

Great Falls CONNECTION

SENIOR LIVING

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Sable loves curling up
in baskets, all baskets.
—Amy Miller of Great Falls.

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Coincidentally, the light-colored Great Pyrenees, and the Rhodesian Ridgeback, are both named Apollo.

PET CONNECTION



The rules are posted, and most pet owners follow them.

At Dog Parks, the Clean-Up Bag is a Must

Walks are important for the family dog, but so is scooping the poop.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

At the Old Mill Dog Park in Mount Vernon, Apollo, a light-colored Great Pyrenees, met another dog named Apollo, a Rhodesian Ridgeback, and they ran around until Penny, a collie-mix, showed up, and then all three were in a game of chase. The deck at this dog park was small-stone gravel, and clean-up bags were available, but the trees took in all the scent-marking leg lifts the dogs had to dish out. That's the way it is in 10 county "off leash," dog parks across the area.

This dog park is well used, but there wasn't an "accident" to be seen inside the park. "People are pretty responsible," said Susan, the owner of the Ridgeback. On the trail to the park, someone forgot to bring a bag, and the dog waste is not one of those things that just goes away with the next storm.

JUDY PEDERSEN at the Fairfax County Park Authority is in tune with what's going on at the parks, and has not experienced many problems. "We have not noticed any significant impact to the vegetation surrounding a dog park. Dog owners are required to pick up after the dogs, so we believe any potential impacts that there might be, are mitigated by that practice," Pedersen said.

Since a dog's diet is not a plant-based diet like cows and horses, dog waste is not ideal for use as a fertilizer and "unsuitable for soil enrichment," said DoodyCalls a pet waste clean-up service that started in Northern Virginia in 2000 by Jacob and Susan D'Aniello. Obviously the size of the dog determines the amount of waste, but on average, Doody Calls says that a dog produces about 274 pounds of waste a year. If left on the ground, particularly in a fenced in yard, that could end up as a stinky mess that might take a while to absorb into the ground, and then it's not good for the grass or trees, DoodyCalls said.

Gardeners may go out and buy a bag of manure for the garden, but not all waste is made equal. Whether a specific animal's waste is beneficial to the soil depends primarily upon the animal's diet. As a rule of thumb, in order for waste to be used as an effective fertiliz-

er it must consist mainly of digested plant matter, so that's why the bags of cow manure are so good for the garden and dog waste is not. "Cows and horses are herbivores, which makes their waste ideal for use as fertilizer. In contrast, a dog's diet is made up of mostly animal products, making their waste unsuitable for soil enrichment," DoodyCalls said.

Just throw it in the compost pile, right? That's not the answer either, they said. It doesn't break down at the rate that it would pile up, it could lead to "a number of potential health hazards to families and their pets," DoodyCalls said. Their recommendation is to bag it, tie the bag up so there is no leakage, and throw it in the trash.

There are in-ground waste digesters, but these aren't foolproof either. For one, they have to be moved about once a year, and heavy clay soils like in some parts of Fairfax County, often prevent digesters from draining properly.

Fairfax County off-leash Dog Parks

BARON CAMERON
11300 Baron Cameron Avenue, Reston
Established: September 2001
Capacity: 35 dogs (28 Large / 7 Small)
Special Features: Water supply and separate area for small dogs (under 25 lbs.)

BLAKE LANE
10033 Blake Lane, Oakton
Established: June 2000
Capacity: 25 dogs

CHANDON
900 Palmer Drive, Herndon
Established: January 2003
Capacity: 47 dogs (43 Large / 4 Small)
Special Features: Water supply and separate area for small dogs (under 25 lbs.)

DULLES STATION COMMUNITY PARK
13707 Sayward Blvd, Herndon
Capacity: 18 dogs
Special Features: Water supply, shade pavilion

GRIST MILL
4710 Mt. Vernon Memorial Hwy, Alexandria
Established: April 2006
Capacity: 64 dogs
Special Features: Water supply



Moo Moo Cat Adoption Story

"After ignoring and delaying my twin daughters' requests for a cat, I gave in to their demands last summer. My daughter, Addison, found Moo Moo on Fancy Cats and Dogs Rescue website. Moo Moo is a Baltimore City rescue. We were very blessed to have M&M because he was originally spoken for one hour before we sent our email request. Luckily, M&M's fos-

ter Mom said we should still meet him that afternoon. We immediately drove to Ashburn and in less than five minutes we were walking out the door with our new cat! Needless to say, Moo Moo is what we all needed in these difficult times and we like to think he loves all the attention! "

— MOO MOO, ADDISON & MCKENNA NICHOLS (MCLEAN)



Virginia Is for Pet Lovers Too

Cosmetics testing, research dogs/cats, dangerous dogs, pet store employees come under scrutiny.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

The 2021 Virginia General Assembly had only six companion animal-related bills before it this session; a small number compared to the roughly two dozen during the 2020 session, and a dozen in 2019. Virginians love their pets and legislators are no different. Several frequently sponsor bills aimed to better the lives of animal companions, although the short session this year led to a restriction in the number of bills legislators were permitted to file.

