CONTECTION
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'People Will Change their Behavior and Slow Down'

Fairfax City installing photo speed cameras.

By Bonnie Hobbs The Connection

eads up, drivers in Fairfax City – photo speed cameras are headed your way. The Virginia General Assembly and Gov. Northam recently enacted legislation granting limited photo speed enforcement authority to Virginia localities.

It was also part of the City's 2020 legislative program and, following a work-session discussion and a public hearing, City Council approved it for use here. City attorney Brian Lubkeman explained where and when it applies.

"It's limited to school-crossing and work zones, and only while they're active," he said. "City police officers will review each photo, and the penalty is a civil fine. And the records and photos are eventually destroyed."

Fairfax City staff has worked with its existing, photo red-light vendor to obtain new equipment – a combination of fixed and por-



Janice Miller

table speed-monitoring devices. In addition, it's making upgrades to that current equipment, to be prepared in case the scope of permitted photo speed-camera enforcement expands in the future.

Present plans include four fixedpost speed cameras – one is already an existing, photo red-light camera at Main Street/Pickett Road – to cover Woodson High's school zone on Main Street and Fairfax High's



Sang Yi

school zone on Fairfax Boulevard.

There'll also be five, portable, control units available to cover the Old Lee Highway school zones and the school zones on Jermantown Road. When needed, these units may be deployed to provide traffic enforcement in highway work zones. And the City will comply with legal requirements pertaining to signage and limitations on enforcement.

THE CAMERAS are in the process of being installed; and as with the photo red-light program, the City will undertake a public-information campaign prior to enforcing violations under this program. Only warning citations will be issued during a 30-day implementation period.

The enabling authority permits fines up to \$100 and states that citations may be issued once a vehicle is exceeding the applicable, active school zone or active work zone speed limit by at least 10 mph. City staff proposes a graduated, civil= penalty, fee structure beginning at 12 mph over the posted speed limit.

"We looked at high-traffic areas, and this is a safety-structured program," said Fairfax Police Capt. Craig Buckley. "We'd like two cameras in each direction at both Fairfax and Woodson high schools." He said a 25-mph speed limit is in effect in school zones, 45 minutes in the mornings, during student arrivals, and 45 minutes in the afternoons, when they leave. And warning signs are posted 1,000 feet before each school.

"Would this extend to after-school hours, as well, or just regular school hours?" asked Councilmember Janice Miller.

"Just the 45 minutes in the morning and afternoon – 30 minutes prior to the bell and 15 minutes after the bell, in the morning, and the reverse in the afternoon," said Buckley. "Just when the 25-mph lights are flashing."

"If I loaned my car to someone who's caught at a red-light camera, and gets a ticket, what happens?" asked Councilmember Tom Ross.

"You can contact us and let us know you're not the driver, and we'll void that summons for you," answered Buckley. "But if you can provide the driver's information, we'll send it to him."

"Is speeding the leading cause of pedestrian crashes in the City?" asked Councilmember Sang Yi. Buckley replied, no, that pedestrians struck by vehicles are usually the result of driver inattention.

"My biggest concern is how speed cameras will solve that problem," said Yi. "I want facts that'll prove to me that a speed camera

SEE CITY, PAGE 7





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News

Fairfax Supervisors Condemn Anti-Asian Racism

cknowledging the large and vibrant Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community in Fairfax County, Chairman Jeff McKay introduced a resolution on March 23, passed unanimously by the Board of Supervisors, condemning violence and discrimination against AAPIs.

The resolution requires that the County and schools intentionally consider equity when making policies or delivering programs and services. The Chairman acknowledged that as Covid-19 spread this past year, reports of anti-Asian discrimination, racism, hate crimes, violence, and scapegoating, sadly, increased nation-wide. McKay, speaking to his resolution, said "We hear your concern and anxieties and believe any acts of racism against Asian Americans are unacceptable. In Fairfax County, no matter where you are from, you are welcome in our community."

Fairfax County counts nearly 20 percent of its population as AAPI, with Korean and Vietnamese as two of its five most spoken languages. Heritage from the Philippines, Korea, Vietnam, India and other AAPI origins add richly to the blended Fairfax County symbolized by the commemoration Korean Bell Garden at Meadowlark Gardens, the Asian American Festival in Fairfax City, and many other cultural events.

— Susan Laume



Photo by Susan Laume/The Connection

Bell of Peace & Harmony, Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, installed in 2011 to commemorate the equality, opportunity, and freedom Koreans once found in the United States

Joining Forces Against Hate

Local legislators part of newly formed Asian American and Pacific Islanders Caucus.

By Susan Laume
The Connection

ast week local delegates Mark L. Keam (D-35) and Kathy KL Tran (D-42), joined other Virginia General Assembly members with Asian American heritage to speak out against violence against Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.

This week they announced the formation of the General Assembly's Asian American and Pacific Islander Caucus (VAAPIC) and their participation as "founding members."

The formation of the caucus follows the March 16 mass shootings in Georgia that targeted Asian American women and businesses, and the increase of reports of assaults against Asian Americans across the country over the past year. In the Georgia spa shootings, six of the eight killed were Asian American women. The advocacy group, "Stop AAPI Hate" reports 3,795 hate incidents targeting AAPIs in all 50 states and Washington DC between March 2020 and February 2021; including 49 reports of assault in Virginia.

