

CONNECTION

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Individuals and families in need of winter outerwear select one coat and accessory for each household member at the Hunter Mill District Winter Coat Closet held outdoors during the 2020-21 season.

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

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NEWS



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Individuals and families in need of winter outerwear select one coat and accessory for each household member at the Hunter Mill District Winter Coat Closet held outdoors during the 2020-21 season.

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Keeping Hunter Mill Residents Warm This Winter

No one needs to go without a coat.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
 THE CONNECTION



Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill District) stops by the District Winter Coat Closet distribution held in partnership with Cornerstones.

The Hunter Mill District Winter Coat Closet that Cornerstones ran in partnership with the Hunter Mill District Supervisor's office continues to be a much-needed resource for the community. On Saturday, Feb. 6, those in need of coats and other winter items lined up early, well before the 10 a.m. opening, with lines stretching down the sidewalks.

"Those coming to us in need of a coat were successful in finding coats. No one left empty-handed," said Susan Alger, Director of Cornerstones Volunteer and Community Engagement Program.

Community donors offered the clean and gently used items, some still with store tags attached. Volunteers sorted cozy puffer coats to heavyweight quilted parkas with hoods in preparation for the event. Others worked to keep the racks filled for shoppers. Alger reported the distribution of 420 coats, 419 hats, gloves, mittens and scarfs, and 164 5-piece mask packs.

Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill District) arrived at the North County Government Center shortly after volunteers

counted out the first groups of individuals to enter the parking lot turned coat boutique. Pleased to continue the partnership initiated by his predecessor Cathy Hudgins, he said, "No one should be without a coat in Hunter Mill District or Fairfax County, and the outpouring of generosity from our residents with coat donations has been incredible."

There will be one more distribution on Saturday, March 6, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 1801 Cameron Glen Drive, Reston, located half a block from Reston Regional Library.

Donations of children's and youths' coats, all sizes, and extra-large adult sizes, 3X and larger, are especially appreciated.

Contact Susan Alger at 571-323-1383 about volunteering at the Winter Coat Closet.

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The Madness of Trust and Betrayal

Months of no hot water for mixed-use Reston condo.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

It's a losing game in the long run for any condo association to postpone needed maintenance on their buildings or make band-aid fixes. It's also not best practices for a condo association to dip into their coffers, funded by members, to pay for millions of billable gallons of Fairfax County water leaking into the ground.

Matt and Robin Jordan own a unit in the Quayside mixed-use building facing Lake Anne Village Center Plaza in Reston. On Wednesday, Feb. 10, they and some individuals

in the other 19 residential and 8 commercial units reached their limit. The day marked 77 days without hot water.

Matt said he and Robin felt "extremely frustrated," "ignored," and "not informed of what's going on." They hung a spray-painted protest banner for all to see. Emblazoned with orange letters, it read: 'Entire building without hot water since 12/1. Where are you, LARCA and CMC?' Then they took to social media.

"We elected the (Lake Anne Reston Community Association, LARCA) board. We chose CMC (Community Management Corporation). When you feel your voice is not heard, you have to resort to some other method," Matt said.

GEORGE AND VICKY HADJIKYRIAKOU also own a unit at Quayside. On Feb. 11, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration recorded the water in the Northern Atlantic Ocean at Portland, Maine, at 40.5 degrees. Asked to take the water's temperature flowing out of their "hot tap," Vicky sent an image to the Connection. The photo shows the recorded temperature with a difference of only 2.5 degrees, at 44 degrees.

"This is outrageous," George said. "We pay \$1000 a month in condo fees for electricity, water, basic cable, and trash removal."

Robin Jordan said that she took a thermometer assessment of her water. "It was coming out of the tap at 45 degrees," she said. The Jordans remain distraught at having to put big soup pots of water in the tub and squat over them to take a sponge bath.

Jason Romano, co-owner of Lake Anne Brew House, part of the Quayside building, says he is the 2019-2021 President of the five-member LARCA board. Political in-fighting and squabbling among board members became apparent. Election result as to who



Residents in the Quayside Condominium Building in Reston on Lake Anne Plaza peacefully protest against their treatment by the Lake Anne Reston Community Association (LARCA), charged with keeping and maintaining the property in good condition, including access to hot water.

is LARCA President is contested by LARCA board member Senzel Schaefer who says she is President. The case is headed toward litigation.

Schaefer said during her tenure as LARCA President for the October 2019-2021 term, she planned to replace CMC once she and others had a majority on the board. However, Schaefer's first motion and one the LARCA board did unanimously approve, according to Schaefer, was Ernst & Young's operational audit, an analysis of expenditures and activities. It flagged concerns on past financial practices decision-making by the board between 2017- up to Nov. 2019. An investigation ordered by the Commonwealth Attorney to be conducted by the Fairfax County Police followed.

