's annual pumpkin decorating contest for charity and they want your votes. Local kid-friendly businesses (everything from Toy Stores to Pediatricians) in NOVA and D.C. were invited to submit a small donation and decorate a pumpkin, with the winner getting to choose which charity to donate the proceeds to. Over 20 businesses have entered and over \$400 has already been raised for a good cause! Voting takes place in person and online from Oct. 26 to 30 and the voting is open to the public. You don't need to be a patient of Dr. Peter's to vote for your favorite pumpkin. Check out the pumpkins and vote for your favorite here: www.smilewithvk.com/pumpkin

MONDAY/NOV. 2

Sibshop Workshop. 10-11 a.m. and 1-2 p.m. Virtual workshop. An exciting workshop for brothers and sisters of children with special needs. The Sibshop workshops are for children in grades 2-6 who have siblings with special needs and who are enrolled in Fairfax County Public Schools. Registration is free, however, donations are accepted to support the cost of future Sibshops: <https://fcpsfoundation.org/donation.jsp?campaign=43&&test=true>

TUESDAY/NOV. 3

The Woman's Club of McLean hosts a speaker on U.S. presidential wives on Tuesday, November 3rd, at Garfield Memorial Christian Church, 1731 Great Falls Street, McLean, at 12 p.m. Andrew Och, an award-winning media producer, is the author of two books on American presidential wives, from Martha Washington to Melania Trump. Visit www.mcleanwomansclub.org.

FRIDAY/NOV. 6

Digital Citizenship Webinar Series. 10-11:30 a.m. How to Find Balance with Technology. This will be an Online Webinar. Registrants will be emailed the link ahead of time. All webinars

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are free to families, educators, and community members. This webinar is for adults only. For more information, call 703-204-3941 or visit: <https://www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center>

SATURDAY/NOV. 7

Krop's Outdoor Vintage Market. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Krop's Crops, intersection of Georgetown Pike and Utterback Rd., Great Falls. Unique vintage items for your home, fun gifts for family and friends, fresh homemade pies and more yummy goodies, treasures for everyone. Free.

SUNDAY/NOV. 8

Virtual Magic Show. 3:30-4:30 p.m. Virtual via Zoom. Get Ready for Laughs and Giggles from this local legend! The Great Zucchini will be putting on a Magic Show, Live on Zoom. Cost is \$15 Donation per Family. Visit the website: <https://cota.org/campaigns/COTAforEandJ/events/The-Great-Zucchini-Live-Virtual-Performance>.

VIENNA'S TREASURE ORNAMENT

The Vienna Volunteer Fire Department is offering Vienna's treasure, the 1946 Maxim Fire Engine that will be featured on a beautifully crafted ornament. Limited quantity available, delivery expected early December. Don't miss out, order yours now for \$20 at <http://vffd.org/store.html>.

1495 NEXT COMMENT PERIOD

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) announced it will extend the formal comment period for the 495 Express Lanes Northern Extension Project (495 NEXT) until Friday, December 4, 2020. The public is invited to provide formal input on the project's Environmental Assessment (EA) and draft design plans, which were presented to the public at a virtual hearing on October 5 and an in-person hearing on October 8. VDOT's extension of the formal comment period will allow additional time and opportunities for the public to learn about the project and provide feedback prior to finalizing the environmental document and design plans. Visit 495NorthernExtension.org to learn about the project, review public hearing materials and information, and learn how to provide comments.

NOW THRU DEC. 8

Just Breathe!...We've Got You! Tuesdays 9:45 to 12 p.m. Via Zoom. A Program of the Shepherd's Center serving Oakton-Vienna-Reston-Herndon (SC). Three-part webinar series to learn how to get started for your next chapter in life. Each session is hosted by a professional and will allow time for Q & A. Series sponsored by Navy Federal Credit Union; AARP; Kensington Reston Senior Living. Just Breathe! - A breath and meditation break- Katie Courlander, Katie Courlander Yoga. Call 703-281-0601.

