

Great Falls CONNECTION

Vienna and Great Falls residents gather to mourn 'Colvin Run's death' after the VDOT realigned the stream into a paved trapezoidal channel near the confluence with Difficult Run as part of its Route 7 Improvements.

Residents Mourn 'The Death of Colvin Run'

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Two Lawsuits Threaten Virginia Public Schools

Appellants ask courts to halt implementation of Student Transgender Policies; local FCPS Pride reacts.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The outcome of two lawsuits filed in Circuit Courts the last week in March threatens the treatment of transgender students in all Virginia school divisions, including Fairfax County Public Schools.

On Monday, March 29, Christian Action Network filed a Motion for Intermediate Relief pursuant to Va. Code § 2.2-4028 in the Circuit Court for the City of Lynchburg, Va., asking the court to postpone implementation of “Model Policies for the Treatment of Transgender Students in Virginia’s Public Schools.”

On Tuesday, March 30, the Founding Freedom Law Center (FFLC), along with The Family Foundation and Sarah Via, a parent from Hanover County, filed as appellants in the Circuit Court of the City of Richmond a Petition for Appeal From State Department of Education Guidance Document against appellees Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and Atif Qarni, in his official capacity as Virginia Secretary of Education over its recently adopted Model Policies for the Treatment of Transgender Students in Virginia’s Public Schools.

ACCORDING TO THE MODEL POLICIES, the fundamental guiding principle is that all children have a right to learn, free from discrimination and harassment. The policies will, among other things, allow students to use bathrooms, locker rooms, and changing facilities that conform to their gender identity or expression, as well as use pronouns and a name so reflective. The policies also address bullying, dress codes, and school record-keeping, holding educators and administrators accountable.

Jim Davids is Chief Counsel of the Founding Freedoms Law Center. He argued that the 30-page suit with exhibits seeks to stop the effective date of these policies to enable VDOE, as well as school boards, to have more time to study the effects of policies on transgender students and students “who have no gender dysphoria.”

But Virginia law approved March 4, 2020, requires each school board to adopt policies relating to the treatment of transgender students; policies pursuant to subsection B of § 22.1-23.3, Treatment of transgender students policies, no later than the beginning of the 2021–2022 school year.

Davids urged prudence, saying they were asking the court to send the document back to VDOE. He alleged legal errors and the need to remove constitutional violations of the guidance document. “Sit back; let’s walk through this together..We want to work with the Department and school boards to frankly avoid the injury that accompanies poorly thought out governmental policies.”

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Jim Davids, Chief Counsel of the Founding Freedoms Law Center, holds up the 30-page lawsuit.



Kristen Allen represents a group of parents in Arlington called The Arlington Parent Coalition opposed to the recently adopted Model Policies for the Treatment of Transgender Students in Virginia’s Public Schools.

He referenced Japanese Americans’ internment during World War II and that it took thirty years for an apology. Davids claimed in his statement, “Most of these students (transgender) revert to their biological sex anyway before leaving adolescence.”

VDOE developed the document in response to House Bill 145 and Senate Bill 161, enacted by the 2020 Virginia General Assembly last March. Thirty-four stakeholders throughout the Commonwealth provided input and offered expertise.

Local FCPS Pride, a community and network for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Allied employees and families in Fairfax County Public Schools, posted on its Facebook account, it was “appalled.” The group supports the newly released model policies regulating safeguards and treatment of transgender Virginia public school children K-12.

FCPS Pride has fought for years for regulations. In May of 2015, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) added gender identity to its nondiscrimination policy. In July of 2016, FCPS finalized and made immediately effective regulations on how the school system responded to transgender and gender non-conforming students, choice of names, bathrooms, and other concerns.



Victoria Cobb, president of The Family Foundation of Virginia



Robert Rigby Jr., co-President of FCPS Pride and 22-year veteran teacher in FCPS

Plaintiff Family Foundation of Virginia is a conservative nonprofit, faith-based organization. It lobbies against same-sex marriages, funding of abortions and holds a core principle that “Gender (is), beautifully expressed as either male or female according to God’s immutable design,” as cited on its Family Foundation website.