Referencing the 2019-2021 election, Schaefer said, "Well, he (Romano) lost but refused to concede. CMC anointed him President, and continues to bill LARCA from their base cost of \$140,000 to approximately \$225,000 a year. LARCA is a cash cow for CMC." She said the locks on the doors are now changed, and she cannot enter.

When asked if Romano is board president, Matt Jordan said, "I'm saying he's recognized by CMC management... And that's a big difference. They have control of the board because three members banded together... Two members are effectively shut out of decision-making." Jordan added if it was an impartial board, where they agreed to disagree, they could get back to business. But with a split, there is not the leadership capable of getting the situation in hand.

"We, as the residents, suffer," said Jordan.

In the meantime, Quayside resident Bac



Matt Jordan and his wife, Robin (not pictured), spray-painted their protest banner and hung it off the railing of their condominium. Their unit happens to be one unit away from Lake Anne Brew House, owned and operated by Jason Romano, who some people call the 'disputed' President of the Lake Anne Reston Community Association (LARCA), that Community Management Corporation, CMC recognizes as President.

Hoang said she goes to her sister's house to shower twice a week. "But my husband, he has to suffer the shower every day... We are not young. My husband is in his 80s." Like Jordan, Hoang said the big issue was that the LARCA board was in dispute of who is the board and that one group "hijacked" it.

"So, we are in the middle, and we get squished... I think we are all a bunch of stupid people to have let it happen for so long," Hoang said.

As the days of no hot water wore on, some asked about complaining to the Health Department. Hoang said she was cautioned not to do it, so instead, she kept quiet. "If you do that, they will condemn our building, and where will we go," Hoang said she was told.

According to Hadjikyriakou, who previously served on the elected five-member LARCA board, the root cause of the problem was LARCA's decision to manage the property itself rather than hire a "true" management company.

"We were taking information from the staff we hired to reside on the property... Unfortunately, people on the board are not engineers, plumbers, or electricians... It

ends up costing people who live here," he said.

The second problem Hadjikyriakou said is that if LARCA had managed its finances correctly, planning for infrastructure replacement and building up the reserve funds from the beginning, they would not have needed to pay in so to play catch up.

COVID closed Jennifer Lee's new business, Barberland Gentleman's Grooming, on Washington Plaza. That hurt. Then eleven weeks of no hot water cut severely into anticipated revenue. "I lost a lot of money. I've been waiting and waiting... Now I boil water with a hot pot I got at the Korean grocery. I tell my clients I'm treating you like a king."

SUPERVISOR Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill District) said, "My office is aware of the complaints filed to Fairfax County Code Enforcement, and they are investigating. This situation illustrates the serious problem of aging and decaying infrastructure at Lake Anne, which may require intervention to ensure this cultural heart of Reston is sustainable."

Romano is co-owner of Lake Anne Brew House that occupies one of the first-floor commercial units at Quayside. According to Romano, hot water from the boiler is leaking out of the underground trunk lines, the pipes beneath the concrete on the first floor commercial units. Romano said "approximately 330 gallons" of water leak into the ground every hour. "We're talking 60-year-old lines that have holes, so we're trying to deal with that."

Then there is the gas hot water boiler itself. The board approved an interim solution to get hot water to residents, according to Romano. The board first replaced the old 70-gallon commercial boiler with a new 70-gallon boiler for \$12,000. Romano said that it proved not appropriate because water continued to leak out of the pipes, and condensation formed, which could ruin the boiler. They had it disconnected.

On Feb. 11, the board approved the \$35,000 purchase of another, more powerful boiler, one with a 121-gallon capacity and greater BTUs, according to Romano. "What

Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is!

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



COMMENTARY

I have never known a politician who has not promised better schools, quality of life and safety. Although these standards are defined differently by the persuasion of the persons making them, the promises share one thing in common: to be realized fully will cost money. The true measure of an officeholder comes not in the promises made but whether that person is willing to put their money where their mouth is. I could not be prouder as a member of the House of Delegates and the Appropriations Committee of the budget passed in the House of Delegates last week. The Senate passed a very similar budget with the differences between the two to be resolved in a conference committee over the next couple of weeks.

While debate over the budget is most often about spending, discussions need also to take into account revenues and investments. There had been dire predictions about state revenues heading into the pandemic, but the loss in revenue has not been nearly as great as feared. In

addition, federal monies coming to the state for education and for COVID relief helped make up for lost revenue. The Governor's proposed budget already had more than a billion dollars in reserve, and the House added \$150 million to that amount to soften the impact of a decline of revenue next year without the same level of federal relief.