Northern Virginia's Senator Jennifer Boysko (D-33) and Del. Kaye Kory (D-38) sponsored bills in their respective legislative houses to restrict cosmetic testing on animals. The Humane Cosmetic Act (SB1379 and HB2250), which has passed both houses, will prohibit testing of cosmetics on animals in the Commonwealth, and prohibit the sale of any cosmetic that was developed or manufactured using animal testing by any cosmet-



Senator Jennifer Boysko, D-33, sponsor of Senate Humane Cosmetics Act.

ics manufacturer. If signed by the Governor, the testing provision of the Act will go into effect on July 1, 2021, and the ban on sales on Jan. 1, 2022. Unsuccessful with similar bills last year, both legislators found success this time with accord from manufacturer associations.

Sen. William Stanley (R-20), a member of the Senate Agricul-



Delegate Kaye Kory, D-38, House sponsor of the Humane Cosmetics Act.

ture, Conservation and Natural Resources Committee, also is a frequent sponsor of animal bills. He sponsored two bills this session, SB1412 to keep those convicted of animal cruelty from working in the pet industry; and SB1417 to give research dogs and cats an opportunity for an adopted home when no longer needed at a research testing facility, including our institutes of higher education.

Stanley's SB1412 will mirror some restrictions for pet stores and dog breeders that public and private shelters and rescues have operated under for many years. Northern Virginia has had multi-



COURTESY SENATOR STANLEY OFFICE
Senator Bill Stanley, R-20, sponsor of adoptions for research dogs and cat; with Marsy, his beagle rescued from a medical research dog breeding facility

ple examples of pet store manager convictions, where pet stores were closed, only to have the manager move and open at another location. The bill restricts those with animal cruelty, neglect or abandonment convictions from working as owners, managers, employees of pet store or breeders. The bill also requires pet stores to obtain a statement from purchasers or adopters, that the person has not had an animal related conviction, as shelters and rescues are now required to do.

The testing facility dog adoption bill (SB1417), requires that a dog or cat, no longer needed for testing, be given an opportunity for adoption prior to euthanasia, providing that the animal does not pose a health or safety risk to the public. The testing facility may enter into an agreement with a shelter or



Senator Dave Marsden, D-37, sponsor of dangerous dog legislation

rescue, or research arms of higher education research facilities, such as Virginia Technical College, may institute their own adoption programs. Senator Stanley himself adopted a beagle bred for research after visiting a Cumberland medical research breeder with Sen. Dave Marsden (D-37) to inspect the facility. The two Senators wanted to know more about the only medical research dog breeder located in Virginia after discussion of a 2020 General Assembly bill that would have restricted the business, but did not pass. Stanley named his adopted dog Marsy in commemoration of his trip with Sen. Marsden.

Senator Marsden, Chairman of the Senate Companion Animals subcommittee, sponsored a bill to restructure the procedure for adjudicating cases of dangerous dogs; SB1135. The bill provides for the speedy adjudication of such cases, within 30 days of the summons.



Rescuing Annie and Sophie

Mary Kay Claus of Oakton writes:

"My husband Jim Sweeney and I have rescued 4 lab/lab mixes over the years. Attached are photos of our newest two. The first photo shows Annie (2 year old lab mix from HART - adopted in December 2020) and Sophie (6 year old lab/rottweiler mix from LRCP - adopted in December 2020). This photo was taken 6 weeks after Annie joined our home. The second photo shows Annie in her foster home awaiting her forever home. Notice the difference? This is why we rescue dogs.

Annie started her life in Alabama and was shuffled from shelter to shelter since September of 2020 until she made it to HART Rescue in December. We were fortunate to be looking for another lab/lab mix. Annie (as many strays) enter rescue organizations heartworm positive. Ironically, so was Sophie. This is a deadly but treatable disease if you catch it soon. Annie successfully made it through the month long treatment and is now enjoying life in the manner in which she deserves: Daily walks in the woods and weekly weekend visits to the Vienna Dog Park."



Playing Soccer in Great Falls

Gigi Fernandez of Great Falls writes: Shelby the Shiba Inu found herself playing soccer outside in the snow with a volleyball! Shelby came to Great Falls in 2019 and has loved the outdoors ever since. She enjoys long walks along the beach and playing soccer with her favorite people. Shelby is surprisingly good at rock climbing. The Shiba Inu originated in Japan so she is a naturally born climber.

Celebrating Black History

There are ample reasons to be celebrating Black history in Virginia this month and throughout the year.

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



One of the meaningful traditions that has evolved in the Virginia House of Delegates over the last couple of decades has been the celebration of Black History Month by having a speech each day on the House floor about famous Black persons and their struggles and accomplishments in the Commonwealth. According to History magazine, Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing their central role in U.S. history. Also known as African American History Month, the event grew out of "Negro History Week," the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. Since 1976 the month of February has been designated as Black History Month and is celebrated around the world, including in Canada and the United Kingdom.

Virginia has a unique role in Black histo-

COMMENTARY

ry. The first enslaved Blacks arrived in Virginia in 1619, and the labors of these persons were central to the growth of the Virginia colony and then state. It was Black laborers who built the grand plantations' homes and the institutions of higher education while themselves living in meager housing and refused entrance into public schools and colleges. It was Black slave labor that built the early Virginia tobacco economy while being denied all but the most limited income. Black persons supported the lifestyle of the most prominent Virginia families with no public recognition of their accomplishments. As significant as were Jefferson's words that "all men are created equal" in the Declaration of Independence, they did not apply to the slaves in his household nor to the Constitution that counted them as 3/5ths of a person.