Victoria Cobb, President of The Family Foundation of Virginia alleged during the March 30 filmed FFLC news conference published to Facebook that the guidelines replace fundamental parental rights and protection of bodily privacy and safety rights for their youngest students.

Cobb said the Constitution of Virginia ensures that it is the fundamental right of parents to raise their children in accord with parent’s beliefs, and those rights do not get erased because Virginia chooses to dismiss them to fulfill its agenda and disregard the process outlined in Virginia law to produce the guidance document. Cobb alleges that the law took it a step further, stating that all schools shall adopt these guidelines as the minimum standards to operate schools.

Sarah Via is the mother of two children in the Hanover school district and was named in the lawsuit against VDOE. Via said she was concerned about what happens when her young daughter reaches middle school and wants to be modest but cannot choose when a biological male sees her body. The

Virginia Law

APPROVED MARCH 4, 2020

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 22.1-23.3 as follows: § 22.1-23.3. Treatment of transgender students; policies.
- A. The Department of Education shall develop and make available to each school board model policies concerning the treatment of transgender students in public elementary and secondary schools that address common issues regarding transgender students in accordance with evidence-based best practices and include information, guidance, procedures, and standards relating to:
 1. Compliance with applicable nondiscrimination laws;
 2. Maintenance of a safe and supportive learning environment free from discrimination and harassment for all students;
 3. Prevention of and response to bullying and harassment;
 4. Maintenance of student records;
 5. Identification of students;
 6. Protection of student privacy and the confidentiality of sensitive information;
 7. Enforcement of sex-based dress codes; and
 8. Student participation in sex-specific school activities and events and use of school facilities. Activities and events do not include athletics.
- B. Each school board shall adopt policies that are consistent with but may be more comprehensive than the model policies developed by the Department of Education pursuant to subsection A.
2. That the Department of Education shall develop and make available to each school board model policies pursuant to subsection A of § 22.1-23.3 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act, no later than December 31, 2020.
3. That each school board shall adopt policies pursuant to subsection B of § 22.1-23.3 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act, no later than the beginning of the 2021–2022 school year.


school administration will take that choice away from her.

Kristen Allen represented a group of parents in Arlington called The Arlington Parent Coalition. She, too, spoke at the news conference on March 30 in opposition to the guidelines. Allen said that parents could no longer protect their children in public schools and were concerned about children who struggle with gender dysphoria. “Current policies lead to damaging outcomes for these students while demanding transgender ideology indoctrination of all children,” Allen said.

“The members of FCPS Pride, including LGBTQIA staff, parents of LGBTQIA+ students, and LGBTQIA+ families in Fairfax County Public Schools, are shocked that these organizations would try to foster such an unfriendly and unwelcoming atmosphere in our schools for Transgender and Gender-Expansive children. But we acknowledge the ongoing work that FCPS is doing to make our schools welcoming and safe. We have every confidence that FCPS will continue its efforts to be inclusive of Trans and Gender-Expansive students at all levels, despite the unveiled threats of The Family Foundation. This smells of politics to us,” said Robert Rigby, Jr., co-President of FCPS Pride and 22-year veteran teacher in FCPS.

SEE LAWSUITS, PAGE 11

GREAT FALLS CONNECTION ♦ APRIL 7-13, 2021 ♦ 3




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COMMENTARY

A Civic Duty

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

As we probably learned and as we teach our children, voting is the most important of civic duties. By choosing our leaders at election time and by deciding questions on referenda, we set the direction for our communities, states, and nation. Voting is a way to express our values and beliefs.

In one of the contradictions that strain the legitimacy of what we teach vs. what we do is to teach our children, proclaim in civic pronouncements and require for Scouting citizenship merit badges an acknowledgement of the importance of voting while at the same time making it difficult and sometimes impossible for some people to vote.