Both the House and the Senate funded the biggest investment in preschool education ever made. I term it an investment for much research shows that investing in early childhood education pays off many fold in later learning success, civic engagement, and quality of life. The House budget includes the state share of a five percent pay increase for teachers whose average pay has continued to lag behind the national average and who have had to do double duty this year with virtual learning. Funding is provided for another step to a 1:325 school counselor-to-student ratio moving towards the ideal of 1:250. Federal relief of \$1.3 billion is

provided for schools along with \$51.1 million to address COVID-19 learning loss. An amount of \$84 million is provided in the budget to maintain affordable access to Virginia colleges and universities and \$8.5 million to increase Tuition Assistance Grant awards and include online education.

COVID-19 concerns drove many budget decisions. In addition to getting the schools open when safe and to make up for lost learning, the budget provides paid sick leave for essential workers, increased funding for nursing homes, and worker compensation for health care workers and first responders.

The budget makes investments in the future of the economy and our environment. Funding is provided to expand broadband access throughout the state. A one-time five million dollar capitalization fund is established for rebates on the purchase of electric vehicles for persons whose income qualifies them. The largest ever amount is provided for agricultural best-management practices to meet Chesapeake Bay clean-up benchmarks.

The best compliment that I and my colleagues could receive is that we put the public's money where we have been told that it should be!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Three Months Without Hot Water at Lake Anne

To the Editor:

The Lake Anne of Reston issue is a microcosm of our national politics. We, too, are experiencing dysfunction due to years of mismanagement by a property management company that cashed checks and turned a blind eye. As the Ernst & Young audit revealed, there are violations of our bylaws and self-dealing in this vacuum of oversight. The hot water crisis is a direct result of these compounding issues. Today we approach nearly three months of 25 units without hot water, which has affected the daily lives of 50+ members.

I, along with Directors Kevin Le and George Hadjikyriakou, consulted with master plumbers and a structural engineer. We developed the short term and long term solutions and were in the process of implementing the remediation plan to fix the plumbing. To our surprise, a recently defeated Board member, Jason Romano, directed our Maintenance Manager to change the locks to the boiler room and the LARCA administration office, locking out the Plumber and Electrician from inspecting the boiler room. We waited outside for hours last week.

Romano also instructed the LARCA property management company Community Management Corporation (CMC) to block the release of funds for any work we planned to initiate. Our efforts are

frozen. CMC refused to return our calls and emails. With no relief designed for the affected owners and our efforts blocked, we requested that CMC supply their own approved vendors, as they should have at the start of the problem, but they have not responded.

As a result, we have 50 people living in a pandemic with no hot water in the middle of winter. They are forced to boil water on the stove, shower at gyms and friends' homes. We laid out the plan to immediately get small water heaters installed in each unit and access the electrical panel to handle added usage. For the long term, the experts suggested abandoning the old, corroded pipes and mapping out a new above-ground pipe system that can easily be accessed when problems arise in the future. Our existing lines are buried under two feet of concrete, a symptom of poor design from inception.

Romano, with the help of CMC, is essentially holding our members hostage. One might ask, why is CMC enabling this? I had been very vocal over the past year about replacing them once we had a majority on the Board. CMC will make well over \$200,000 in 2021 off of LARCA. They have made over \$1.3M over the last 14 years while our infrastructure crumbled.

LARCA deserves a competent, proactive property management company and a Board who will

look out for our community's best interest. Last week, our neighbor Robin Jordan had no choice but to hang a sign on her balcony to express her outrage. Romano refuses to answer the owners' questions in his meetings or respond to members' calls and emails. He directed members to send questions to the LARCA Administrative Assistant, a newly hired CMC employee who will cost us over \$70,000 this year.

I contacted Supervisor Walter Alcorn's office for assistance. They promised a response, and I am still waiting. In two Town Hall style meetings, which Director Kevin Le and I initiated in November and December 2020, I asked Supervisor Alcorn for more involvement and assistance in tackling the aging infrastructure of LARCA. Commercial owner members who are the majority, minority-owned, expressed concern over the favoritism in the form of monies being allocated to a small group's businesses who also controlled our Board of Directors for well over 15 years. They asked that the County intercede on their behalf and even audit our financials as they do not receive services and are left to repair their shop's infrastructure out of pocket while paying exceedingly high association fees. We have requested a follow-up meeting with Supervisor Alcorn.

Many LARCA members contacted the Health Department and

local news organization to raise awareness out of frustration with the lack of response and ongoing cold showers.