The Emancipation Proclamation, the outcome of the Civil War and the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment did not result in equal-

ity under the law for Black citizens. Under the federal Reconstruction government about one hundred Black citizens were elected to public office between 1869 and 1890 including a Black congressman, but a swift reaction by conservative whites led to Jim Crow laws and voting laws that quickly curtailed the power of Black voters. The 1902 Virginia Constitution that included a literacy test and poll tax for voting limited the number of Black voters to such a degree that they did not regain their numbers at the turn of the century until the 1990s.

The recent history of voting in Virginia offers reasons to celebrate. There are more Black members of the Virginia General Assembly today than at any time since Reconstruction. There are two Black congressmen from Virginia. The Lieutenant Governor, the President of the Virginia Senate, and the majority leader of the House of Delegates are Black. The General Assembly has made historic strides in repealing Jim Crow laws, expanding voter participation and reforming criminal justice laws and practices that discriminated against persons of color. Virginia was the first state to have a Black governor, and for the nominations to run this fall there are at least two Black women and one Black man running for governor; two or more Black men running for lieutenant governor and at least one Black man running for the attorney general nomination. There are ample reasons to be celebrating Black history in Virginia this month and throughout the year.

High School Students Receive Peace Awards

Students from 24 Fairfax County public schools have been named recipients of the 2021 Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County, designed to recognize young people who work as peacemakers. Recipients will be recognized at a virtual reception in March.

The Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County were begun in 2006 to encourage people to think more about peace as both a means and an end, and to recognize young people who work as peacemakers. Every year, the high schools in Fairfax County are asked to select one junior or senior, or a group of students, whose work has promoted peace. The project is organized by volunteers and funded by donations from 17 secular and religious sponsoring organizations.

The 2021 recipients include the following students from our area:

Aamirah "Molly" Malik, Herndon High School -- As part of a group of students, she gave gifts through Heifer International of a cow and chickens to a family in Africa in honor of their geography teacher. The animals have enabled the family to become self-sustaining entrepreneurs through the sale of milk and eggs. She is a member of When We All Vote, registering people to vote and taking an organizational role.

Shreya Papneja, Langley High School established the nonprofit CHAPS - Children's Health Awareness Program in Schools to help enable school children to make health-conscious decisions. The organization has provided information to students and parents about health and

nutrition and provided them with information on local resources and held food drives. During the COVID pandemic, the program raised more than \$5,000 for the charity Real Food for Kids through outreach and a GoFundMe account.

Katie Monacella, Madison High School organized a regional hub of the Sunrise Movement, a youth movement to stop climate change. She coordinated a climate strike to express the importance of the climate crisis and, with the group, asked FCPS to establish a Green New Deal, outlining changes the school system could make to become more environmentally sustainable. They proposed more energy-efficient windows, solar panels, and electric school buses. She was honored by the Fairfax Board of Supervisors for her efforts.

Loredana Munteanu, Marshall High School -- Originally from Moldavia, Munteanu had a formative experience at the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C., that reinforced her commitment to improving diplomatic relations on the international level, as well as within her former country. She and her brother were invited to talk about their own experiences growing up in Moldova and the U.S., from the perspectives of insiders and outsiders to both cultures.

Brittany Peng, McLean High School is the chief executive officer of LeadPeace, a Fairfax County student organization that empowers young people to become community leaders and peacebuilders. Peng currently manages two new initiatives: Lead Talks, a series of monthly speaker events to share the stories of youth

leaders, especially those who identify as people of color, female, or other minorities; and ArtPEACE, that hosts monthly art challenges and dialogues to foster discussions about social inequity and to promote unity.

Diana Ho, South Lakes High School is a mental health advocate, working to get more services in FCPS. As a member of Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement (VOICE), she spoke in support of VOICE's budget proposal to Governor Ralph Northam for funding mental health services in schools. She and other students founded the VOICE Teen Team and lobbied the Virginia General Assembly in 2019 about their proposals. Based on her own experiences, Diana offers advice to those new to mental health self-care and self-awareness through her Take Care website.

TJHSST Assistive Technology Club, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology Students in TJ's Assistive Technology Club (ATC) use their technology skills to provide support for younger students with limited mobility, speech, or hearing abilities. Over more than 12 years, members of the ATC have designed books, enhanced instructional materials, developed games, and implemented specially designed software programs for use with the children's specialized communication devices. Club members meet weekly with the younger children via video conferencing, sharing colorful, educational online games and other materials they created to meet specific needs of the children.

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Town Hall to Discuss Springvale Road Bridge Replacement

The Great Falls Citizens Association is sponsoring a community-wide Town Hall to discuss a proposal to replace the Springvale Road Bridge. This Virtual Meeting will be held this Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021 at 7 p.m.

This outreach effort will afford GFCA members and Great Falls residents with an opportunity to speak to the issue, and hear presentations by GFCA and VDOT planners. Dranesville Supervisor, John Foust, will be in attendance.

To register for this event and sign up to speak, click Town Hall Registration. You will then receive an invitation via email containing the Meeting link on the day of the event.

The VDOT proposes to replace the existing one-lane Springvale Road Bridge with a two-lane structure. GFCA conducted a limited survey of the community on this topic, late last year, and communicated the results to Dranesville Supervisor Foust providing him with feedback that 62 percent of the survey respondents opposed the two-lane concept. Now, the GFCA needs broader community feedback to gauge the community's viewpoint to present Supervisor Foust a more comprehensive picture, as he has requested.

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.

