

# CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station

## National Coach Of the Year

NEWS, PAGE 5

South County Coach  
Gerry Pannoni with  
the championship  
plaque. He was named  
national football  
coach of the year for  
2019-2020.



## GMU Homecoming and Valentine's Day Fun

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## Fairfax City Budget: Cautious Optimism

NEWS, PAGE 3

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CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 6 ♦ CALENDAR, PAGE 7

PHOTO BY ALDO RAZO/SOUTH COUNTY HS



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

## Stuffing the Bus for Food for Others

Standing inside the CUE bus filled with food that residents brought to contribute to nonprofit Food for Others is volunteer Adam Taylor. This Stuff the Bus food drive was held Saturday, Jan. 30, in Fairfax City's Van Dyck Park. "We've had a steady stream of donations," said Taylor. "This has been very successful." A similar food drive was also held in the City that day outside American Legion Post 177 on Oak Street. Monetary donations are still needed and may be made online at <https://www.volunteerfairfax.org/events/stuff-the-bus-2/>.

# MOUNT VERNON DISTRICT

**This year may look different, but COVID-19 will not stop our annual tradition! Are you passionate about your family, home or community?**

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**Saturday, February 6, 2021**  
**9:00 a.m. – noon**  
**Speakers, Q&A's and Virtual Tour**

**Live on Channel 16 & Facebook**  
**How to Participate: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon)**

Connect with TEAM MVD and your Mount Vernon neighbors at the 34th Annual Town Meeting! #ConnectMVD

**Thank you  
 Mount Vernon  
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 30+ years  
 of service!**

**Join Supervisor Dan Storck for the 34th Annual Town Meeting! Meet your Supervisor and many county, state and federal leaders. Have your questions answered, learn about issues important to you and connect with county agencies and service providers. The highlight of the morning will be taking a "virtual flying tour" of all that is going on in the District with your "pilot" Supervisor Dan Storck.**

**Speakers:** Board of Supervisors Chairman **Jeff McKay**, County Executive **Bryan Hill**, Mount Vernon District School Board Member **Karen Corbett Sanders**, Health Department Director **Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu**, Special Guests Congressmen **Gerry Connolly** and **Don Beyer**, as well as other community leaders.

**For more information,** call the Mount Vernon District Office at 703-780-7518, TTY 711, visit the office at 2511 Parkers Lane, or send your questions/comments to [mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov).



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In an artist rendering, the corners of Liberty Market are the old watchtowers from the prison.

## Grocery Store at Liberty Market is Another Asset for Laurel Hill

Must-have amenity enhances community appeal.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

**T**he residents at Laurel Hill will have a local grocery store in about a year or so, now that plans for a 30,000-square-foot Lidl store have been approved as an anchor for the Liberty Market shopping center in Lorton.

The location in Lorton is on land that was once part of the Lorton Reformatory, and the plans were approved by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, National Park Service, and the Fairfax County's Architectural Review Board, Elm Street Development said. Elm Street Development will also build a new multi-tenant retail building to complete the shopping center. These two new buildings, plus the seven existing historic structures at the site with watchtowers, will make up Liberty Market. "We are combining the best new construction with the creative reuse of existing buildings. We hope to bring a unique collage of small shops in a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere with fun dining options to create a vibrant community hub for all Lorton residents to enjoy," said the Elm Street representative.

NVRetail is also leasing nearly 50,000 square feet of repurposed historical retail/flex space at the center. Those historic buildings feature vast ceiling heights, oversized windows, and historic brick architecture that opens onto an expansive green grass quad, their literature said. In the grocery-anchored portion (front portion) of the center, the developer is actively seeking a large footprint brewery, sit-down and quick-service restaurants, fitness users, service providers, and other neighborhood retail uses.

Liberty Market is located in the Mount Vernon District of Fairfax County, and district Supervisor Dan Storck has supported the development of the former prison land calling the addition of Lidl to Liberty Market a "win" for the surrounding community. "With many homes within walkable distance to Liberty Market and the recent closure of Shoppers at Lorton Marketplace, Lidl will provide additional options to the South County community, as well as an anchor tenant for the growing Liberty commercial area," he said.



Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck has supported the development of the former prison land calling the addition of Lidl to Liberty Market a "win" for the surrounding community

The center is going in right off Silverbrook Road, which is a busy thoroughfare for Laurel Hill. Once the shopping center opens, a new traffic light will be installed at the intersection of Silverbrook Road and White Spruce Way.

### The Big Picture

Laurel Hill is now home to the Workhouse Arts Center, the Laurel Hill Golf Club, the Lucy Burns suffragist museum, and several developments of apartments, townhouses, condominiums and single-family houses, as it emerges as a destination for many. Officials have discussed bringing in a grocer in the past but were unable to move forward until now. Some of the condominiums are actually in former prison buildings as is the Lucy Burns suffragist museum. The "Fairfax Peak," indoor ski slope at the former Lorton Landfill is in the works. It will be connected to Occoquan Regional Park by a gravity-powered, mountain coaster that will slide from the summit to the park, and a gondola to ferry riders from Occoquan Regional Park and the facility's base to the summit where Fairfax Peak sky terrace, will be built, one plan states

Barry Biggart, the CEO of Visit Fairfax, looks at the big picture as a "historic triangle," with Mount Vernon, the Army museum at Fort Belvoir and Laurel Hill as the main historic venues, linked by bike trails, parkways and the Occoquan River. "The south county area is really on the verge of being a destination itself," he said.



Dave Hodgkins



Rob Stalzer

## 'We're Slightly, Cautiously Optimistic'

Stalzer gives quarterly review of FY 21 budget.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**I**n just a few weeks, Fairfax City Manager Rob Stalzer will present his proposed FY 22 budget. But first, at the City Council's Jan 5 work session, he gave his quarterly review of the FY 21 budget,

Because of the pandemic, he'd had to dramatically revise the current budget to accommodate potential revenue losses and provide the City with the necessary tools and flexibility to deal with a rapidly changing situation. To offset a possible, lengthy economic downturn, Stalzer significantly streamlined the City's operating and capital budgets, while freezing funds for many initiatives and placing them in reserve.

"We're not out of the woods," he told the Council. "But we're slightly, cautiously optimistic, based on the trends we're seeing."

Chief Financial Officer Dave Hodgkins explained that, regarding Fairfax's meals tax, "A lot of our restaurants have experienced losses. But our grocery stores have picked up the slack and made up some of the difference."

**AS FOR SALES TAX REVENUE,** he said, "Overall, we're doing much better than anticipated and almost just as well as pre-COVID. And the same goes for the use tax because of how well the grocery and hardware stores did."

Christine Johnston, director of Real Estate Assessments, discussed the FY 21-22 real-estate outlook. "The residential, real-estate market continues an upward trend," she said. "And residential, real estate makes

up 65 percent of the City's overall \$6.5 billion real-estate tax base."

However, she said, "Commercial property declined, and the vacancy [numbers] could be as much as 10 percent higher than last year. And rent has dropped in the retail sector." Nonetheless, said Johnston, "We're looking at a very healthy tax base, going into this [upcoming] budget session."

Hodgkins said the City ended 2020 with a balanced budget and a slight surplus. "To balance the budget, we had to cut our [employees'] compensation and fringe benefits, freezing some positions and eliminating temporary labor. For FY 21, we expected a significant decrease in revenues, so we decreased our expenditures."

"We now have an estimated surplus, although we still have a way to go before this fiscal year ends," he continued. "Our sales-tax numbers are much greater than were budgeted, and our meals-tax numbers are more than \$1 million higher than our worst-case estimate. So FY 2021 is currently projected to end with a \$2.4 million surplus, assuming our assumptions for the next six months hold true."

Hodgkins also noted that development is continuing and has not slowed down significantly. Therefore, he added, "We hope to bring a balanced budget to the Council for FY 22, without recommending any real-estate tax increase. And we expect to start generating a surplus – a lot of it from development activity in the City."