During the colonial period and early years of the state of Virginia, only white land-owners could vote. The Reconstruction era after the Civil War brought Black men into the electorate, but in a matter of decades that free access to voting was cut off by white supremacists who reasserted their power. An avowed purpose of writing a new constitution in 1902 was to disenfranchise Black men. It was successful in that the voting rolls were cut in half as most Blacks and poor whites were not able to make their way through the maze of requirements that one had to meet in order to vote. A blank sheet registration system and a \$1.50 poll tax to be paid three years in a row at least six months before an election kept many from voting. White people in the upper crust of

local society made it through these hurdles as the voting registrar who was part of the governing machine would provide them assistance while everyone else floundered at trying to get through the process.

Regardless of their race, women in this country have been able to vote for just over a hundred years, and that right came after incredible struggle. The Civil Rights era and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 opened up the electoral process for many Black people. Even now there are debates in the states about ways that access to the polls can be limited.

The Virginia General Assembly has put the Commonwealth on the path to supporting citizens carrying out their civic duty with several of the most progressive voting laws in the country. A headline in the New York Times last week proclaimed that "Virginia, the Old Confederacy's Heart, Becomes a Voting Rights Bastion." Over a fourteen-month period and two legislative sessions the General Assembly has passed and the Governor has signed bills to repeal a voter ID law, enact a 45-day no-excuse absentee voting period that permits early voting, made Election Day a holiday, and established a system for automatic voter registration for anyone who receives a Virginia driver's license. The Virginia Voting Rights Act follows some of the provisions of the earlier federal law but applies to localities in the state to ensure that voting remains accessible.

In Virginia we will continue to say that voting is one of the most important of our civic duties, and now we will have a legal structure that demonstrates we believe it!

LETTERS

'Historic Designation' Disregarded at Colvin Run

To the Editor:

I would like to bring to your attention the massive construction and relocation of the Colvin Run stream at the intersection of Carper's Farm Way and Route 7.

My family moved to the Carper's Farm neighborhood in July of 1992. During the course of the purchase of our home, we were notified as per the survey plot of our property and the Carper's Farm subdivision, that our home is located in an historic district. We researched this historic district designation with Fairfax County and were informed that our property, all of the properties on Scenic View Terrace as well as the Colvin Run stream are part

of an historic district since all these properties face the Colvin Run Mill located across Route 7 in Great Falls. Colvin Run Mill is located on the National Register of Historic Places.

When I first learned of the proposed construction of the widening of Route 7 and the subsequent relocation of Colvin Run stream, I brought the historic district designation to the attention of various representatives from VDOT and Fairfax County at meetings held with our neighborhood. These representatives never provided answers to my concerns. I think you can use the power of the press to pursue how can this "historic district" designation be complete-

Great Falls CONNECTION

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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ly disregarded, hundreds of trees removed, and an entire stream and ecosystem bulldozed and relocated? Does Fairfax County and VDOT not believe in preserving Fairfax County's historic district designations, and if these designations can so easily be ignored, why do they exist at all?

Hope Reynolds
 Vienna

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On March 26, Rita's Italian Ice of Fairfax provided "happiness drops" of Italian Ice to the local healthcare heroes at the Inova Fair Oaks Hospital Emergency Room in Chantilly



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Rita's Italian Ice Honoring Healthcare Heroes

Rita's Italian Ice & Frozen Custard is celebrating spring a little differently this year by honoring healthcare workers for all of their hard work and dedication throughout the pandemic.

On March 26, Rita's Italian Ice of Fairfax provided "happiness drops" of Italian Ice to the local healthcare heroes at the Inova Fair Oaks Hospital Emergency Room in Chantilly.

In addition to the local happi-

ness ice drops, Rita's has launched a Healthcare Hero Recognition Program, a social media campaign designed to celebrate healthcare workers everywhere. Rita's fans are encouraged to recognize their local healthcare hero by sharing a photo and/or story about the impact they have made over the past year.