Despite our issues, the LARCA community is a vibrant and robust group. This is the sort of community where your neighbors reach out to you just to say hello or to drop off homemade treats, offer to walk your dog, or grocery shop for you. We know that this will pass, too. Still, I want to ensure that the right institutional changes are implemented so that our members can enjoy their homes and community without the worry of losing basic amenities like hot water.

Senzel Schaefer, President,
Lake Anne Reston Condominium
Association (LARCA)

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A Landmark Achievement in Local Scouting

First female Eagle Scouts in the Sully District.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Four local teens have completed all the requirements to become Eagle Scouts. But what sets them apart from other Scouts is that they're girls. And unlike Boy Scouts – who generally take four to six years to earn this rank – these girls did it in just two years.

On Feb. 8 – Scouting's 111th birthday – Boy Scouts of America (BSA) officially recognized the Sully District's Inaugural Class of female Eagle Scouts. They are Megan Staton, Christina Alvarez, Elena Taylor and Bailey Ruhl.

"This is a huge deal for these girls," said Christina's mom, Jennifer Alvarez. "They've all been part of Scouting for years, be it as a sister attending Cub Scout events with their brothers or as participants in Girl Scouts, Scouts BSA or Venture Crew. They were founding members of their all-girl troops and have all served as senior patrol leaders, among other positions, besides holding several president/vice-president positions in their crews."

Scouts BSA began allowing girls into its Scouting program in February 2019. The two all-girl groups that formed in the Sully District were Troop 893G, sponsored by Centreville United Methodist Church, and Troop 1137G, sponsored by the Izaak Walton League, Arlington-Fairfax Chapter.

Proud of all four new female Eagle Scouts, Alvarez said, "Because of these young ladies' Scouting experiences, they've all improved their leadership and communication skills and lived by the Scout Oath and Scout Law."

Megan Staton

Megan Staton, 17, of Troop 893G, is a Westfields High senior and follows her dad



Megan Staton



Christina Alvarez



Elena Taylor



Bailey Ruhl

and brother in achieving Eagle Scout. She has earned her Gold Award for Girl Scouts in 2020, completed her Order of the Arrow Ordeal Weekend and will soon achieve Venture Summit rank (the highest rank in Venturing). She also earned her Venture Rang-

er award, which exemplifies challenging, high-level, outdoor-adventure skills.

Staton earned two palms with her Eagle Rank (for a total of 31 merit badges) and has made treks to Philmont and Okpik Northern Tier High Adventure camps. She is

currently president of the Council Venturing Officers' Assn. for the National Capital Area Council. Her Eagle project was to refurbish Westfield's lecture hall. She refreshed the walls, then painted Westfield-themed décor and created a gallery for graduating-class pictures.

Christina Alvarez

A Chantilly High junior, 16-year-old Christina Alvarez of Troop 893G is excited to join her great-grandfather, uncle, cousin and older brother as Eagle Scouts. She's also a Juliette in Girl Scouts and will be finishing up her Silver Trefoil (100 service hours in defined categories) and Gold awards this year. Furthermore, Alvarez was Troop 893G's first Senior Patrol Leader.

To date, she's earned six palms in addition to her Eagle Rank (51 merit badges). With Venture Crew 893, she also plans to finish her Summit Rank this year and is working toward receiving the Ranger Award.

Alvarez has attended Okpik Northern Tier High Adventure winter camp and plans to attend Summit and Sea Base, over the next few years. Her Eagle Project was building insect hotels at the Izaak Walton League's Arlington-Fairfax Chapter.

Elena Taylor

A senior at Centreville High, Elena Taylor, 17, is in Troop 893G and joins her great-grandfather and her twin brother as proud Eagle Scouts. When asked why she joined Scouts BSA, she explained, "My brother, Robert, was in the troop, I watched him come up through the BSA process and had gotten to tag along on many occasions. When I was old enough, I joined Venturing Crew 893, as there was a coed opportunity there."

For her Eagle Project, Taylor worked with Ellanor C Lawrence Park to educate the community about invasive plant species and remove them. She led a team of 60 volun-

SEE GIRLS, PAGE 7

AREA ROUNDUPS

Stringfellow Road Closing for Overnight Bridge Work

Northbound and southbound Stringfellow Road approaching I-66 in Fair Oaks/Fair Lakes will close nightly, this Friday-Sunday, Feb. 19-21, for installation of bridge beams. These beams are for the new I-66 West bridge over Stringfellow Road, as part of the Transform 66 Outside the Beltway Project.