"Our residential tax base is almost twice our commercial tax base," said Mayor David

SEE CITY BUDGET, PAGE 6

# Volunteering for Area Parks

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

As many citizens take a renewed interest in community service as an energy outlet and to help others during the challenges of the pandemic, we note the on-going efforts of 2018 Ellie Doyle Park Service Award honoree Michael Applegate. Applegate, a familiar figure to users of Laurel Hill Park, has been logging a minimum of 30 hours weekly since 2016. Initially concentrating on mowing along walking and biking trails, of late he has been spending more time on drainage improvement and expanding trail verge areas into the thicker brush.

This week we found Applegate assisting the area's County Maintenance Operations crew in improving an old broken drain at the Park's Ashton-Snowden entrance. A small broken pipe and brickwork dating from the prison era, lining a portion of Giles Run, were improved with a larger volume pipe and added trail for access. Applegate hand dug rocks into the stream bank using a shovel and pick, framing the large water carrier pipe.



Laurel Hill Park volunteer Michael Applegate stands at his hand dug rock wall lining creek drainage.

County maintenance crew members then used mechanized equipment to cover the pipe and line the passage with border rocks.

The enhancements add improvements needed after relocation of some Giles Run Disc Golf Course

holes to accommodate the land sale and housing development adjacent to the course.



County park maintenance employees Gabe Fetzer and Christian Croke (in cab) work with volunteer Michael Applegate to improve the trail and drain dated from the prison era.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

# GMU Homecoming and Valentine's Day Fun

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

To support George Mason University's annual Brave and Bold Homecoming celebration, Fairfax City is again partnering with GMU to showcase its Patriot Pride with the program "Patriots in the City." It unlocks discounts and specials for Mason's community – including students, faculty, staff and alumni – when a GMU ID or alumni card is shown.

More than 45 businesses within the restaurant, retail, personal care/grooming, and professional-service sectors are participating. The discounts and specials began this Monday, Feb. 1, and will run through Saturday, Feb. 13.

"As the hometown of George Mason University, this is Fairfax City's third consecutive year helping to sponsor Homecoming," said Fairfax Mayor David Meyer. "While the number and type of events we typically hold are different this year, we continue to support the university's community and want them to know they're welcomed in Fairfax City."

Dawn Hicks, director of community relations with GMU Athletics, is delighted that this tradition will continue. "We're thrilled the City of Fairfax is again joining Mason's Brave & Bold Homecoming celebration," she said. "Seeing the City dressed up with green and gold decorations – and the Homecoming banner displayed in Old Town Square – is an exciting new tradition."

"Patriots in the City offers an extravaganza of exclusive promotions, offers and deals for the Mason community to enjoy," she continued. "There's a safe, sanitized, and socially distanced special for everyone, and that's a treat we can all use right now."

To see which businesses are offering promotions, go to [fairfaxcityconnected.com/mason-homecoming](http://fairfaxcityconnected.com/mason-homecoming). Participating businesses will also display special, welcome signs.

## 'Fall in Love in Fairfax City'

Fairfax City's Economic Development Authority (EDA) has launched a campaign to support local businesses: "Fall in Love in Fairfax City." It features an ultimate guide to Valentine's Day in the City, plus a social photo contest with multiple gift-card giveaways.

"Supporting local businesses and restaurants this year is more important than ever," said Assistant Economic Development Director Danette Nguyen. "And by shopping small, you're sure to give a gift that's memorable."

The EDA's Gift Guide features promotions and discounts at small, local, and minority-owned businesses throughout the community and are good, Feb. 12 through Feb. 14. More than 20 Fairfax City businesses are participating.

The EDA is also giving away 10 gift cards

of \$100 each to participating "Fall in Love in Fairfax City" businesses as prizes in the photo contest. Share a photo of you and a loved one, using the hashtag #FallinLoveinFairfaxCity and by tagging the EDA, @FairfaxCityEDA, for a chance to win. Pictures should include memorable Fairfax City sites.

Photos must be posted on Facebook or Instagram between Feb. 8 at noon through Feb. 14 at 10 p.m. For full prize details and contest rules, go to [fairfaxcityconnected.com/fallinlove](http://fairfaxcityconnected.com/fallinlove).

### Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

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(From left) are Chris Bruno, director, Economic Development Office; Trinh Scott, program manager, EDO; Councilmembers Janice Miller and Sang Yi; Mayor David Meyer; Councilmembers Joe Harmon and Tom Ross; Christina Alexander, manager, Transportation Capital Projects; Wendy Sanford, Transportation director; Alice Lippert, vice chair, Environmental Sustainability Committee; and Stephanie Kupka, coordinator, Sustainability.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MATTHEW KAISER

## Fairfax City Charges into the New Year

Electric-vehicle charging stations are now available.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

As more and more automakers transition to electric vehicles – and their popularity rises with consumers – the City of Fairfax is joining the charge. On Jan. 13, it celebrated the installation of four new electric-vehicle charging stations.

Residents may now boost their electric vehicle's battery while conducting business at City Hall, 10455 Armstrong St., or while parked beside Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive. Each location features two chargers, plus adjacent parking spaces reserved for electric vehicles.

"This is a lead-by-example project," said Fairfax Mayor David Meyer. "By the end of this decade, electric vehicles aren't going to be a novelty – they'll be what people buy to replace conventional automobiles."

Because electric vehicles have fewer moving parts and no internal-combustion engines, both their fuel and maintenance costs are lower than traditional vehicles. Between 2017 and 2019, electric-vehicle registration in Virginia increased 157 percent. And in 2019, the number of public electric-vehicle charging stations in Virginia surged to 614 – up from 274 just five years ago.

Furthermore, Fairfax's charging stations are just the beginning of a massive infrastructure transition. They're

part of a larger push by the City toward even more innovation, sustainability and technology in the future.

The City of Fairfax has already committed to improving local air quality by reducing Citywide, greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions by 80 percent – from its 2005 baseline levels – by 2050. And Meyer is optimistic that Fairfax will exceed that goal and possibly accomplish it even earlier.

"I do believe, 20 years from now, when we convert to electric vehicles, we'll see a demonstrable increase in air-quality improvement, even though we'll have a population increase," said Meyer.

And installing the new charging stations is a step forward. Their \$35,000 cost was funded by federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality money dedicated to transportation projects that improve air quality.

In 2018, transportation and mobile sources accounted for 40 percent of the City's GHG emissions. "The Washington Metropolitan area really doesn't have any heavy-industrial manufacturing," said Meyer. "The vast majority of the air-quality problems we have here come from automobiles."

"The new generation who'll inherit all this – our children and grandchildren – are going to be living in a completely different world," he continued. "They're going to look back on photographs and videos of people in gasoline-powered cars and it will seem like a distant memory."

— MATTHEW KAISER CONTRIBUTED TO THIS STORY.



The electric-vehicle charging station outside Fairfax City Hall.

Coach Gerry Pannoni played a big role in the undefeated season of 2019-2020



PHOTO BY ALDO RAZO/  
SOUTH COUNTY HS

## National Coach of the Year

South County Coach Gerry Pannoni recognized for undefeated season in 2019-2020.

BY MIKE SALMON

THE CONNECTION

Former South County High School football coach Gerry Pannoni has been selected by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Coaches Association as the national football coach of the year. Pannoni is one of 23 high school coaches from across the country to be recognized in boys sports and girls sports.

Pannoni earned national coach of the year honors after guiding South County to an undefeated 15-0 record and the 2019 Class 6 state championship with a 14-13 win over Oscar Smith in the finals. He also led his first South County team to a 11-4 record and a state runner-up finish in 2011. Entering his 10th season at South County, Pannoni has led the Stallions to an overall 84-31 record.

Pannoni was recognized for his work in the 2019-2020 year. High school football was cancelled this fall season because

of the pandemic, but Fairfax County high schools plan to start an abbreviated season this spring.

Pannoni taught in the classroom for years, coaching for Centreville and Woodson in the past before heading to South County. He was known as "the first guy to step up," when the school system called for a volunteer, said Fairfax County Public Schools athletic director Bill Curran. "He's very, very dedicated," added Curran, noting the role sports plays in a high school education "is a huge part," of high school, Curran said.