For more information about Rita's Italian Ice, visit www.ritasice.com.

Public Input Sought on Police Chief Selection

Increased expectations of public involvement and transparency drive forum.

MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The 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 leadist@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 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.



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Residents Mourn ‘The Death of Colvin Run’

Great Falls, Vienna residents argue that ‘George Washington would not recognize his stream of 1799.’

By Mercia Hobson
The Connection

Colvin Run in Vienna died this spring. The stream, also known as Bridge Branch in the late 1700s when President George Washington owned the 300 acres in the area of the now historic Colvin Run Mill runs parallel to Leesburg Pike (Route 7). The stream is part of the Route 7 Corridor Improvements Project by the Virginia Department of Transportation, assisted by Shirley Contracting Company, LLC, along with Dewberry Consultants LLC as its Lead Designer.

IN THE LATE AFTERNOON of April 3, 2021, approximately 25 distraught citizens from both sides of Route 7, Vienna and Great Falls, gathered together at the intersection of Carpers Farm Way and Colvin Run Road. They had assembled to mourn the death of Colvin Run. Washington, who walked the same area on November 7, 1799, and investigated the bounds of his purchased parcel according to history by Robert Lundegard, more than likely would not recognize it.

Instead of water tumbling powerfully over rocks, a source of potential energy for a future mill, Colvin Run flowed flat through a near 60-foot-wide trapezoidal paved channel with paved banks, devoid of life. This is not what the community had worked to achieve for over a decade.

On May 23, 2019, William Canis, the Great Falls Citizens Association (GFCFA) president sent a letter to Robert Berg, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Norfolk. According to a copy of the letter provided to the Connection by Canis, GFCFA was concerned with the highway widening’s environmental aspect and the relocation of Colvin Run. As part of the Route 7 Working Group, Canis said GFCFA expressed concern that the stream should not be made into a long, straight channel “because of the adverse impact that it would have in managing stormwater.”

Through working with Fairfax County stormwater management officials, GFCFA learned about best practices the County employed. Canis wrote, “The recommendation to make Colvin Run into a riprap channel-Option 10C-is not a best practice. It seems like a throw-back to an earlier era that resulted in downstream degradation and erosion.” Canis said that it would be a departure from stream management best practice, with unintended consequences of channelizing the stream needing to be addressed in the future “at great cost to the Commonwealth or the Fairfax County Park Authority.” Canis added channelizing Colvin Run would cause problems for Difficult Run and could negatively impact the nearby wetlands. Canis suggested an option such as a meandering stream with shallow pools.

A few months later, in another email dated Aug. 12, 2019, Craig Carinci, Director Stormwater Planning Division Department

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Vienna and Great Falls residents gather to mourn ‘Colvin Run’s death’ after the VDOT realigned the stream into a paved trapezoidal channel near the confluence with Difficult Run as part of its Route 7 Improvements.



Hope Reynolds of Vienna



Stella Koch of Great Falls



of Public Works and Environmental Services Stormwater Planning Division of Fairfax County wrote to Mark Eversole, Marine Resources Commission Habitat Management Division regarding the pending Route 7 Corridor Improvements East and Realignment of Colvin Run, VMRC Permit Application 20190554. Carinci said the main item of concern was the proposed realignment of Colvin Run into a trapezoidal channel running parallel to Route 7 near the confluence with Difficult Run

Carinci said Fairfax County recommended: “The realigned Colvin Run segment be designed using natural channel design to incorporate aquatic habitat, improve water quality and enhance the adjacent wetlands.” Carinci qualified the recommendation by saying that while the County understood that the Corps of Engineers recommended the hardened, trapezoid channel over a more natural channel design to avoid direct loss of adjacent wetlands, they appreciated the importance of protecting wetlands. However, they were “concerned about the potential secondary impact of draining these wetlands by constructing a large, trapezoidal channel.”