Del. Keam indicated they expect their developing caucus to assure that AAPI voices are heard in the policy and lawmaking process. Legislators will hold virtual "listening sessions" in Northern Virginia, central Virginia, and the Hampton Roads areas in April to hear from citizens on the support needed, on dates to be announced. Future legislation could address equality in the justice system, government contracting, and language support.

In an emotional response, Del. Tran spoke of the www.ConnectionNewspapers.com



Delegate Mark Keam, born in South Korea, spent childhood in Vietnam and Australia, coming to California as a teenager; attended the University of California; earned a law degree from the Hastings College of the Law. Virginia delegate since 2009.



Delegate Kathy KL
Tran, born in Vietnam,
at 2 years old fled with
her parents as boat
refugees. A two-term
Virginia Delegate running for her third term
this year; graduate of
Duke University; Masters degree in social
work from the U of
Michigan.

sadness she felt that her young son, at age eight, already understands the meaning of racism, experiencing taunting in school due to his Asian appearance. She spoke of her father's caution to her, that no matter what she accomplishes, she will always be seen first as an Asian; just as others in black and brown communities are seen first for their appearance. She looks to the Caucus and all Virginias to stand up against racism and violence.

Public Input Sought on Police Chief Selection

Increased expectations of public involvement and transparency drive forum.

Mercia Hobson
The Connection

he Fairfax County Board of Supervisors is seeking public involvement as its nationwide search for the next Fairfax County Police Chief gets underway. On Tuesday, April 6, from 7-9 p.m., Chairman Jeffrey McKay and Supervisor Rodney Lusk will host a public input session. It will feature County Executive Bryan Hill and Polihire CEO & President Kenyatta Uzzell.

The public can weigh in and share the qualities they would like to see in the next police chief. They can also suggest questions for the Board of Supervisors to ask candidates during the interview process. Public input assists in identifying a candidate pool matched with the qualities and work experience the community seeks.

To participate, individuals and speakers representing groups can call 703-324-1114 at the time of the program or submit pre-recorded video testimony to leedist@fairfaxcounty.gov.

"Right now, there is a high level of distrust and fear of police by people of color in Fairfax, who are disproportionately arrested and subjected to use of force by FCPD," said Diane Burkley Alejandro, ACLU People Power Fairfax. "Police reform must be a top priority of the new Police Chief in order to build the community trust that is lacking."

Alejandro added that for the new Police Chief to succeed, the individual would need "to understand and be able to address

"Police reform must be a top priority of the new Police Chief in order to build the community trust that is lacking."

— Diane Burkley Alejandro

the concerns that the Fairfax community has with how law enforcement performs its job."

To view the Police Chief Selection Public Input Session, tune to Local TV Channel 16, live stream at https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/.../chann.../live-video-stream or watch on Facebook @supervisorlusk @jeffreymckay.

Car Crash in Merrifield Kills Centreville Man

Centreville man died following a vehicle crash, early Monday morning, at the intersection of Arlington Boulevard and Javier Road in Merrifield. The victim was identified as Dashdavaa Zambalgaray, 49.

Detectives from the Fairfax County Police Crash Reconstruction Unit preliminarily determined that he was the lone occupant and driver of a 2008 Lexus RX. They say he was traveling west on Arlington Boulevard, on March 29, before 4 a.m., when his car drifted into the center median and crashed into a traffic pole at Javier Road.

Zambalgarav was taken to a hospital where he succumbed to

his injuries. Detectives continue to investigate the circumstances surrounding this incident, but they initially don't believe speed or alcohol were factors.

Anyone with information about this crash is asked to contact the Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips may also be submitted anonymously via Crime Solvers by phoning 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477), texting FCCS plus the tip to 847411, or going to http://www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org/. Tipsters are eligible for cash rewards of \$100-\$1,000 for information leading to an arrest.

— Bonnie Hobbs

OPINION

Ending State Executions

By Kenneth R. "Ken" Plum State Delegate (D-36)

irginia made history last week: The Governor of Virginia Ralph Northam signed the bill that made Virginia the first state in the south and the 23rd state in the nation to end the death penalty! I made the nearly four-hour trip to the Greensville Correction-

al Center in Jarratt where the "death chamber" is located to be at this momentous occasion when another of my legislative goals was realized.

While some have justified the death penalty as an appropriate "eye for an eye" punishment and a deterrent for other crimes, the history of the death penalty is much more complex. Virginia executed more people than any other state having executed 1,390 people over its 413 years. Its uneven application among the states and within the state itself is astounding. Virginia executed 94 women over its history, twice as many as the state with the next most executions of women. Of those, 78 were Black,11 were



COMMENTARY

White and five were of unknown race. Sixteen children below the age of 18 were executed including a slave girl about 12 years old who was hung in 1825. In 2005 the United States Supreme Court declared that the execution of those under the age of 18 at the time of their crime was cruel and unusual punishment and hence

unconstitutional. It followed an earlier decision in a Virginia case that found that executing an intellectually disabled person as the state was poised to do was unconstitutional.

Until the first electrocution in 1908, executions in Virginia were carried out by hanging making them not unlike the lynchings of Blacks that had occurred throughout the South. From 1900 until the U.S. Supreme Court declared the death penalty unconstitutional in 1977 for crimes in which no one was killed, Virginia executed 73 Black defendants for rape, or attempted or armed robbery that did not result in death, while no White defendants were executed for those crimes.