Since 1920, the NFHS has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and performing arts activities that help students succeed in their lives. Virginia High School League is part of the NFHS, and spokesperson Mike McCall said, "Students who participate in high school athletics and academic activities perform better in the classroom."

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# Fairfax City Budget: Cautious Optimism

FROM PAGE 3

Meyer. "I hope commercial uses will increase."

"Most of the development has been mixed-use," replied Johnston. "So we may see a little bit of a shift."

Hodgkins also showed a chart listing items in three categories – FY 21 Initiatives/Increases, Operations and Personnel – that were left in reserve to reduce the FY 21 budget shortfall, but not removed from the budget. He then indicated which items "we believe are most critical" to take out of reserve. Altogether, they total \$1,462,500.

STALZER said that, even if that entire amount was restored to the budget, "We'd still have roughly a \$1 million surplus." Included is a partial thawing of a hiring freeze that the City had to implement. Said Stalzer, "We've got two to three dozen [personnel] positions in some state of being frozen that we'd like to look at."

Councilmember Sang Yi said he

hoped the \$1 million surplus could be used "to reduce the next real-estate tax rate for our residents because they, too, have been suffering, on various levels."

Even if all the funds held in reserve are restored to the current budget, said Meyer, "It doesn't mean they'll necessarily be all used up by the end of this fiscal year, June 30. And then we could consider where in the FY 22 budget to apply them. For example, our City employees didn't receive a pay adjustment, at all, this year."

Councilmember Jon Stehle praised the results the City achieved by placing the items in reserve "to help close a projected, nearly \$18 million, FY 21 budget shortfall." The Council then gave a thumbs-up vote approving all the previously reserved items that Hodgkins and Stalzer recommended for restoration to the current budget.

"This was a helpful exchange of opinions," said Meyer. "[City] staff now has our guidance on these matters going forward."

### Announcements



## Brown v. Board of Education SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS THROUGH MARCH 26, 2021

The Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Program was established by the Virginia General Assembly in 2004 to provide educational opportunities for persons who were denied an education in Virginia due to the closing of the public schools during Massive Resistance between 1954 and 1964. The program is open to new eligible applicants for the 2021-2022 school year. For applications and information on eligibility, visit:

[BROWNSCHOLARSHIP.VIRGINIA.GOV](http://BROWNSCHOLARSHIP.VIRGINIA.GOV)

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

### Legals

Effective January 20, 2021, Dr. Jessica Russo Revand acquired the Burke practice location of Northern Virginia Endodontic Associates, PLLC and will now practice under the name of Russo Endodontics. If you are a patient of the practice, at your written request (or the written request of an authorized representative), copies of your records can be sent, within a reasonable time, to any other like-regulated provider of your choice or provided to you pursuant to § 32.1-127.1:03. Please note that there will be an administrative fee of \$5.00 to offset the cost of reproduction of your records and supplying you or your provider chosen by you with the copies of your records.

### Legals

#### ABC LICENSE

Harvest Eats LLC trading as Jinya Ramen Bar, 2911 District Avenue, Ste 170, Fairfax, VA 22031. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On and Off Premises & Mixed Beverage Restaurant license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Sam Shoja, Sole Member. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at [www.abc.virginia.gov](http://www.abc.virginia.gov) or 800-552-3200.

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-Werner Heisenberg

### Announcements

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### Legals

#### ABC LICENSE

Urban Mosaic LLC trading as Urban Hot Pot, 2980 District Ave Ste 110, Fairfax VA 22031-2339. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine & Beer On Premises/ Mixed Beverage Restaurant license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Kam Wong, Member. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at [www.abc.virginia.gov](http://www.abc.virginia.gov) or 800-552-3200.



Let us know about an upcoming event

[connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar](http://connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar)

# CALENDAR

## FEB. 1-13

**Mardi Gras at the Workhouse.** In-Person on Saturday, Feb. 13., 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. The Workhouse Arts Center is thrilled to present its first-ever Mardi Gras celebration. Join them for two weeks of family-friendly events that will engage, inspire, teach and make you laugh. This mini festival will include: Online workshops on festive mask making; Online Mixology sessions; Online demonstrations on how to make floats or yard decorations; In-person glass bead demonstrations; In-person cooking classes; Parade on the Workhouse Campus; and Drive In Comedy Shows.