GOVERNOR UNVEILS COVID-19 VACCINE PRE-REGISTRATION SYSTEM

Gov. Ralph Northam last week invited Virginians to pre-register for the COVID-19 vaccine online at vaccinate.virginia.gov or by calling 877-VAX-IN-VA. The Commonwealth's new, centralized system allows individuals to easily pre-register for the free vaccine, confirm that they are on the wait list, and learn more about Virginia's vaccination program.

Virginia is also launching a new call center for those who prefer to pre-register by phone. The call center is open seven days a week, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. It is staffed by 750 live operators who can answer questions about the COVID-19 vaccine and help people get pre-registered.

MARINE CORPS MARATHON EARLY REGISTRATION

Starting Wednesday, Feb. 24, MCM Runners Club members have a two-week, early-registration window to enter the 46th Marine Corps Marathon (MCM) and the 2021 MCM50K. Members of the MCM Runners Club – an exclusive group of runners who have finished the MCM five times or more – will be able to register and secure a spot in this year's MCM and MCM50K prior to the general registration in March. Currently, the 2021 MCM Weekend is scheduled as a virtual event with the possibility of a live version in October in accordance with local guidelines. Virtual entries are \$55 plus a processing fee and are available to runners ages 14-and-older at www.marinemarathon.com.

FEB. 19 TO NOV. 19 (FRIDAYS)

Virtual Great Decisions Discussion Group. 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. A Program of the Shepherd's Center serving Oakton-Vienna-Reston-Herndon. Great Decisions is America's largest discussion program on world affairs. Cost: \$32 per person (includes briefing book) which must be ordered from the Foreign Policy Association. Contact SC Coordinator, Mike Mulreany, at mulreany@verizon.net to register and get the information to order the books. Participants who have

pre-ordered their books will have the books delivered to them in mid-January. Class meets the third Friday of the month.

FEB. 27 TO AUG. 28

Virtual Book Club. 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Interested in reading some of your favorite books or diving into new genres? Come be a part of the McLean Community Center book club. This great program will allow you to discuss books monthly in a group setting. Expand your knowledge. Meet great people. Make great memories. Contact the McLean Community Center at 703-790-0123.

THURSDAY/MARCH 11

Shape of the Region Conference. 12:30-2 p.m. Virtual. The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia is hosting its 2021 Shape of the Region Conference. The theme this year is: Co-Creating a New Northern Virginia: An Emerging Vision of a More Inclusive, Sustainable, and Equitable Region. This event will explore the collective efforts of Government, social, philanthropy, and private sector actors to bring more inclusivity, sustainability, and equity across our region. The event will feature brief stories and a panel discussion to highlight recent cross sector collaborations that have helped promote a more equitable and inclusive region. To register for this event, visit www.cfnova.org/shape-region.

CVS HEALTH OFFERS COVID VACCINES

CVS Health will begin to offer COVID-19 vaccinations to eligible populations at a limited number of CVS Pharmacy locations across 11 states. The vaccinations start date was Feb. 12. Vaccines in a retail setting will be offered on an appointment-only basis via CVS.com or through the CVS Pharmacy app, and those without online access can contact customer service: (800) 746-7287. Individuals eligible for COVID-19 vaccinations are asked to use the appropriate digital channels or contact customer service to check for appointment availability, as opposed to contacting individual CVS Pharmacy locations.



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"We love these two big boys because they are affectionate and devoted friends. Our chocolate lab is Mousse, an 11-year-old boy turning a little grey. The Black Lab is Buddy, an eight-year-old boy who acts like he is 2 years old. They keep us young and busy. They must stand in the bow of the boat to make sure we are safely navigating the waters they love."-- Richard and Carol Haver of Great Falls

Nothing But the Best for Family

Pets of Great Falls.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

For us lucky ones, pets are part of our lives. Most pets, regardless if they're furry, feathered, finned, or otherwise, elicit our unconditional love. It doesn't matter the responsibilities and expenses. We are there for them every day, from their cute wide-eyed early weeks of life and for many during their last car ride, our hearts aching.

Unknown to pets, they are the best of human mood-boosters, most of the time. Pets increase our physical levels, even when we growl, crawling out of our warm beds in the predawn darkness and schlumping outside with them or filling their dishes with food and water before making our cups of coffee.

And we take pictures of our pets because their faces are friendly, their lives generally short, and they are our adopted family members, welcomed into our homes and cherished in our hearts.



This is Sable, my seal point Siamese, born on Saint Patrick's Day in 2016. Sable is my constant companion, full of energy, and greets everyone who comes to visit. Her favorite game is chasing and hiding small foam balls all over the house, and when my lap is not available, she loves to curl up in baskets. Sable is an indoor cat, but she's been spoiled with a little cat condominium where she loves to watch the birds and squirrels in warmer weather. -- Amy Miller of Great Falls



Buddy, when he was 2 months old. - Richard and Carol Haver of Great Falls



Mousse, when he was 2 months old. -- Richard and Carol Haver of Great Falls



Sable loves curling up in baskets, all baskets. -- Amy Miller of Great Falls

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



"Cole came into my life as a rescue when he was about 9 months old. He was a lot to handle at first, but with time and consistent training, he blossomed into a friendly and (mostly) well-behaved companion that I can take almost anywhere! Cole has taught me patience, perseverance and that allowing dogs on the couch is a great idea." -- Ashley Green, Great Falls



Carol Haver watches as her water-loving labs, Mousse and Buddy, arrive back at shore.-- Richard and Carol Haver of Great Falls



Boat rides are fun for Mousse and Buddy. -- Richard and Carol Haver of Great Falls

Citizens Association Opposes Flag Restrictions

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Long-time Great Falls resident and Great Falls Citizens Association Board member Ruth Carver says she finds it “highly offensive” that Fairfax County advertisement of the Zoning Ordinance Modernization (zMOD) program is equating the American flag to a commercial banner.