VIENNA LAUNCHES SATURDAY 'SHOP & STROLL' CAMPAIGN

The Town of Vienna announced the launch of a new campaign to encourage visitors to explore the town's diverse shopping centers. The initiative titled Vienna Shop & Stroll will take place on select Saturdays starting Saturday, October 24 through December. Each month, designated shopping centers will host safe and socially distant seasonal activities and in-store promotions for all to enjoy. Locals and visitors can get to know business owners and learn more about the history of each shopping center. Visit ViennaVA.gov/shopandstroll.

Schedule: Select Saturdays 12-4 p.m.

November 7 -- Danor Plaza
November 14 -- Cedar Park
November 21 -- JadesShopping Center + Vienna Plaza
November 28 -- Small Biz Saturday on Church Street and surrounding streets off Church
December 5 -- Village Green
December 12 -- Glyndon Plaza

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Missive or Dismissive



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

For the last few months, I have been receiving unsolicited emails from Tommy Chug; he being the other half of the 70's era comedy duo, "Cheech and Chong" with whom I spent countless hours in college laughing at their recorded routines, but beyond that I don't remember much. There were a few follow up movies - which I never saw, and more recently, I have found somewhat belatedly a early 2000s cop show starring Cheech Marin alongside Don Johnson: "Nash Bridges." Nothing at all from Tommy Chong until these emails began arriving.

The email is a solicitation followed by content about his life these last years, and the discovery he made after he had served a nine-month prison sentence for selling decorative bong (there's a bit more to that story, but it's not particularly pertinent to this column). After being diagnosed with prostate cancer, Tommy sought help trying to mitigate the effects of his chemotherapy treatment and perhaps even improve his quality of life. (he's 81 now, by the way.) In so pursuing, he met a doctor from Utah while on a plane, and the rest is Tommy's email.

The content is not exactly personalized but it does resonate. It resonates because it sounds reasonable and plausible and the remedy not too impactful to major organs, specifically liver and kidney, for which I'm very keen and concerned, given my nearly 13-year chemotherapy-plus treatment for cancer. However, the email has struck a nerve. It did so because as a cancer patient, it's easy to believe (hope certainly), there's a magic (often non-Western) cure to whatever ails you, especially when cancer is the culprit. I wouldn't necessarily characterize my feelings/emotions as susceptible but it's hard not to lean that way when you've been given a "terminal" diagnosis by your Western/conventional doctors. To say you have nothing to lose is a bit of a simplification. Still, hearing the words I heard on Feb. 27, 2009 (you bet I remember the date) at the initial Team Lourie meeting with my oncologist, does cause your antennae to go up and out and all-around seeking an answer to what might very well be, the unanswerable.

When an oncologist tells you you're likely to die within "13 months to two years," all bets are off and caution no longer becomes an impediment. Standing pat and adhering exclusively to what your doctors are telling you seems like giving up sort of. For me, I didn't give up. I started trying alternatives, many of which I am continuing a decade-plus later. Now whether these non-conventional/non-Western methods have proven beneficial I certainly can't confirm, but if living is any indicator, they likely did no harm (the crux of the Hippocratic oath). So yes, on the face of Tommy's email about improving one's quality of life, I am open to some other possibilities to prescription medication.

In fact, to this day, I still consume about 60 pills a day and always wash it and most other things down with alkaline water. Moreover, I try to limit my sugar, which is impossible and I remain open to new ideas. Over the years, I have ingested spoonfuls of pureed canned asparagus, drank water with baking soda, drank water with apple cider vinegar, blended fruit and vegetable smoothies (how else does one tolerate kale?) and tried to be mindful of a maintaining an alkaline diet. The goal has been to enhance my immune system while eliminating toxins in order to enable my body to heal itself. Again, it's difficult to know what alternatives have worked and what hasn't. Whether it has been real or a type of placebo effect where I thought it was beneficial, I am not prepared to say. However, I am living proof of something.

As concerns what Tommy is selling, the problem is, as it was with all my previous choices, there are no guarantees. Unfortunately, that was a problem at the beginning, and I fear it will be a problem at the end.

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



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