Drivers traveling on Stringfellow will be directed to a detour route and should allow extra time. The Stringfellow Road ramps to I-66 East from I-66 West will also be closed, all three nights. Work hours are 9 p.m.-6 a.m.

All work is weather-dependent and will be rescheduled if inclement conditions occur. The I-66 bridges over Stringfellow are being widened to accommodate the new I-66 express lanes and provide room for any future mass transit along I-66.

Jim Hart Is Elected BZA Vice-Chairman

Centreville's Jim Hart has been elected vice-chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA). He served as an at-large member of the BZA since 2000; and from 2004-2020, he served concurrently on the county's Planning Commission. An attorney with Hart & Horan, PC in Fairfax, Hart lives in the Virginia Run community.

Sully District Neighborhood College

Fairfax County's Sully District Neighborhood College – a free, seven-session, civic-engagement program – is now open for registration. Sponsored by Supervisor Kathy Smith (D-Sully), this unique program is open to Sully District resi-

dents interested in learning about Fairfax County and the Sully District.

Through lectures, group discussions and practical experiences, participants will explore how to work with neighbors, community organizations and local government to strengthen neighborhoods and build community capacity. It's also a leadership program for residents who serve as officers on their homeowners' or civic association's board.

Classes will be held virtually on consecutive Thursday evenings, 7-8:30 p.m., from March 11-April 29, via Zoom (no session on April 1). For more information and to register, go to <http://bit.ly/SullyNeighborhoodCollege>. Registration must be received by Monday, March 1.

Residents may visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/myneighborhood/> to confirm in which magisterial district they reside. For questions and to request language or ADA accommodations, contact Amber-Lee Leslie, Sully District Office, at 703-814-7100 or amber-lee.leslie@fairfaxcounty.gov.

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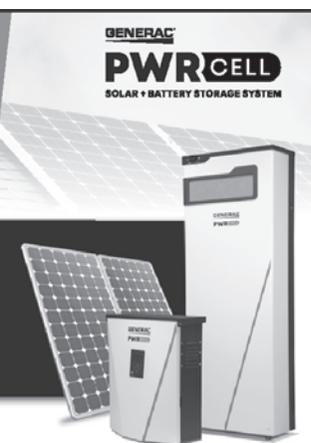
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FEB. 2-26
The Learning Connection. At The Old Firehouse, McLean. The Old Firehouse Learning Connection is a supervised e-learning program supervised by staff, for students in the 5th-10th grades. The program will provide a supervised environment for 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 or call 703-448-8336, TTY: 711.

FRIDAY/FEB. 19
Virtual Family Bingo Night. 7-9 p.m. Virtual event sponsored by the Old Firehouse, McLean. Cost is \$5 per family (per Zoom invite). Join in a virtual evening of fun and prizes with your family. Winners will take their pick of prizes. Preregistration is recommended. Register online at www.oldfirehouse.org or call OFC at 703-448-TEEN (8336).

FEB. 21 AND FEB. 22
Doktor Kaboom! "Look Out! Science is Coming!" Sunday, Feb 21, and Monday, Feb. 22, 4 p.m. Sponsored by the Alden, McLean. "Look Out! Science is Coming!" Even if it is in your kitchen! Doktor Kaboom! is known around the world for taking his audience on an educational tour of the modern scientific method, using humor and comedy while demonstrating spectacular applications of the physical sciences. "Better than Bill Nye" — DC Theatre Scene. \$15/\$10 MCC tax district residents (this fee is per device). To purchase tickets or for more information, visit www.aldentheatre.org.

SUNDAY/FEB. 21
Sing the Bay Fantastic. 7-8:40 p.m. Online. Hilarious and poignant songs about the people who live on America's waterways featuring Janie Meneely (Chesapeake Bay), Lee Murdock (the Great Lakes), and George Ward (the Erie Canal and upstate New York). Visit the website: <https://fsgw.org/event-4147590>. Concert is also a stealth publication party for Janie's new book, "Sing the Bay Fantastic", which highlights the music, history, and culture of America's waterways.

TUESDAY/FEB. 23
Search for Winter Waterfowl. 10-11 a.m. At Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Burke Lake Park is teeming with wildlife, even in the coldest months of winter. See what birds are calling the lake home this season with the park's "Waterfowl" program. During the program, you will walk the shores of Burke Lake in search of winter waterfowl. Be on the lookout for birds, such as loons, lesser scaups and ring-necked ducks. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. This program is designed for participants age 12 to adult. Cost is \$8 per person. Call 703-323-6600.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 24
Unruly Theatre Project Virtual Improv Show. 7 p.m. Virtual at The Alden Theatre, McLean. Join the Unruly

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

Months of No Hot Water in Reston

FROM PAGE 3

we're doing with this is compensating for the water losses that we're experiencing...It should arrive by Tuesday (Feb. 14)."