## FEB. 2-26

**The Learning Connection.** At The Old Firehouse, McLean. The Old Firehouse Learning Connection is a supervised e-learning program supervised by staff, for students in the 5th-10th grades. The program will provide a supervised environment for students to complete their school-led virtual instruction. Staff will provide limited socially distant recreation opportunities for students during their breaks. Program waivers, participant contracts and additional information will be sent to all registered participants prior to the start of the program. Cost is \$300. To register, visit: [www.oldfirehouse.org](http://www.oldfirehouse.org) or call 703-448-8336, TTY: 711.

## WEDNESDAY/FEB. 3

**The Unruly Theatre Project's Virtual Improv Show.** 7 p.m. Sponsored by The Alden. Join the Unruly Theatre Project's virtual fall improv shows from the comfort of your couch! Register online and a Zoom link and password for the show will be emailed to you. Participants must register two hours in advance of showtime. Register online at [www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org).

## SATURDAY & MONDAY, FEB. 6 & 8

**"The University of Wonder & Imagination."** 11 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 12 p.m., 12:30 p.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 4 p.m., 4:30 p.m., and 5 p.m. The University of Wonder & Imagination is now enrolling students of all ages and magical abilities...and there's a place with your name on it! Assemble with your fellow students and journey to the most unusual of universities, where the mysterious Professor Bamberg will send you off to interact with the liveliest of lecturers, choose your subjects

of study, enter themed rooms (such as Math, Science, and Art!) and encounter all kinds of problems and puzzles, unlocking your magical powers as you go. The decisions made by you during the event will shape your unique experience. Purchase tickets \$15/\$10 MCC district residents.

## SUNDAY/FEB. 7

**Folklore Society of Greater Washington's Mini-Fest.** 7 p.m. Online. Featuring an online concert with international world musician Kinobe, followed by storyteller Noa Baum. After an intermission enjoy sassy blues and honky-tonk music from singer/guitarists Eleanor Ellis and Martha Burns. Free, but reservations are required. Information and reservations: <https://fsgw.org/event-3738989/Registration>

## SUNDAY/FEB. 7

**Worst Spy Ever.** 2-3:30 p.m. Cold War Museum (100% virtual). Most damaging spy ever? Robert Hanssen. Learn why from the Historian of the FBI. Visit the website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ultimate-betrayal-robert-hanssen-people-he-got-killed-and-the-lessons-tickets-123410242357>.

## SUNDAY/FEB. 7

**Meet Author Kiley Reid.** 2 p.m. Cosponsored by The Alden and FCPL. Cosponsored by The Alden and the Fairfax County Public Library. Celebrate Black History Month with Kiley Reid, bestselling author of "Such a Fun Age." Reid is the instant New York Times bestselling author of "Such a Fun Age," a critically acclaimed new novel that shines a bright light on the subtle, yet deeply impactful aspects of race and privilege in America. To register or for more information, visit [www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org).

## SUNDAY/FEB. 7

**McLean Uncorked Part 3.** 5-6 p.m. Free admission; registration is required. For beginners and connoisseurs alike, this wine experience will not disappoint! Join your friends, start your Super Bowl celebration early, or surprise your Valentine and enjoy this fun, virtual, live and interactive wine tasting and food pairing event. Four unique wines for this tasting are available to pre-purchase by registrants at Balducci's in McLean. A wine expert will lead this session and explore the selected wines as well as other interesting aspects of the art of wine tasting. To register or for more information, visit [www.mclean-center.org](http://www.mclean-center.org).

## 2021 Virtual Fairfax County Teen Job and Opportunity Fairs: Signup Begins Feb. 1

For the past few years Supervisor Pat Herrity's office, Fairfax County Public Schools and Connection Newspapers, along with Supervisors' offices, businesses, and community organizations including our local chambers, have hosted very successful teen job fairs and career-building workshops. These events focused on students and young job seekers looking for a variety of employment opportunities; full time, after-school, seasonal positions, internship opportunities, and volunteer positions. The fairs have provided thousands of teenagers the opportunity to get in front of employers and for our employers to find talented Fairfax County students to fill their positions.