Other numbers show how the death penalty was more an act of White supremacy than for public safety. Between 1900 and 1999, there were 377 executions and of those 296 were Black persons and 79 White persons. For murder there were 304 executions, 223 Black and 79 White persons. For rape 48 Black persons and for attempted rape 20 Black persons executed, and in both instances no White persons were executed.

One of the most unbelievable stories in the history of the death penalty in Virginia was the execution of five Black defendants on Feb. 2, 1951, and the execution of two more Black men on Feb. 5, 1951, accused of raping a White woman. An all-White jury meted out the punishment after trials that lasted one day per defendant.

We cannot rewrite this dark chapter of Virginia's history, but we must learn from it. Too many laws in the past were written to maintain White supremacy rather than protect the public equally. The General Assembly has made major strides at ridding the Code of Jim Crow laws. We can see the repeal of the death penalty as a major step in moving Virginia forward as a more just state.

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Time to Face, Prevent Child Abuse

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

By Michele Thames Executive Director SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center

hat if I were to tell you that right here in Fairfax County we could fill more than 50 school buses with children whose abuse and neglect by adults brought them to the attention of Child Protective Services?

Lockdowns, school closures and movement restrictions have stimulated violence in families where it didn't exist before and worsened situations in places where mistreatment and violence had been a problem. Too often in the pandemic children have been stuck with their abusers, without access to the safe space that school and other outside activities normally offer.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, an opportunity to recognize both the dangers posed by various forms of child abuse and neglect, and the life-saving help that is available right here in Fairfax County.

Child abuse generally is defined as a situation in which a parent or caregiver, whether by actually inflicting harm or by failing to prevent it, causes injury, death emotional harm or risk of serious harm to a child. There are many forms, among them physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and emotional maltreatment. Nearly three million cases are reported every year in the US. Here in Fairfax County in 2019 -- 3031 children found themselves under the supervision of Child Protective Services (CPS).

That's 56 school buses!

Survivors tell us that the fear associated with their abuse generated, among other feelings, a long-lasting sense of unworthiness. They also speak of the demoralization of unpredictability in their lives: Will the morning start off with my abuser being in a good mood, or will the painful cycle begin anew some contrived transgression leading to physical and emotional violence?

Such abuse and neglect typically have a debilitating impact on long-term health and wellbeing. We know that exposure to violence in childhood increases the risks of injury, future violence, substance abuse, sexually transmitted infections, delayed brain development, lower educational attainment, and limited employment opportunities. But we also know that if we can get to these kids — or more accurately, if we can get concerned family members and friends to help them obtain the services and guidance that can lead to safety and good health — we can change lives.

As a partner in Fairfax County's overall effort to "Build Stronger Families," SafeSpot Children's Advocacy Center provides a suite of life-saving services organized around a crucial information-gathering tool: the "forensic interview." This child-oriented open-ended, non-leading conversation is conducted by a trained professional when allegations of abuse are levied. It allows a child to talk about potentially traumatic events he or she may have experienced or witnessed, and to do so in a non-threatening environment. Our goals in

• the interview are to assess the safety of the child's living arrangement, address the child's needs, and offer support.

The interview often is witnessed discreetly by CPS and law enforcement officials, and ultimately can help determine whether criminal charges might be brought against someone who may have been abusive to the child. Non-abusive parents and family members, law enforcement, CPS, and trained counsellors all participate in identifying the best course of action for the child in the aftermath of the interview.

When coupled with other services that offer support to the family structure and well-being and that provide therapy to address the child's trauma, we can begin the healing process. But we and our professional colleagues and allied programs can't even get started unless caring and concerned parents and friends ... do something.

In the past year Fairfax residents have come together as a community to cope with, manage and combat the coronavirus. And while hope and healing for abused children are not to be found in a vaccine, we can save lives if together we are willing to open our eyes and increase our awareness, understanding, and attentiveness to the potential for child abuse and neglect. What better time to start than now – National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

SafeSpot Children's Advocacy is a 501(c)3 that offers hope and healing to child survivors of extreme physical and sexual abuse in Fairfax County. To learn more, visit www.SafeSpotFairfax.org, or call 703-385-5437.



West Springfield High School cheerleaders will participate in State Championship on Saturday, April 17.

West Springfield Cheerleaders Win District, Region Titles

For the first time in West Springfield High School history, the Varsity cheerleaders, coached by newcomers to the team Blake Whetzel and Benita Nam, won the Patriot District title as well as the Occoquan (6-C) Region title. Due to VHSL and Fairfax County COVID protocol, this co-ed squad cheered with masks on and even with an edited scoring rubric and fan-less bleachers. The Spartans outscored the other top five

teams in the Region on Wednesday, March 24 winning the extremely competitive event. Historically, WSHS has won many District titles and in 2003 won a State Championship but the Region title has eluded the Orange and Blue until 2021.

The VHSL Class 6 State Championship will be held on Saturday, April 17 at Glen Allen HS and will be live streamed for at-home fans to watch.

This special focus section will include stories focusing on enhanced lifestyle for seniors among Connection readers and their families, including spiritual, physical, mental and financial wellbeing. Advertising allows you to target the many mature adults exploring new opportunities by showcasing your products and services in this special section with the award-winning Connection Newspapers print and digital media.



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New Water Tank Erected at George Mason University

Water pressure improved for college and nearby Fairfax residents.

By Mike Salmon
The Connection

he campus of George Mason University and the housing surrounding that area welcomed 2021 with increased water pressure, courtesy of a new 2.5 million-gallon water tower on the GMU grounds. The new tank is 156 feet tall, and this assists in the increased water pressure by relying on gravity pull to propel the water to some extent.