"We are hoping we can have the hot water restored by the weekend of Friday, Feb. 19," said Romano.

The billable water that passes through the trunk lines will continue to leak into the ground at a rate of approximately 330 gallons an hour. The U.S. Geological Survey water-use data, can visualize, in a mil-

lion gallons, the yearly water loss of the approximate 2,890,800 gallons of water if averaged to 3 million gallons. That is the approximate number of water gallons lost in one year if the trunk line is not repaired or replaced.

The water body would be a swimming pool, 10 feet deep and 801 feet long by 50 feet wide.

"As long as we have an interim solution in place that buys us time... We're not under the gun for implementing a rush job (to repair the leaking lines)," said Romano.

Girls Earn Eagle Scout Rank

FROM PAGE 5

teers to clear 70,000 square feet of parkland. She's also completed her Order of the Arrow Ordeal Weekend.

As a Venturing Scout, Taylor is working on her Summit Rank. She recently finished the requirements for the Ranger Award. And as a Girl Scout, she completed her Silver Award project where she assembled nearly 10,000 food packs to deliver to a local food bank.

Bailey Ruhl

Bailey Ruhl, 17, of Troop 1137G, is a senior at Charles Colgan High and joins her brother in the Eagle Scout family. Indeed, her family has a long history in Scouting in the United Kingdom. Her great-grandfather camped with the founder of Scouting, Lord Robert Baden Powell, and her grandfather

was the youngest Group Scout Leader in the U.K.

Ruhl has served on the staff at Camp Olmsted at the Goshen Scout Reservation in Southern Virginia. She's currently earned four Eagle Palms (44 merit badges) and had the opportunity to complete her Order of the Arrow Ordeal in 2020.

Her Eagle Project was the installation of a commercial playground at Pillar Church in Woodlawn. The project took place over three weekends in November and took more than 430 hours of volunteer work to complete.

Although her time in the troop has only been two years, Ruhl believes that "Scouting is a journey that should not be rushed. It's important to take the time to enjoy the moments along the path and watch the sunsets."

— JENNIFER ALVAREZ CONTRIBUTED TO THIS STORY

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 6

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 show-time. Register online at www.aldentheatre.org.

THURSDAY/FEB. 25

Voices of Woodlawn: A Reckoning by 4 Poets of America's Slave-Holding Past. 12-1 p.m. Virtual event. Hosted by the Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, Alexandria. In Voices of Woodlawn, four poets give voice to the erased lives of the enslaved at Woodlawn, a Fairfax, Virginia former plantation that is now a historic site. Maryland Poets Diane Wilbon Parks, Patrick Washington, Sylvia Dianne "Ladi Di" Beverly and Hiram Larew confront the sadness, anger, injustice, and confusion of such a past and its haunting legacy. They are joined by poet and harmonica player, Cliff Bernier, in a powerful program of witness. Visit the website: <http://www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org/voices-of-woodlawn>

FRIDAY/FEB. 26

Color Utilization. 10 a.m. to noon. Via Zoom. Walt Bartman, the founder and director of Yellow Barn Studio and Gallery, will be giving a demonstration on color utilization at the Friday, February 26 Meeting of the McLean

FRIDAY/FEB. 26

Virtual Family Fun Trivia Night. 7-9 p.m. Virtual at the Old Firehouse, McLean. Gather the whole family around the computer or tablet and get ready for some socially distant trivia. Prizes for winning teams! To register for Old Firehouse events, visit: www.oldfirehouse.org or call 703-448-8336, TTY: 711.

FRIDAY/FEB. 26

A Taste of California - Virtual Wine Tasting event with host, Vienna Vintner - 6:30-7:45 p.m. via Zoom. A benefit for Shepherd's Center serving Oakton-Vienna-Reston-Herndon. During the tasting, Vienna Vintner's owner, Victor Mendes, will be presenting a selection of 3 fine wines from his own winery in California's Paso Robles region. He will be showcasing wines from his VIX selection. To participate in this private tasting experience, contact Vienna Vintner by Feb. 25 at 703-242-9463, or viennavintner@gmail.com, or stop by Vienna Vintner, 320 Maple Ave E, Vienna, VA 22180 to register and purchase your wine. Visit www.scov.org/announcements

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If Michael Corleone Had Lung Cancer



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

"Just when I thought I was out ... they pull me back in." And just when I thought I had a month off from cancer-related appointments, infusions, scans and lab work, et cetera, I experienced a new symptom the other day which warranted an unexpected brain MRI. Though I delayed a few days in sharing my new symptom, on Thursday I emailed my oncologist. Within the day (not nearly soon enough for my wife, Dina), I received a call from my doctor. After a brief conversation during which I described my symptoms in more detail, a diagnostic scan was scheduled for the next day (fortunately an appointment opened up while we were talking. Otherwise, it might not have occurred so soon). According to my oncologist, what I was experiencing is called "disequilibrium." I couldn't walk a straight line. Had a police officer been present, I would have been cited for walking while intoxicated.