On April 3, 2021, gone were the hyporheic zones, habitat, and refuge for various stages of aquatic organisms such as microbes, macroinvertebrates, and fish. Gone were the wetlands, home to birds, amphibians, reptiles, and small mammals. Washington more than likely would not recognize the “concrete monstrosity” as Hope Reynolds, who lives in the neighborhood, called it. The tumbling, mighty Colvin Run was dead.

VDOT: The Least Impactful Option

The Connection has obtained the following comment from VDOT:

“The team had also proposed a curved, meandering design, however this would have had greater impacts to forested wetlands just south of the stream, so the channel design was required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to protect valuable forested wetlands in this area.

This section of Colvin Run was originally relocated into a straight channel along the south side of Route 7 in the late 1960s. Over time the channel eroded and meandered, resulting in extensive soil loss near Route 7. To accommodate the road improvements and a longer, taller bridge over Difficult Run, about 1,200 linear feet of Colvin Run has been shifted slightly to the south in an articulated block channel. The articulated blocks will protect the area from erosion, and wooden weirs placed in the channel will encourage the stream to form a more natural, meandering pattern. The hollow shape of the blocks will help encourage plant growth.

Of ten total options considered for Colvin Run with input from the environmental agencies, this option was determined to be the least environmentally impactful.”

SEE HIGHLIGHTS, PAGE 11

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Cicada Stroll Bingo!

This spring, Fairfax County and parts of Northern Virginia will be among the regions of the Mid-Atlantic states that see millions of Brood X cicadas emerge from 17 years of living underground. These periodical cicadas rise to the surface to shed their shells, find a mate, lay eggs, and die, after fulfilling their mission in life. And since Virginia is for Lovers, Fairfax County is celebrating this season of love by encouraging curious visitors to witness this rare event with a fun-filled Cicada Stroll Bingo adventure and giveaway.

The Brood X cicadas are expected to begin emerging from the ground in early May, with peak emergence in the Northern Virginia area happening towards late May and early June. While the greatest concentration of cicadas may be found in natural settings, they will be visible in enormous numbers throughout the region as this particular brood is one of the largest insect emergences in the world.

Visit Fairfax, the official tourism organization of Fairfax County, has created a fun-filled Cicada Stroll Bingo Card that encourages visitors and locals to look for and snap photos of cicadas in various settings around Fairfax County.

A sampling of these spots include:

Cicadas Near the Water, where cicadas may be trying to cool down at one of Fairfax County's waterfront parks like Great Falls, Burke Lake, or Pohick Bay.

Cicadas on Public Art, where cicadas may be posing at the colorful murals at Mosaic or taking in the sculptures along Reston's splendid public art trail.

Cicadas at Historic Sites, where cicadas may be soaking up some culture learning about George Washington at his Mount Vernon estate or checking out Sully Historic Site.

Cicadas at a Brewery or Winery, where cicadas may be looking for the perfect mate to flirt with over a locally poured beer or a crisp glass of Virginia wine.

Bingo players can upload at least two photos from their completed Bingo Card to Visit Fairfax's image library for a chance to win a Cicada Care Package filled with fun items,



Cicadas return in 2021: Play Visit Fairfax's Cicada Stroll Bingo Card & win prizes! Details here: FXVA.com/cicadas

including a custom cicada facemask. Winners will be randomly selected beginning in May. The bingo card and more information can be found at FXVA.com/cicadas.

"While some may view the arrival of the Brood X cicadas as a nuisance, we here at Visit Fairfax choose to look at it as an exceptional opportunity for visitors and residents to witness one of Earth's most remarkable natural occurrences – and have fun at the same time," said Barry Biggar, President & CEO of Visit Fairfax.