The old water tank was smaller and not as tall, and officials began demolition of this tank in January 2019. The new water tower began supplying homes and businesses in the area in October 2020.

It is a Fairfax Water facility, and they were in charge of the demolition and construction, which will be paid for "via water rates, fees, and charges," said Fairfax Water spokesperson Susan Miller.

According to Miller, the new tank was built on the same site as the previous tank, which was built by the City of Fairfax in 1978. The demolition of the previous tank was completed in January 2019, and the tank's concrete pedestal was completed 11 months later.

Between January 2019 and October 2020, the school and the nearby residents relied on water from a different part of the distribution system, Miller said. The tank supplies water to some residents in the City of Fairfax, GMU, and some residents in Fairfax County as well. On the north end of the water tank area is marked by Main Street, and to the south, the service boundary is Braddock Road, University Mall and a few residential streets in that area.

Other Fairfax Water projects going on in the area include a pump-

ing station near Chain Bridge Road and a river crossing at I-95 and the Occoquan River. At the river, Fairfax Water is working with Prince William County Service Authority, and Virginia American Water to increase drinking water transmission capacity and enhance system reliability for existing and future customers in eastern Prince William County, their project information stated. This 16-month project involves dual 42-inch mains inside a 400foot long tunnel to cross beneath the river near the Town of Occoquan. The construction work will occur on Fairfax Water property and within existing Fairfax Water easements and will be completed

Another project is with the pumping station project in Mc-Lean and this consists of piping modifications to improve pressure zones and water transmission capacity within the service area via the Washington Aqueduct water source, Fairfax Water said. Modifications include construction of

in spring 2023, Fairfax Water said.



This map shows the area supplied by the new water tank.



New water tank is on GMU property.

approximately 800 feet of 30-inch and 42-inch diameter water main, installation of new water flow meters, and interior pump station improvements. Construction limits are within Dolley Madison Boulevard and the driveway of Fairfax Water's Chain Bridge Pump Station, near the intersection of Kirby Road, Fairfax Water said.

Burke Civil Air Patrol Squadron Receives State Award

The Civil Air Patrol's Virginia Wing recognized the Burke Composite Squadron with the 2020 Squadron of Merit Award in March. Each year, the Wing evaluates the actions and activities of the 22 Virginia Civil Air Patrol squadrons across the state and selects the top squadron for this special recognition. Burke Composite Squadron members have collectively and individually continued with and expanded unit activities during the past year, despite the pandemic. While meeting virtually, the squadron hosted the President of the Space Force Association and the Astrobotics Mission Director for the Peregrine Lander lunar mission. As part of the Peregrine Lander mission, the squadron advanced a special project with a small payload containing the names of Civil Air Patrol members and Air Force Association StellarXplorer's competitors as well as the Civil Air Patrol patch design on



Burke Composite Squadron's Color Guard.

the inscribed microchip that will be sent to the moon later this year.

The Burke Composite Squadron cadets participated in two Air Force Association competitions this past year. The CyberPatriot team competed at the Platinum level, the highest competition level. Two StellarXplorers teams competed in the semi-final round in February. All teams are looking forward to competing in the fall 2021.

The Virginia Wing also recognized the squadron with the Colonel Dion E. DeCamp Ground Team of the Year Award for ground team efforts in emergency services. Fifteen squadron members actively

supported local food warehouse distribution efforts on multiple occasions. Members also participated in ground team search and rescue training and conducted two real-world ground searches.

The Wing individually recognized squadron members for top contributions from across all of Virginia's Civil Air Patrol Wing's 2,000 members, with the following recognitions:

Senior Member of the Year: 1st Lt. Kerry Kaplan

Maj Gen Jeanne M. Holm CAP Aerospace Education Officer of the Year: 2d Lt. John Douglas

Lt Col. T. Keith Riddle Aircrew



Glider orientation flight.

Member of the Year: Lt. Col. Erik Karlson

Public Affairs Officer of the Year: Cadet 2d Lt. Samuel Ten

Professional Development Officer of the Year: Capt. Julie Demyanovich

Safety Officer of the Year: 2d Lt. David Adams

Capt. Sara Demyanovich, the squadron commander for Burke Composite Squadron, said, "It is great to be recognized for our efforts to provide a quality program for both cadets aged 12-18 and senior members. Many of our programs provide unique aerospace, aviation and leadership opportunities."

The Virginia Wing of the Civil Air Patrol, with 22 squadrons spread throughout the Commonwealth has approximately 2,000 members, 12 light aircraft, 29 multi-purpose vehicles and two cargo vans. These assets are available to federal, state and local governments, emergency responders and law enforcement agencies to perform search and rescue, homeland security, disaster relief, humanitarian assistance and counter-drug missions. For more information on the Virginia Wing, visit the wing's website at https://www.vawg.cap.gov/.

Sweet Memories of Childhood

Thomas A. Edison High School presents 'Alice's Looking Glass Adventures.'

By Miranda Simpson McLean High School

hrough you go, through the looking glass and into a dazzling wonderland! The entrancing performance of Thomas A. Edison High School's "Alice's Looking Glass Adventures" brought back sweet memories of childhood within the first few minutes. Through beautiful storytelling and hilarious voices, this performance perfectly encapsulated the chaos and dreamlike atmosphere that is so wonderfully displayed in the classic story.