This year Herrity is once again teaming up with Connection Newspapers, Fairfax County Public Schools, community chambers and organizations and fellow Board members to bring our community two Fairfax County Teen Job Fairs and Career-Building Workshops. Normally, there are 5-6 fairs at local high schools. With the limitations of the ongoing pandemic,

this year's fairs will be hosted virtually through Brazen, a professional virtual job fair platform. The virtual fairs are scheduled for Saturday, March 13, 2-5 p.m. and Saturday, March 20, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The fairs will be open to all teens in Fairfax County looking for employment, volunteer opportunities, or tips on building their resume. Free online booth space will be provided to businesses and organizations to advertise their available positions. We will also host resume and career building sessions with our Chamber of Commerce partners.

Beginning Feb. 1, students as well as employers can register to attend at this link, [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield/teenjobfairs](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield/teenjobfairs).

First jobs are important, and these events help connect teens with employers and prepare our youth for the workforce. This year especially, students and employers are desperate for opportunities provided by the fair with the hope that some normalcy will begin this summer.

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## Progress, I Guess?



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I received in the mail today what in the sales/marketing world, we'd call a "pre-approach" letter. It was a letter confirming that my health care provider is aware of me and my covid needs. Moreover, it offered up the tantalizing notion that one day (although they didn't specify) when it is my turn, I will indeed get contacted/scheduled for my inoculation. Unfortunately, they couldn't be any more specific because their allotment of vaccines barely scratches the surface of the actual need. Nevertheless, both my wife and I have been assured that we are on a list. I suppose that's something. As "Forrest, Forrest Gump" would say: "One less thing."

Not that I'm paranoid about catching the virus or ever do I throw caution to the wind by actually integrating into the outside/formerly normal world, especially considering the comorbidity I represent: cancer, but all things being equal, I'd sure like to receive my inoculation. I'd just as soon die of old age. And my wife is doing everything she can to make that happen. She has me on a very short leash. I'm barely able to heel. A pandemic will do that.

As we begin our second year of living dangerously, the vaccines certainly offer hope. Hope can't iron out the logistics, however. Apparently, at least according to the daily news coverage, inoculating so many people in so many places with or without the proper refrigeration is a nearly overwhelming task. Then add in the necessary ingredients: ppe, masks, syringes, swabs, trained inoculators, et cetera, and you've got a hurdle Edwin Moses couldn't overcome. To see that this virus has killed more Americans than died in World War II is a stunning reality to behold. Seeing the death tally rise every day is a jaw-dropping/head-shaking moment. Progress, so far, has been hard to come by. Though there are some alternative theories and explanations about the actual numbers, I tend to believe what the news organizations are telling us. I really don't see the motivation to do otherwise.

Ultimately, we're all responsible for our own actions - and inactions, and the consequences that follow (I only heard that a million times from my father while growing up). If I was to contract covid, I'd have no one to blame but myself. My wife might blame others as she's very impatient/indignant of people who are not adhering to public health advisories and who don't abide by the Vulcan philosophy, especially during a worldwide pandemic: "The good of the many outweigh the good of the few." And it doesn't seem a stretch to ask/expect that your fellow man - and woman, should respect the constriction of some of our freedoms as together, hopefully, we work to overcome this once-in-a-century health crisis. In an odd kind of karma, what goes around does indeed come around. And to prevent this virus from continually coming around, we must be mindful of the scientific facts as more and more is known about this virus.

Still for those of us who have survived this worst pandemic since the Spanish Flu, it's one year and counting. I don't view it as much of an accomplishment, more a series of random strokes that add up to luck. However, since luck doesn't last forever, and can't exactly be counted on, I was happy to receive today's letter acknowledging that the health care powers that be know who I am and where to find me and that I need a vaccination. Presuming otherwise, in the midst of an organizational challenge the likes of which haven't ever been experienced by the current generation in charge, or previous generations for that matter, would be illogical. Here's hoping we all "live long and prosper."

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

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