“While it, (zMOD) was intended to streamline the Zoning Ordinance to make it easier for citizens to read and interpret its content, the County has taken it several steps further by including changes to contents of the current regulation and adding new requirements,” said a spokesperson for GFCA.

On Thursday, Feb. 18, William Canis, President of the Great Falls Citizens Association issued a letter to Commissioner Peter Murphy, Chairman of the Fairfax County Planning Commission, on behalf of the GFCA Board. He conveyed a resolution adopted by the Great Falls Citizens Association on Feb. 16.

Resolution of the Executive Board of the Great Falls Citizens Association objected to the proposed “overly restrictive” treatment of flags in the zMOD amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. Canis copied Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville District) and Vice Chairman John Ulfelder, appointed to the Planning Commission by the Board of Supervisors to represent the Dranesville District.

“GFCA believes that the display of the United States flag should be exempt from this Ordinance, and we have attached a resolution in support of that position that was adopted by our board on February 16,” Canis said in the letter.

THE RESOLUTION said that the proposed amendment changed the substance of a flag’s definition and incorporated the phrase “regardless of content.” That definition eliminated the distinction between the United States Flag and any other flag’s design defined under the Zoning Ordinance code.

The proposed amendment “does not recognize differences between the Flag of the United States, or any other ‘single piece of cloth,’ as defined in the proposed Ordinance,” stated wording in the Resolution.

GFCA Vice President Ed Phillips, a retired U.S. military officer, later said the importance of the U.S. Flag could be diminished with a cookie-cutter approach to the Ordinance.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

The Executive Board of the Great Falls Citizens Association said in the Resolution that the National Flag of the United States deserved special recognition within the Zoning Ordinance due to its historic and patriotic significance.

“The United States Flag, as the symbol of America, has been described in a history published by Drexel University Today, as a “...vibrant symbol of the American principles of democracy, justice, and freedom, and the everlasting memory of those who have sacrificed their lives defending these intrinsic principles of the United States of America,” stated the Resolution.

According to the Executive Board, the amendment would create a new compliance burden because it set new limits on the total square footage and the number of displayed flags, including that of the United States, unless an exemption is offered in the proposed amendment. The Executive Board called

on the Planning Committee to reject a flag’s proposed definition and insert new language exempting the United States Flag from the proposed rules.

The County Zoning Ordinance previously allowed up to three flags, provided the flags were limited to U.S., State, and corporate flags. “In 2019, that provision was amended to address “issues with content-neutrality.” County

staff have cited 2015 Supreme Court decision (Reed v. Town of Gilbert, AZ) as the basis for changing the Ordinance,” cited a GFCA spokesperson.

SIGNATORIES on the cover letter: William Canis, President, Edward Phillips, Vice President, Elizabeth Huebner, Secretary, James Trent, Treasurer, and Board Members Michael Barclay, Ruth Carver, Jennifer Falcone, Peter Falcone, Pam Grosvenor, Dawn MacPhee, and Fadi Shadid.

After delivery of the letter and the Resolution, Canis said, “With thousands of U.S. servicemen and women serving overseas under the National flag, and in the midst of a devastating pandemic, Fairfax County has more important issues it should be focused on.”

Board member and Land Use and Zoning Chair Jennifer Falcone raised a concern that County staff had not drawn a nexus between the proposed rule to govern flags and the harm that it would prevent. Falcone suggested that the County had yet to provide the public and members of the Planning Commission evidence of the “compelling state interest” that this rule would serve.

“With thousands of U.S. servicemen and women serving overseas under the National flag, and in the midst of a devastating pandemic, Fairfax County has more important issues it should be focused on.”

— Bill Canis, President, GFCA

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Langley High Play Explores Impact of Isolation

**‘Hey Stranger’
tackles the question
everyone struggles
with during pandemic.**

BY LILA YORK
CHANTILLY HIGH SCHOOL



From left -- Hannah Toronto, Claire Stephenson, Cole Sitalides.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

In a time where the pandemic has isolated humanity, how does one find solace? In perfect Zoom fashion, Langley High School’s production of “Hey Stranger” tackled the question with which everyone has struggled.

Written by Steph Del Rosso, the play revolved around two high school sweethearts reconnecting after many years apart. From their initial awkwardness and, of course, technical difficulties, both Eve and Gideon reflected on the different paths their lives have taken since the end of their relationship. When the call is crashed by the vocal teenager and tutee Zoe, the trio erupted in chaos due to contrasting viewpoints and clashing personalities. With only three roles, the captivating production illuminated the various impacts of isolation and the loneliness that accompanies it on individuals.

With her hair styled neatly and a wine glass by her side, Eve (Hannah Toronto) was eager to reconnect with her presumably divorced ex-boyfriend. When the screen focused on just her for monologues, Toronto’s expressions and pacing put meaning behind every line, highlighting the “kind of lonely that’s infuriatingly mediocre” her character was experiencing. Yet, as an argument ensues, Toronto gracefully demonstrated how one’s view of isolation can shift. At the beginning, through Toronto’s realistic nervousness and inner monologues, she revealed how Eve, like many individuals, struggled with isolation. But as the story progressed, Toronto perfectly encapsulated Eve’s shifting

view of how isolation acted as an opportunity to reflect, relax, and find comfort in the peace found in being alone.