CAPPIES REVIEW

The original stage play written by Alice Gerstenberg was a dramatization of the books "Alice in Wonderland" and "Alice Through

the Looking Glass" by Lewis Carroll. It first opened in the Fine Arts Theatre and the Booth Theatre in 1915. The Thomas Edison Theatre Director, Jeffrey Walker, then adapted this play into a four-part audio only radio play. In the section of the show the audience watched, Chapter 3, Alice has arrived in the March Hare's garden, and is sent into a mess of confusion as she interacts with the guests, including the Dormouse, the Mad Hatter and more. She explores Wonderland with a game of croquet, the tea party, and the introduction of many kooky characters that could only be found in the crazy world that she has been thrown

Alice, played by Charlotte Chozick, perfectly displayed Alice's naivety and youthfulness, while keeping the sophisticated tones of the beloved character. Her gentle voice was distinctive from the rest of the characters and was delightful to listen to as she wandered around a world that one can only dream of. The tea party scene, with Landen Chanthaphanij as the Dormouse, Luke Pietrykowski as the March Hare and Lars Irvin as the Mad Hatter, had a fantastic energy that remained entertaining and chaotic throughout the entire scene. Lars Irvin did an outstanding job as the insane Mad Hatter, using a witty voice with lines that made absolutely no sense. His vocal variety and excited tone gave the show a spark of energy. Landen Chanthaphanij and Luke Pietrykowski acted alongside him and added humor and impeccable chemistry to the scene, contrasting each other with the sleepiness of the Dormouse and the bossy, sharp tone of the March Hare as the host. Finally, Dylan Tootle added a creepy yet enticing addition to the insanity, playing the mysterious Cheshire Cat. He had the audience hooked on his every word, with a hypnotizing voice

Alice's Looking-Glass Adventures



AN AUDIO PRODUCTION OF **EDISON HIGH SCHOOL THEATRE**

Thomas Edison's "Alice's Looking Glass Adventures" was a captivating show that left you in your very own wonderland.

that provided a flawless visual of the Cheshire Cat himself speaking.

This performance was truly brought to life by the Sound Consultant, Aiden Yancy. With sound effects like the crying infant, the hilarious pig noises, and the soft snoring of the Dormouse, the performance became even more irresistible. The addition of music and sound effects truly transformed the radio play into an immersive experience and brought the world of wonder to life.

"Alice's Looking Glass Adventures" was a crazy, confusing, endearing, and wonderful rollercoaster that left imagination to whirl and create a beautiful visual in the audience's mind. The seamless timing of lines and pacing did not allow for any dull moments, and the sound effects and music gave an authentic feeling to the performance that would not have been the same without it. Thomas Edison's "Alice's Looking Glass Adventures" was a captivating show that left you in your very own wonderland.

City Installing **Speed Cameras**

From Page 2

will help." He also requested an estimate of how much revenue these new cameras will raise for the City.

"I'd estimate \$140,000 to \$200,000/year, because I know I can't put an officer at every school crossing," said Buckley.

Councilmember So Lim asked if the data could be used for anything else. "The data collected by the cameras can't be used for anything but speed violations," answered Buckley. "Nothing else, like reckless driving or expired, license-registration tags. And the data is destroyed, 60 days after the fine is paid, so there are some privacy safeguards."

"I'm not a fan of cameras," said Councilmember Jon Stehle. "But they can [change people's driving behavior] for the better."

Buckley said the new cameras will also tell City police the number of cars going through a specific area, as well as the times when their drivers are more likely to violate the speed limit. Councilmember Joe Harmon then asked how much more effective speed cameras are than digital signs telling drivers how fast they're going.

"Eventually, people realize there's no penalty attached to the mobile, digital, speed signs," replied Buckley. "With cameras, you have a means of enforcement and compliance. And unlike officers [stationed at a particular place], they're not getting called away to go cover a crash. The cameras are there all the time, rain or shine."

Fairfax Mayor David Meyer stressed that the goal of these cameras is improved safety, not revenue generation. "Before we activated our red-light cameras,

we had many, many speeding incidents and accidents at red lights - especially at Fairfax Circle," he said.

"And we have hard data to show that these cameras have reduced the incidences of accidents at red lights and enhanced pedestrian safety. They also reduce the amount of calls to police and EMS [personnel]. And there's a flagrant, disregard of workers in highway work zones in Virginia."

Yi asked if the City has conducted any analyses of the accuracy of the equipment used by the vendor it's chosen for this program. "No, but the camera heads and equipment are regularly checked for constancy and accuracy," said Buckley. "And it's the same technology we use for our red-light cameras."

Still, Yi worried that this technology will be used, more and more. And, he added, "I hope we start getting information on [school- and work-zone safety], before and after these cameras go in."

FAIRFAX POLICE CHIEF Erin Schaible said Montgomery County has used these cameras for years, and "It's reduced speeds in those zones by 59 percent."

"I think that, once people have gotten a ticket, it'll encourage them to drive more safely," said Meyer. Miller then made a motion for approval, with Stehle seconding.

The vote was 4-2, in favor of using the new cameras, with Yi and Harmon voting no. Said Miller: "I believe that, when people drive through school-crossing and zones and see the cameras, they'll change their behavior, slow down and observe the speed limit.'