Amazingly I received the results from the MRI within a few hours of my appointment. The report from the radiologist was extremely thorough since I had been given "contrast," an infusion which provides better detail for the radiologist. (Given my pre-existing kidney issue, there are certain products which I cannot tolerate, ones which are filtered through the kidney, specifically "contrast.") But this time, my oncologist wanted the clearest picture/assessment possible. (Infusing "contrast" results in a kind of clarity, like the difference between viewing color and black and white.) So receiving an "unremarkable" (no metastasis, "no infarct, no hemorrhage, no intracranial abnormality," no anything) report was particularly encouraging. Now I can breathe again, except for another side effect caused by the lenvima (my thyroid cancer medicine), but that symptom is more par for the course I've been on for the last four months or so. "Disequilibrium" not so much.

Going forward, I am experiencing less balance/dizziness issues. But I'm also no longer - for the moment, taking my thyroid medicine, which I can't imagine is a good thing. However, I'm not going to worry about that in the short term. In the long term, not taking the best possible prescribed treatment for the treatment of papillary thyroid cancer is hardly reassuring to my presumptive life expectancy. Nevertheless, if I've learned anything in my nearly 12 years as a cancer patient, it is that nothing (drugs, side effects, miscellaneous treatment/protocols) lasts forever. Heck, sometimes treatment and all doesn't even last a month. It's best to sit tight and try to be patient. Getting ahead of one's immediate circumstances is unhelpful and could be much ado about nothing (at least that's been my modus).

That being clear to me, anytime I can get a month where I have no scheduled lab work, infusion, injection, diagnostic scan or appointments is to be acknowledged and celebrated almost. Presently, I am, or rather was in the middle of just such an interval until this "disequilibrium" manifested. It's sort of like being called in to work on your off day. Mentally, it really upsets the apple cart, and more specifically your peace of mind. And any time a cancer patient can get some piece of mind, it's extremely valuable. It's mind over something that's the matter.

With a month off from cancer-related activities, one can almost ('almost,' not quite though) live a cancer-free, normal-type life. It's not as if you forget your circumstances however, but it allows a certain mental break which believe me, all us cancer patients need. Without all the constant reminders, one can almost back-burner the whole cancer existence. Unfortunately, this kind of existence is also characteristic of the ups and downs and all-arounds that cancer patients experience. Granted, it's not ideal, but it's still a living, thank God!

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

Herndon HS Band's 'Show Your Love' Tag Day Campaign

PHOTO
CONTRIBUTED

It's the time of the year when love is in the air, and the Herndon High School bands would love for you to show your love.

The Pride of Herndon Virtual Tag Day Campaign goes live on Feb. 14 and will be on through the end of February. Details of this event have been shared on the newly launched fundraiser site <https://give.classy.org/HerndonBandTagDay2021>.

Every year the Pride of Herndon holds its biggest fundraiser event known as 'Tag Day' that sees the band students dressed in their marching band, concert or guard uniforms going door to door in the neighborhood. Students hand out flyers with information about the band and tags with the concert schedule (hence the name – Tag Day) while asking for contributions. This year because of the pandemic, the students have been unable to do this in-person and for the first



'Show Your Love' - a screenshot of Herndon HS Band students attending school virtually from home.

time the Tag Day Campaign has gone virtual.

Donations made by well-wishers and supporters of the band are invaluable in helping fund music instruction, uniforms and instruments. This is key to maintaining a high-quality band program in the community. To thank the community for their support, all the Herndon HS bands perform at an annual Tag Day Concert. Since this year it hasn't been possible to hold this event, the link to the last Tag Day Concert held in November 2019 has also been shared on the campaign website in an effort to share some music.

Visit the high school band website (<https://www.herndonband.org/tag-day-campaign-2020-2021>) for a short summary on how to donate or visit the fundraiser site (<https://give.classy.org/HerndonBandTagDay2021>) for the detailed virtual campaign.