On the other side of the screen leaning back in his chair was Gideon (Cole Sitalides). While leading Eve on through his flirtatious manner and supposed divorce, Sitalides portrayed a successful chiropractor yearning to reconnect; yet throughout the play, Sitalides revealed Gideon’s selfish acts to benefit his ego. When the intelligent teenager Zoe (Claire Stephenson) joins the Zoom call for a tutoring session, the two clash, forcing Eve to be stuck in the middle. With her slight slouch and mannerisms, Stephenson

embodied an outspoken teenager who does not tolerate sexist and demeaning remarks. Altogether, the three actors’ pacing, witty remarks, and dynamics allowed for the production to be very realistic.

In addition to compelling performances, the technical aspects were equally amazing. Whether it was Zoe’s practical bedroom setting, where most teenagers are doing their schoolwork, or Gideon’s abstract painting hung on his wall, the set and props in each frame fully depicted each character. Moreover, the subtle technical elements highlighted their characters. At the start, Sitalides’ camera was lower while Toronto’s camera was higher, already signaling the power Gideon had over Zoe. Additionally, the contrasting lighting, Eve’s cooler light and Gideon’s warm lighting tone, furthered their dynamic. Along with accurate costumes, the technical elements added to the reality of the production.

Truly making the best of the app that everyone has become a little too familiar with during quarantine, Langley High School’s production of “Hey Stranger” revealed that once one comes to terms with isolation, one can find the good in it. In isolation, one can observe the majestic trees of the woods, smell the moss, hear the thump of a tree falling, and feel the solace of finding oneself.

Trust and Transparency Enhance Public Safety

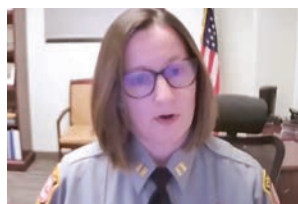
Supervisor Alcorn hosts Hunter Mill Town Hall With FCPD.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

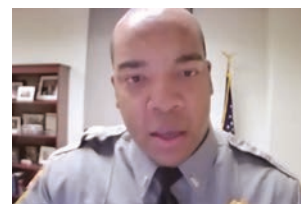
Leadership at the Fairfax County Police Department, Reston District Station are “very proud” of their work but acknowledge there is more work to come. “We want to ensure we are completely transparent and ensure the community’s trust,” said Station Commander Thea Pirnat during the Virtual Town Hall hosted by Hunter Mill District Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D) on Tuesday, Feb. 16. The hour-long event featured Alcorn’s introduction focused on proposed County policing options, followed by Pirnat’s review of trends and statistics and Assistant Commander Lieutenant Marc Mitchell’s overview of officer training. It ended with a question-and-answer period. Alcorn said that there had been much in the news about policing over the past year, and a number of issues related to policing had come to the Board of Supervisors for consideration. Alcorn described his Joint Board Matter: Request to Review the 9-1-1 Dispatch and Response System to Enhance Division First Strategies that he and Lee District Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D) introduced. Alcorn shared that some calls to 9-1-1 did not necessarily



Hunter Mill District Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D)



Reston District Station Commander Captain Thea Pirnat



Reston District Station Assistant Commander Lieutenant Marc Mitchell

involve criminal activity but were instances of mental and behavioral health crises.

Alcorn said, “Should we be sending... folks who are experienced to deal with these types of mental health or behavioral crisis or perhaps be able to approach them in a little bit different way other than Fire and Rescue or our uniformed police.”

PIRNAT described Reston District Station’s 56 square mile coverage, an area consisting of Reston and parts of Great Falls, Vienna, Oak Hill, and Herndon. The District contained varied elements, Reston Town Center, Lake Fairfax Park, Great Falls National Park, Frying Pan Park, Riverbend County Park,

“Our crime rate is three times below the national average... (and) we have one of the lowest ratios of police officers to the general population.”

— Capt. Thea Pirnat

and Metro Stations. The area also exhibited vertical population growth, and thus the Station needed to have a healthy, collaborative working relationship with surrounding jurisdictions and other law enforcement agencies. Pirnat added the Station expected it would be experiencing changes in its types of calls and police responsibilities.

“Fairfax County is one of the safest com-

munities in the entire nation to live,” said Pirnat. “Our crime rate is three times below the national average... (and) we have one of the lowest ratios of police officers to the general population.”

According to Pirnat, there had been a downturn for most crimes in the County. There was a decrease in criminal nature calls; traffic enforcement went down overall, and specific to the Reston District Station, there was a decrease in DWI fatalities in 2020.

Pirnat noted a drop in the number of robberies and burglaries. Robberies decreased from a reported 344 in 2019 to 314 in 2020.

While there were decreases, a number of increases occurred. According to Pirnat, in 2019, the County cited 455 weapon law violation calls compared to the upsurge of 518 in 2020. Motor vehicle thefts jumped from 863 in 2019 to 1,273 in 2020. “I believe that is related to the pandemic,” Pirnat said. Mental health calls ticked upwards slightly in 2020, to a total of 5000 calls compared to the previous year’s count at 4,715.