'People Are Still Hurting and Struggling Financially'

Fairfax City's advertised, real-estate tax rate is \$1.08. Stalzer told the Coun-

By Bonnie Hobbs THE CONNECTION

n February, Fairfax City Manager Rob Stalzer proposed a residential real-estate tax rate of \$1.08 per \$100 assessed valuation, as part of the City's FY 22 budget. It represented an increase of \$0.005 - from the current \$1.075 tax rate.

The Fairfax City Council won't officially adopt the new budget until May 5. But in the meantime, it's decided to stick with Stalzer's proposed residential real-estate tax rate of \$1.08 as what it will advertise. It doesn't mean that, specific figure will be ultimately approved; it just puts a ceiling on the tax rate the Council may adopt.

"It's the maximum amount it can be,"

cil during its meeting,

last Tuesday, March 23. "But you can adjust it, if you want."

He believes the \$1.08 tax rate is needed because \$0.035 of it would support the City's Stormwater Fund. However, because this tax hike would come on top of City residents' raised home assessments for calendar year 2021, the owner of an average home in Fairfax valued at \$541,554 would pay \$20/

month more in real-estate taxes for an annual rise of \$235.

The 3.5-cent stormwater fund increase would yield approximately \$2.3 million dedicated to fund stormwater projects. The money is needed for improvements to the City's stormwater infrastructure.

"A half penny on the stormwater budget brings us back to where we wanted

SEE TAX RATE, PAGE 9



Fairfax Academy Students Welcomed Back to Class

When Fairfax County Public Schools recently opened again to students, welcoming them back to the Fairfax Academy were (from left) ESOL teacher Sara Chae, FCPS bus driver Kenny "Shrek" Goss, and Career Experience Specialist Erin Molek.



Arabic-language instructor, Mitch Ford, teaching his Fairfax Academy students in class and online, at the same time.

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 are:

Jimmy Le, Annandale High School -- A founder of the Annandale Equity Team—a group of students and staff who are working to reexamine procedures, create equitable opportunities for all students, and establish an anti-racist, inclusive, and transformative culture at Annandale High School. The group works on equity issues including college assistance, anti-racism, and access to advanced courses, athletics and the arts.

Active Minds Club, Centreville High School -- eniors Gabrielle Martis, Anna McNulty, and Lydia Kim are officers of the Centreville High School chapter, an organization dedicated to mental health awareness and education for young adults. The club has experienced an increase in membership from students in lower grades as well as greater gender diversity. During the pandemic, the club instituted a pen pal system to enable members to build community among themselves and to safely engage with each other.

The Teen Town Hall Project, Chantilly

High School -- Nayana Celine Xavier led a group of seven Chantilly students to establish a virtual town hall to explore the concerns of underrepresented students. The group held a Zoom call in which they fielded questions on race, culture, ethnicity, and gender issues and the program has expanded to cover issues concerning Asian-Americans, students with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ students, as well as the attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Yenee Berta, Edison High School -- Founder of the philanthropic organization Soles of Love, she collected and donated shoes and clothes for an Ethiopian school. She participates in the Edison Student Ambassador Club to welcome new students and serves as an Equity Team leader, helping to develop cultural activities for the school. As secretary of the Interact Club, she has helped with Salvation Army holiday collections, food drives, mask drives, and fundraising for literacy and poverty-focused nonprofits.

Darwin Otchere, Fairfax High School
-- A member of the City of Fairfax School
Board Superintendent's Advisory Team that
proposed and helped implement the name
change for Lanier Middle School to Katherine Johnson Middle School, Otchere is a
leader on inclusion and student diversity
issues. He worked with the City of Fairfax
Police to positively affect the relationship
between police officers and students in the
Fairfax community.

Betty Solomon, Hayfield Secondary School is an active member of the youth-led One Day Seyoum Organization, whose goals are to end human rights abuses in Eritrea and support Eritrean refugees. She worked with members of her church to organize donation drives to supply disadvantaged families in Eritrea with hygiene products and clothing.

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.

Equity Team, Justice High School is the first Equity Team in FCPS to include both students and teachers and is now a model for the district. The Justice team sponsored an art show featuring work representing micro-aggressions the artists had experienced, and are devoted to educating the community on antiracism, inviting speakers to honor the school's recent name-change, supporting the LGBTQ+ community, and sharing ideas of how to advance equity and antiracism.

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.

Megan Long, Lewis High School is a dancer who helps to direct Love Your Body Week at Lewis, dedicated to creating body-positive dance environments for everyone. Students learn and speak about beauty regardless of shape and size, watch videos of dancers of all ages and size, and discuss the importance of body positivity and the use of dance to achieve it. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Long taught kids online how to make body-positive posters for public display. She shares social media videos of various plussized dancers with messages of body positivity and self-love.

Katie Monacella, Madison High School organized a regional hub of the Sunrise Movement, a youth movement to stop cli-

mate 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.

Helena Berhe, Mount Vernon High School founded the Young Democrats Club at her school in response to the polarized atmosphere throughout the U.S. and after seeing how minorities were being belittled, scapegoated, and attacked. Perhaps inspired by her vision and pas-

SEE PEACE AWARDS, PAGE 11

CALENDAR

NOW THRU APRIL 17

The 2021 Vienna Photo Show will be on display at the Vienna Community Center now through April 17. The exhibit will be open 8 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Friday and 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturdays. The entrance fee is \$5. Ribbons will be awarded in seven categories: animals, architecture, nature, pictorial, photojournalism, portraiture, and scenic. Visit viennava.gov/photo.