Whether visitors are curious onlookers, cicada enthusiasts, or science and insect aficionados, this periodical cicada brood emergence offers a memorable way to take a getaway this spring. Fairfax County's 100-plus hotels, hundreds of restaurants featuring spacious and safe indoor and outdoor dining experiences, and the region's incredible swath of cultural attractions and parks are ready to welcome travelers to the area. For more travel tips and trip planning resources, visit FXVA.com. To learn more about Fairfax County's COVID-19 precautions and travel tips, please visit FXVA.com/covid.

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.

THURSDAY/APRIL 8

Caboose Brewing Company Beer Tasting. 7 p.m. A benefit for Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia (SCNOVA) Join them when Caboose Head Brewer, Matt Furda, will lead them through a tasting of four delicious beers that are perfect for the spring season and warm weather. Option to add a cheese & charcuterie pairing. Pick up available at either location. To sign up and place your order, visit Caboose: <https://gotab.io/loc/caboosebrewing/menu/shepherds-center>

NEW BUSINESS BOOTCAMP IN VIENNA

The Town of Vienna Economic Development Division in partnership with the Vienna Business Association and the Fairfax County Public Library announced a new business series aiming to provide expertise and support to small businesses and enhance their business operations and longevity. The free four-week, eight class virtual series kicks off on April 12 and will feature a variety of business-savvy professionals from across the region teaching a variety of topics ranging from marketing, to finance, operations and more. The program is specifically for new entrepreneurs and existing small business owners who reside in Fairfax County and will allow participants to virtually network with one another.

Schedule:
April 12 - Session One – Are You Ready to Start a Business?
April 14 - Session Two – Business Planning 101;

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10

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Bicycling picked up with the pandemic.



Commuting by bike is part of the picture.

Bicycling in Fairfax County Looking to Expand

Meetings planned this month to develop the ‘Active Fairfax Plan.’

By Mike Salmon
The Connection

With the warm weather approaching, Fairfax County is holding a series of meetings to hear thoughts about active transportation in the county, and this input will be used in their Active Fairfax Transportation Plan to integrate the existing Bicycle Master and Trails Plans. Throughout April, every Supervisor’s district will have virtual public meetings to find out how county residents travel by biking, walking, rolling, hiking, running and riding in and around the local communities.

Bruce Wright, the President of the Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling (FABB) supports the county’s trail network, and is looking at linking certain parts of the network to improve ride-ability. While much work has been done in this area, there are a few spots that are unclear for a cyclist connection. “I hope that the county puts more emphasis on

making these connections,” he said.

Officials are looking to work with transportation partners to develop a vision to help shape the future of active transportation in Fairfax County by consolidating previous active transportation planning efforts into one cohesive document that is easy-to-digest and track performance, the county officials said. Using this document, officials want to encourage livable street design through the development of tools and products that ensures a transportation network that connects and encourages people to take transit. Eventually this plan will be used to update the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan.

On the bike riders level, this is local riders’ chance to advocate for more funding,



Officials are looking for commuting options under the Active Fairfax Plan.

Meetings Schedule

District Meetings on Active Fairfax Plan

Braddock -	Mon., April 26	7 p.m.
Dranesville -	Tues., April 20	7 p.m.
Hunter Mill -	Mon., April 19	7 p.m.
Lee -	Mon., April 12	6:30 p.m.
Mason -	Thurs., April 8	7 p.m.
Mount Vernon -	Thurs., April 22	6:30 p.m.
Providence -	Wed., April 2	7 p.m.
Springfield -	Tues., April 27	7 p.m.
Sully -	Wed., April 21	7 p.m.
Conversacion comunitaria de transporte activo en espanol -	Thurs., April 15, 2021	7 p.m.
Lunch & Learn -	Tues., April 13	12 p.m.
Lunch & Learn -	Fri., April 23	12 p.m.

actions to curb speeding by motorists, more signage, lighting, bike parking, and other ideas to make Fairfax County more bicycle-friendly.