“I do think some of those extra calls for service were related to the fact that individuals weren’t able to get their normal service provider, contact that they had prior years, due to the pandemic (and) due to telehealth being implemented,”

SEE TOWN HALL, PAGE 10

The Value of Intergenerational Relationships

The lives of both youth and seniors are enhanced by meaningful connections.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Bringing seniors and youth together for meaningful relationships can be mutually beneficial. From structured and pleasurable programs that help foster such connections to regular telephone calls with a grandparent, the advantages that these interactions offer are many.

"Because of their life experiences, older adults can be a source of stability and emotional support and serve as mentors for children, particularly those who have a difficult home environment," said Kenneth Bell, LCSW, a Burke, Va., therapist who specializes in gerontology. "Older adults can gain a sense of purpose and fulfillment in knowing that they're impacting and nurturing those who will be adults in the future."

"Intergenerational relationships are very important because they allow youth and seniors to appreciate the entire lifespan," added Arlington marriage and family therapist Katie Ziskind. "Often-times, these intergenerational relationships need to be consciously constructed or well organized."

Among the programs that offer opportunities for developing such relationships is The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University. The organization regularly facilitates intergenerational programs between OLLI Members and traditional university students.

"These programs benefit both groups to create community, foster valued learning, and eliminate mutual stereotypes," said Jennifer Disano, Executive Director, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University. "Over the years, our organization has collaborated with several departments at the university for in-class projects, lectures, theatrical performances, research studies, mentoring, and career guidance."

Youth Movement Against Alzheimer's, (YMAA) a non-profit organization with a chapter at Thomas



PHOTOS COURTESY OF OLLI

One option for cultivating intergenerational relationships is through programs like those at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at George Mason University which include both OLLI members and traditional university students.

Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, is made up of high school and college students who visit and spend time with seniors who are living with Alzheimer's. While the visits have been postponed due to Covid-19, students use video conferencing and telephone calls to share meals with the elderly.

"[This] provides youth and older adults with a platform to connect to other generations in this time of crisis," said Katherine Rose, Chief Executive Officer, YMAA.

Even without being part of a formal organization, consider having a regular, set time to have Zoom or phone calls

with elderly friends and family members, suggests Stacie Isenberg, Psy.D., a psychologist based in Bethesda. "Most kids understand the value of their relationships with seniors, and that holds true for seniors as well," she said. "Therefore, both feel a special competence and pride in the special role they fill for each other."

"Intergenerational relationships are very important because they allow youth and seniors to appreciate the entire lifespan."

— Katie Ziskind

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Town Hall on Policing

FROM PAGE 8

Pirnat said.

Overall, Pirnat considered that Reston maintained a “very safe atmosphere,” even though she acknowledged a September 2020 homicide remained an active case. It involved the Sept. 17 shooting of 19-year-old Iris Ponce Garcia that took place in the area of Colts Neck Road and Glade Drive. In another Reston homicide, the Feb. 10, 2021, deadly shooting of Samuel Onyeuka in the 2300 block of Branleigh Park Court, police arrested a man within days.

Pirnat said they had been getting “a lot of calls in particular that are causing concerns for sounds of what are gunshots and that causes obviously a great deal of tension.”

IN RESPONSE to a recent community meeting, Pirnat said the Station launched (on Jan. 4) its RESET initiative, the Reston Engagement and Safety Enforcement Team. Pirnat described it as a blended team composed of officers from patrol and bike, a detective and a community engagement officer to communicate with community members, building rapport and trust while increasing visibility and suppressing crime.

Pirnat recognized that police work is a changing profession. “We will continue to evolve. There’s always room for growth and improvement. Fairfax County prides itself on being a role model on how to do it right...Our goal has always been to use voluntary compliance and not use force.” Pirnat said chokeholds had not been used for 20 years and are prohibited. Their pursuit policy had been revisited.

Assistant Commander Lt. Mitchell provided an overview on the process to become a Fairfax County police officer, a position he described leading to “public trust” for individuals whose backgrounds are honorable, law-abiding and ethical. The Academy is a 6-month training period where individuals are taken from recruits to sworn police officers. They then serve in a probationary capacity under the direction of an FTI (Field Training Instructor), where the newly learned skills are given real-life experience in the community. Once they pass that, they become a senior officer.

The hour-long meeting is recorded and posted on Alcorn’s YouTube channel for public viewing.

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CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 24

Unruly Theatre Project Virtual Improv Show. 7 p.m. Virtual at The Alden Theatre, McLean. 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.

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 Art Society. Mr. Bartman emphasizes personal interpretation in rendering landscapes, still life and figure painting. He received his M.F.A. from American University and studied in Belgium and Holland on a Fulbright Fellowship. Guests are welcome; contact M.A.S. President Ray Goodrow at raymgoodrow@aol.com.

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

SATURDAY/FEB. 27

Burke Historical Society Meeting. 4 p.m. Via Zoom. The speaker will be Christine West, with a talk called "The Mayflower and Early New England Immigration." They will go beyond local history this month to recognize the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower's landing in November 1620. (OK, a few months late, but what's a few months versus 400 years?) The presentation, originally developed by the New England Genealogical Society, will summarize some of the major events leading up to—and following—the Mayflower voyage. Visit burkehistoricalsociety.org.

SATURDAY/FEB. 27

Geocaching Workshop. 2-4 p.m. At Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. Channel your inner pirate and go on a modern-day

treasure hunt using a handheld Global Positioning System, better known as GPS. Discover how you can use GPS units to locate hidden treasure caches within the park. After learning how to enter latitude and longitude coordinates into a GPS, participants will follow the coordinates to find a hidden object, container or unique geological feature. Bring your own GPS; a limited number are available to borrow from the instructor at class. The cost is \$22 per person. Call 703-471-5414.