NOW THRU APRIL 18

Blossoms Galore at Mosaic Gallery. A new exhibit at the Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic gallery in Fairfax offers its own interpretation of the beauty of nature in a show titled "Art Blossoms 2021", featuring artists from the Torpedo Factory Artists' Association, Additionally, there's a special cherry-blossom themed gift for purchasers spending \$200 or more. The Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic is a satellite gallery sponsored by the Torpedo Factory Artists' Association, and is located at 2905 District Avenue, #105, Fairfax.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 31

The Old Firehouse School Break
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APRIL 2-3

'Dear Elizabeth." Presented by The Vienna Theatre Company. The play by Sarah Ruhl is drawn from one of the greatest correspondences in literary history between two of the 20th century's most brilliant American poets, Elizabeth Bishop and Robert Lowell. Sarah Ruhl adapts more than 400 published letters spanning decades, continents and political eras, tells the tale of an unconventional friendship and intimacy both platonic and romantic, and brings it all to life on the stage. This moving, innovative play starts in 1947, ends in 1977 and describes a love that resists easy definition. The performance will be filmed live and aired online as follows: Friday and Saturday, April 2 and 3 at 7:30 p.m. Ticket Prices: \$15. Purchase online at https://

SATURDAY/APRIL 3

It's mini golf and an egg hunt all in one. 11 a.m to 6:30 p.m. At Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Play a round of "Rabbit Hole-in-One" at Burke Lake Park. Bring your group of up to five players and enjoy a socially distanced mini golf and egg hunt experience at the mini golf course at Burke Lake. Play your way through the specially decorated course to reach the 18th hole. The park's Spring Bunny will be busy hiding eggs for each group (three per registered participant), so be sure to keep an eye out to see what you can find. The cost is \$10 per person for 18 holes, Call 703-323-6600.

Tax Rate Debated

From Page 7

to be," explained Chief Financial Officer Dave Hodgkins. "Because of the pandemic, we didn't add a fourth of a penny [to it] in 2021 [as we'd planned]."

And, added Fairfax Mayor David Meyer, "Keeping our stormwater funding at this level will enable us to meet stringent, Chesapeake Bay mandates."

Councilmember Sang Yi asked for more information about the home-assessment increase for the City's homeowners. And Hodgkins told him it rose 2 percent over the previous year.

"When assessments go up, people have to pay more, even if the tax rate doesn't go up," said Yi. "And if it does, it's a double whammy. People are still hurting and struggling financially because of the pandemic. So I think that, in this, of all times, the City needs to tighten its belt and find

the \$340,000 the rate hike would bring, elsewhere."

Councilmember So Lim agreed with him. "I don't think this is the time to increase our residential tax rate," she said. And Councilmember Joe Harmon concurred.

However, three other members of the Council were of a different mind. "I'm willing to advertise the rate at \$1.08," said Councilmember Janice Miller. "There's ample time to make changes, once we get the school-system information."

Agreeing, Councilmember Tom Ross said, "I'd like to keep \$1.08 as a marker, for now. Let's see what happens, in the next few weeks, as we go through the budget process." Councilmember Jon Stehle concurred.

The vote was 3-3, with Miller, Ross and Stehle voting yes, and Yi, Lim and Harmon voting no. Meyer then broke the tie by also voting affirmatively, so the advertised tax rate will officially be \$1.08.

Audition Now for CFTC's Cabaret

The City of Fairfax Theatre Co. is inviting people to audition for its annual Cabaret presented during the City's Spotlight on the Arts Festival. Those interested in participating should submit a video of themselves singing a song of their choice. Send it to Amanda Herman Snellings at cftcartisticdirector@gmail.com by this Sunday, April 4. Auditions are open to anyone 14 and older.

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East Wind Restaurant LLC trading as East Wind Restaurant, 10414 Main St, Fairfax, Fairfax County, Virginia 22030-3301. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Khoa Nguyen, Owner. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.

Legals

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Sushi Toro Restaurant LLC trading as Sushi Toro, 4088 Airline Pkwy, Chantilly, Fairfax County, Virginia 20151-3979. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On Premises, Mixed Beverage Restaurant license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Min Jeon, Member. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www. abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.



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High School Students Receive Peace Awards

From Page 8

sion, her classmates elected her to be president of the class of 2021. Berheis also passionate about the needs of refugees.

Kunming Chen, Mountain View High School spreads peace through advocacy and kung fu, sharing his deep respect for life and belief in the value of diverse ideas. In addition to his full-time studies at Mountain View, Chen works as a kung fu instructor and provides his students who are struggling with free tutoring and counseling. On the FCPS district-wide Student Council Association, he provides a voice for ESOL students in an effort to break both language and cultural barriers that impede student success.

Leah Weiss, Quander Road School is respected for her sound judgment in solving student issues. She is also an accomplished student and a community advocate. She is an active member of the Blossoming Beauties Club, a 2017 Student Peace Award recipient, founded to help girls grow into well-rounded, confident young woman and to work together on school and community projects. Weiss has led Blossoming Beauties Club discussions and offered workable solutions to difficult problems.

Diego Dominguez Liberato, Robinson Secondary School had been following racial tensions in the news and was concerned about the tragedies in black communities. He also questioned the morality of looting at some Black Lives Matter protests. He planned a peaceful protest that the community could get involved with, working out logistics, soliciting volunteers, and coordinating with the Fairfax County Police, West Springfield District Station, who offered to block the roads. Although 300 participants were expected, more than 1,000 people appeared and safely marched down Burke Center Parkway.