Reston Homicide Suspect Arrested in Newport News

A 20-year-old man has been arrested after he fled the Northern Virginia area following Wednesday's deadly shooting of Samuel Onyeuka in Reston. Jalenn Maurtiece Keene, of Newport News, faces charges of second-degree murder and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony.

Detectives from Major Crimes Bureau were able to identify and subsequently locate Keene through financial records and surveillance footage. Once identified, detectives coordinated with the Newport News Police Department, who safely took Keene into custody on Friday night. Keene will remain in the custody of the Newport News Jail until he is extradited back to Fairfax County.

During Keene's arrest, the Nissan Rogue that was used in the shooting was located in Newport News as well as a gun. Detectives are awaiting test results to determine if the gun located was the gun used in the crime. Detectives continue to investigate the circumstances that led to the shooting, but determined Keene and Onyeuka both attended South Lakes High School.

Officers were called to the 2300 block of Branleigh Park Court shortly after 2 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 10 for a report of gunshots and a person lying on the ground. When officers arrived, they discovered Samuel Onyeuka, 20, of Reston, suffering from gunshot wounds to the upper body. Rescue personnel pronounced him deceased at the scene.

Detectives canvassed the area and determined Onyeuka was walking on the sidewalk near his home when he was shot. Preliminarily, detectives believe this shooting was targeted and not a random act of violence. Moments after the shooting, the suspect was seen leaving the area in a silver SUV, possibly a Nissan Rogue or similar vehicle. The suspect is described as a light skinned black male, slim, approximately 6 feet tall with dark hair in braids or twists.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner ruled the death a homicide following an autopsy. This is an active investigation and detectives continue to conduct interviews and process evidence. This is being investigated as the first homicide year to date in Fairfax County.

Victim specialists from Major Crimes Bureau's Victim Services Division continue to ensure the victim's



PHOTO BY FCPD

Jalenn Maurtiece Keene

family is receiving appropriate resources and assistance.

Detectives are asking anyone with information regarding this incident to call Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 2. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone – 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477), by text – Type "FCCS" plus tip to 847411, and by web – Click [HERE](#). Download our Mobile tip411 App "Fairfax Co Crime Solvers". Anonymous tipsters are eligible for cash rewards of \$100 to \$1,000 dollars if their information leads to an arrest.

For ongoing updates, please read our blog and follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram at @FairfaxCountyPD.

— FCPD PUBLIC AFFAIRS BUREAU

Shepherd's Center Expands to Serve Northern Virginia

The Shepherd's Center serving Oakton, Vienna, Reston and Herndon and the Shepherd's Center of Great Falls are joining forces to continue assisting area seniors, supporting aging in place and creating a world without loneliness. The newly formed Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia (SCNOVA) will continue its partnerships and outreach with the region's faith-based organizations, associations, and local governments to provide free transportation services, companionship, learning opportunities, and caregiver support across expanded service area.

"As an affiliate of the Shepherd's Centers of America, our mission, in part, is to support our sister organizations in the area," said W. Scott Schroth, chairman of the board of directors for the Shepherd's Center serving Oakton, Vienna, Reston and Herndon. "We're excited to welcome Great Falls' vibrant programs and dedicated volunteers to our Oakton, Vienna, Reston and Herndon Shepherd's Center. Our combined strengths as the Shepherd's Center of

Northern Virginia will allow us to continue to serve and help sustain our older neighbors more efficiently."

"The merger is expected to be completed in February," said Philip Pifer, president of the Shepherd's Center of Great Falls. During this time, the centers will continue to provide transportation services to seniors as the work of merging our clients, volunteers and organizations is completed. Free ride services for seniors in Great Falls will continue uninterrupted after the merger. In addition, Great Falls volunteers and clients will be transferred into SCNOVA at the time of the merger, allowing for a seamless transition.

"We at SCGF are delighted with the potential of this partnership, and with SCOVH as our partner," Pifer said. "We evaluated a number of organizations who expressed interest in joining forces, and SCOVH was both the best fit and, in our opinion, offers the best potential. Working together, we hope to provide even better and more impactful services to seniors in Northern Virginia."

BULLETIN BOARD

CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM

Cornerstones' Laurel Learning Center and Embry Rucker Community Shelter announce the sponsorship of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The same meals will be available at no separate charge to all participants at each CACFP facility without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Meals will be provided at these centers: Laurel Learning Center and Embry Rucker Community Shelter. For centers' information, contact: Laurel Learning Center; Courtney Park-Jamborsky, Director 571-323-1414; address 11484 Washington Pl. W., Suite 200, Reston, VA 20190. For Embry Rucker Community Shelter, contact Kristina Kooztz, Director of Homeless Services at 571-323-1438; address 11975 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston, VA 20190.