SUNDAY/FEB. 28

Protection & Inspection. 2-3:30 p.m. Virtual at Cold War Museum, Vint Hill, VA. The Cold War ICBM force commander who also led our arms control site inspections in the USSR describes what he saw and did. Cost is \$20. Visit the website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/protection-and-inspection-us-missile-forces-site-inspection-in-the-ussr-tickets-127063146291>

MARCH 1-29

"Life in Historic Virginia." At Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Part of the Park Authority's new series of "Field Trips for All" that are designed to supplement classroom and online lessons. Parks provide an experience not easily duplicated in the classroom, and these field trips offer parents a unique opportunity to provide their kids with real experiences while applying the concepts required in the Virginia Standards of Learning. This history program is designed for students in grades one through six. Life in Historic Virginia is offered on Mondays, March 1, 15, 22 and 29, 2021. The 45-minute programs at Sully Historic Site run at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., and the cost is \$40 per family. Call 703-437-1794.

MARCH 1-13

The Show Must Go On. The McLean Art Society in collaboration with The McLean Project For The Arts is presenting a juried painting exhibition in the Atrium Gallery at The McLean Community Center. (1234 Ingleside Avenue in McLean, 703-790-0123). Original art work in a wide variety of subject matter and painting styles will be available for viewing and purchase.

MARCH 6-7

Franchise Show Chantilly. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At the Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. The community is invited to The Franchise Show at the Dulles Expo Center from March 6 - 7, 2021. Full-time and part-time business opportunities from every industry, at every investment level. Visit the website: <https://thebizex.net/dcvirginia-franchise-show-march-6-2021/>

SATURDAY/MARCH 20

Maple Syrup Boil Down. 11 a.m., noon, and 1 p.m. At Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. It's sugaring time at the mill, so bundle up, brave the weather and watch and learn as sap is boiled down into a sweet syrup over an open fire. While supplies last, sample some of this delicious syrup over cornbread baked with cornmeal ground at Colvin Run. Call 703-759-2771.

SATURDAY/MARCH 20

Fairfax Genealogical Society Spring Fair - "Power Up Your Family Research with DNA". Virtual meeting. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Genealogist Karen Stanbary will present this one-day program featuring tips and tools for using DNA data to aid your family research. Registration (\$50 for non-members; \$30 for members of FxGS) at <https://fxgs2021mar.eventbrite.com> or on the FxGS web page, www.fxgs.org/2021springfair. Details of the program and other FxGS activities on the web site, www.fxgs.org or by calling 703-644-8185.

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Not That I Don't Understand But ...



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

... So this is what the process is like trying to schedule a covid-19 vaccination. If you're lucky though, you receive an email reminder - since you've pre-registered, advising you that the time to strike is now. You click on the link, and as I'm witnessing, you wait your turn. The site says there's "High Traffic," and they'll be with you momentarily. There's no calling. There's barely any responding. There's simply sitting and staring - and waiting. There's no indication of how long you'll be waiting. There's no guarantee that the site will even open. There's only instructions to refresh your computer every 30 seconds in the hopes that an interactive-type page will appear and you'll have reached the promised land: the page where you can actually schedule an appointment.

However, as I'm sitting and waiting, I'm getting frustrated. I seem to be getting nowhere, slowly. Though I'm refreshing as directed, nothing is changing on the screen I'm staring at. I've linked but nothing is really linking. So I keep repeating myself: stare, refresh, wait; stare, refresh, wait. It's a loop of nothingness. It seems an endless pursuit. It's almost like whack-a-mole, except in your attempts to get connected, the process is excruciatingly slow and there's nothing to whack. (At least it hasn't cost me anything, other than time, that is.)

I realize that the demand is way more than supply and according to experts, it won't be until June/July when "anyone who wants to get a shot will be able to get one." Nevertheless, I would have thought, given my comorbidity: cancer and age 66, that I'd be closer to the top than the bottom. Not that I'm particularly anxious about my circumstances, but my wife Dina is very concerned about them. (I'm staring steady at the site where this column began. As yet, despite my rigorous refreshing, I still haven't passed "Go.")

I understand that patience is a virtue. But today, while staring at and refreshing this site and seeing no sign of life as we know it, I am testing that virtue beyond its stress points. This process reminds of the days of buying concert tickets online. It was nearly impossible - for a popular show, to break through the internet logjam. That is not until you received a message that all the tickets had been sold. How people ever got through, I'll never know. It was always befuddling to me.

I know however, with respect to concerts, sporting events and the like, there would be a secondary/aftermarket availability. I knew an alternative existed. I also knew the cost would be black market-ish, somewhat over the original retail. Unfortunately, or fortunately, public health solutions cannot be left to the market. In its effort not to discriminate and be fair to all recipients, we're stuck with the present communication and distribution system.

Having endured these kinds of pursuits before when calling the IRS, Social Security, Medicare and The Veterans Administration, et cetera, I know a few precautions one should take before attempting to climb these mountains. First, clear your schedule. Next, go to the bathroom. Then, go to the kitchen and get some refreshments. Find someplace comfortable and cozy from which to call; you need to be prepared for the long haul. And finally, should another call come in while you're on hold, do not risk your spot in line by clicking on your call-waiting. Technology can sometimes break your spirit.

My wait is over. The site was just refreshed. It says the center is closed. Perfect timing. I just finished the column.

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



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