Zion Nuby, South County High School As a freshman, Nuby founded the South County Debate Association as a forum for political discussions and peaceful conversation about controversial issues. Following the death of George Floyd, he collaborated with local college students to organize simultaneous demonstrations in support of the Black Lives Matter movement, serving as the lead organizer of a peaceful protest at his school that drew more than 300 participants. This protest gave students, staff, and the surrounding community a way to safely participate in the nationwide movement of demonstrations and to experience a moment of togetherness, healing, and solidarity.

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.

Student Equity Coalition of West Potomac, West Potomac High School -- Formed in June 2020, the group works to bring together students to strive for peace and justice in the community. Four students (Sinna Nick, Maeve Korengold, Kezie Osei, and Amina Iman) approached Principal Millard about their concerns about inequities, discrimination, and hate speech in the school. The SEC is now developing sub-committees so that students can be involved in the area about which they are most passionate, including student athletes, students with disabilities, and students whose first language in not English.

Sumaya Zahid, West Springfield High School is the co-founder with her older sister and current president of Spartans for War Victims (SWV) which provides aid and assistance in the form of materials and money to victims of war and raises awareness of the effects of armed conflict. During its first two years, SWV held clothing drives and fundraisers to provide winter clothing, school supplies, food, and other basic necessities to civilians living in war zones around the world. They also hosted awareness workshops where they discussed the current conflicts and their effect on the civilians in war-torn countries.

Westfield Minds Matter, Westfield High School works to change the school culture regarding mental health. Group members have organized open conversations about mental health to increase help-seeking behavior, promote connections, and increase healthy habits and coping skills. They established a teacher and administrator mental health panel in the hope that their concerns will be addressed by adults outside of their meetings. They are also working to ensure students have access to needed resources for mental health.

Johari Iraan Hemphill, Woodson High School -- In response to last summer's Black Lives Matter protests, Hemphill organized and led a Runathon, that raised money by obtaining pledges for each mile run. Despite the difficulties of virtual gatherings, \$3,000 was raised and donated to the NAACP's Legal Defense and Educational Fund. The success of the Runathon encouraged Hemphill and his fellow leaders to pledge service hours to continue the effort during this school year. They are currently creating resource pages to educate and promote empathy, advocacy, and peace.



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Good News Travels Slowly



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Sure enough, the email from my oncologist didn't arrive in my inbox before we left for the weekend away on Friday. It wasn't ideal, but as a long time cancer patient, I've learned to make the best of a bad/potentially bad situation. As it turned out, the time away was invigorating, and there was very little mention of the elephant in the room: Kenny's cancer. Friends can be good like that. Once we got home on Sunday, after a two-hour wait at Six Flags to get my second covid-19 shot, I was rewarded. The email from the radiologist had arrived and the news was good, or so it seemed.

What it is that I typically receive is an automated release of the radiologist's report which is likewise forwarded to my oncologist. Granted, I can only understand half of the words, and those are generally the prepositions; much of the report is written by a doctor for a doctor, not for the doctor's patient. Nevertheless, the process is what it is. It's rare anymore that one receives a call from their doctor with scan-type results. Usually, my oncologist amends this first email with a simplified interpretation of the report: "scan looks good," as a hopeful example. So far, and this is Tuesday afternoon after the Wednes day scan, I've not yet received an amended report, the one where the oncologist offers his summary/opinion. We do have a follow-up video appointment with him on Thursday so perhaps he's saving himself/his comments until that meeting. Perhaps not. Regardless, I should have heard something more definitive by now. Presuming I can figure out the true meaning of the radiologist's report is a bit presumptuous. As a cancer patient, I don't want to have to figure anything out. I want to be told. I shouldn't have to live with any unnecessary uncertainty. I have more than enough uncertainty already. And in case anybody can't guess: uncertainty does not improve my quality of life, one that's already fragile. A "terminal" diagnosis will do that and tends to put a patient ill at ease, morning, noon and night. That's what I call a "post-diagnosis existing condition.'

That reaction/disappointment being expressed, from what few words and meanings I could grasp from the report: "no new lesions," no significant change," "stable disease," I can say with all the limited knowledge at my disposal, that I'm probably OKAY. In fact, I would say that my warranty has been extended for another three months, until we wash, rinse and repeat in another three months, per the cycle I've mostly been on since 2009 when I was first diagnosed.

However, I'd be foolish to fuss too much because if my interpretation of the radiologist's report is correct, I really can't complain about good news. I mean, what goes around, comes around, and I'm not about to tempt fate and ruffle karma's feathers. These reports, which typically are the first and surest indication that the patient is in trouble - or not, are a lifeline us patients cling to. A good/stable disease report is sort of like a "life preserver" until you actually talk with the oncologist and get a more official interpretation. Of course, to receive good news earlier would be a lot better. But when the news is good, as this report was, anytime you receive it: "it's all good," as so many say.

Naturally, I'd rather hear it directly from the oncologist. Moreover, given that not all the words written in this report are familiar/known to me, especially in the context in which they're written ("medicalese"); obviously, I'd rather hear the assessment of the scan from the oncologist in person/so to speak, and not leave anything to chance - or misinterpretation by yours truly. In spite of these irregularities, which I can't do anything about (I've tried), my modus has been to roll with the punches and take the good, bad and ugly in stride. So I'm not mad. I'm glad. Life goes on. Thank God!

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



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