More Bike Options

According to the Capital Trails Coalition, the region already has 469 miles of existing trails but there are 152 projects, making up 408 miles of trails that need to be built or connected to complete the network. In Fairfax County, there is the Backlick Run Trail near Springfield, the Fox Mill sidepath, the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway Trail, the

Reston Parkway sidepath, the Richmond Highway Trail, the Route 7 sidepath, the VRE Trail, and the West Ox Road sidepath. The “sidepaths,” are bike talk for a trail parallel to the road.

While most of these extensions are under one mile, some are significant like the Virginia Railroad Express Trail, which is a path 16.48 miles long, or the Route 7 sidepath that is 11.89 miles long.

For those who cannot make the virtual meetings, the survey can be taken online at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/bike-walk/activefairfax>

AAUW Mclean Branch Announces April 2021 Program

On Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at 7 p.m. the McLean Branch of American Association of University Women (AAUW) is hosting its April Program featuring Cyndi Shanahan, Virginia Chair for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Visit <http://mclean-va.aauw.net> and send in a request to join the meeting. You will be sent an email with the Zoom link.

Cyndi Shanahan is currently serving her second year as

the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Chair of AAUW, Virginia. In this role she has coordinated with the Virginia branches to raise awareness of DE&I and promote programming at the branch and state level. She has taken on the role of coordinator for AAUW state DE&I chairs so that work across the nation can be leveraged. Prior to this role she served as the Membership Vice President position for Virginia AAUW for the past four years.

Prior to her roles on the state board, she held leadership positions in the Reston-Herndon branch including co-president and program chair. She led facilitated sessions to improve membership demographics, program alignment and strategic plan. Cyndi has been excited to continue the positive relationship with the Loudoun campus of Northern Virginia Community College.

Shei is currently retired, and

spends her consulting and volunteering with several nonprofits to empower women in the Northern Virginia area. She is thrilled to be able to spend a good deal of time with her grandchildren who live within walking distance.

A graduate from Jacksonville State University with a Masters from the University of Alabama, Cyndi has been a resident of Virginia for more than 30 years.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Cyndi Shanahan

Estate Planning During Pandemic

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

With the nation sadly surpassing 500,000 Covid related deaths, morality is much more on the mind of many. Yet this year's wills survey, conducted annually by a caregivers foundation, shows that while the Covid-19 pandemic increased people's desire to get a will, most have not taken action.

Why is early estate planning important? There is common agreement that it's best to get ahead of deathbed planning. There are many terrible stories of the sick in hospital beds attempting to tell loved ones where money, accounts, insurance and other financial information could be found in order to carry on without them. And although those without family or with limited assets might be tempted to forego a plan, estate plans have value for everyone.

If a will or trust is not available to follow a decedent's wishes, then state law determines the distribution of assets, which may not align with the person's desire or family situation. Further, having a medical directive relieves uncertainty during times of difficult health situations or in the event of incapacitation.

What is the process at death? Probate is the court supervised process of "proving and recording" a will and transferring assets. Transfers follow a will or state law. Probate also is required when there is solely-held property or other assets without a "pay upon death" designee. Wills use an executor, supervised by the court, to administer the transfer of assets.

Without a will the estate also could remain in court longer, with associated higher court costs, even with a small estate.

A trust can be an alternative or complement to a will, which might allow the estate to avoid the probate court process. In a trust, a trustee, designated by the 'trustor' (trust creator,) stands in to make decisions related to assets in the trust to benefit a third party beneficiary.

Why do people delay making an estate plan? David L. Whiting, principal attorney for the Oak Hill Law Group, Herndon, says there are several reasons. "First, mortality is an uncomfortable topic; as is thinking about what a child or other loved one will have. Second, the rules are complicated and can seem overwhelming. It is easier to push decisions to the end. And third, some feel a plan is unnecessary if there are no children or there are not a lot of assets." Some worry



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Prepare, notarize, and witness basic estate documents for faster, less costly completion of your final wishes

"It's important to confront difficult questions and difficult planning issues while you are still at your best."

— Attorney David Whiting,
of Oak Hill Law Group,
Herndon



PHOTO BY COLLEEN DANNER

**Attorney David Whiting, of
Oak Hill Law Group, Herndon**

about the expense of document preparation.

Is it difficult to form an estate plan, during the pandemic? Professionals who provide estate planning services are often working from home these days; attorneys, accountants, and financial planners. Most may work on-line with fees ranging from a few hundred to several thousand dollars. The Virginia State Bar Association provides an on-line attorney referral service as a starting point for finding those practicing estate planning.

For those who feel comfortable with a 'do-it-yourself' approach, there are several on-line services and apps which might be less expensive, such as FreeWill, Willing, Nolo, LegalZoom, and RocketLawyer. They typically provide templates and instructions, or basic flat fee services at lower cost; from no fee, to with-fees at \$39 - \$329 per document. Bear in mind that discount services and apps are basic, when your actual needs may be more complex.

Whiting warns against trading short term gain for long term loss by not getting professional help; even though it's hard to set money aside for something which may not be needed for decades to come. He suggests shopping around for an attorney with whose fees and practice you can feel comfortable. He says, "Since you will be talking about very personal situations, trust and a comfort level are critical. It's important to confront difficult questions and difficult planning issues while you are still at your best."

Here's What's Happening at MCC!

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Mission: McLean
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The Old Firehouse



Virtual Family Bingo Night
Friday, April 9, 7-9 p.m.
\$5 per person for 5 Cards

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(the) Unruly Theatre Project's
Virtual Improv Show
Wednesday, April 14, 7 p.m.
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Virtual '80s Music Drag Bingo
with Miss Fluffy Soufflé
Thursday, April 15, 7 p.m.
\$10/\$5 MCC tax district residents.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle



Earth Day McLean-Act Locally
Saturday, April 17, 9 a.m.-noon
Free admission
Preregistration recommended.

The Old Firehouse



Virtual Family Fun Trivia Night
Friday, April 26, 7-9 p.m.
\$5 per family (per Zoom invite)

Father-Daughter Silent Disco Dance



Friday, April 30, 7-8:30 p.m.
\$25 per participant
\$15 MCC district residents.



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-Werner Heisenberg

Announcements

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April 19 - Session Three - Money, Money, Money;

April 21 - Session Four - The Business Launch;

April 26 - Session Five - News You Can Use;

April 28 - Session Six - Marketing is King / Queen;

May 3 - Session Seven - Smooth Operator;

May 5 - Session Eight - The Grand Opening.

The sessions will be held Mondays and Wednesdays from 6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. and all participants are expected to attend all eight sessions for the cohort program.

Registration will close at 6 p.m. on Sunday, April 11. For more information on the Ignite Business Bootcamp and to register visit explorevienna.com/ignite.

EARTH DAY MCLEAN

McLean Community Center (MCC) is holding an environmental action event for residents of Dranesville Small District 1A from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, April 17. Earth Day McLean—Act Locally is drive-thru, outdoor, event that provides a convenient way for McLean residents to better the planet. Admission is free; preregistration is recommended. The center is located at 1234 Ingleside Ave.

Several local community businesses and organizations will provide four key facets of environmental health in the spirit of shredding, reusing, recycling and planting.

Earth-friendly opportunities include:

- ❖ Paper shredding provided by ShredInstead
- ❖ Paint recycling provided by Yuck Old Paint
- ❖ Bulk/Household Items accepted by College Hunks Hauling Junk
- ❖ Composting by Veteran Compost
- ❖ Bike donations provided by Wheels to Africa
- ❖ Tree saplings donated by Bartlett Tree Experts
- ❖ Art Alchemy, an innovative recycled art installation provided by Brookfield School.

Visit the website, www.mclean-center.org/special-events, for more detailed information on limits and constrictions.

GOLDEN GIRLS SEEKS PLAYERS

The Golden Girls of Northern Virginia, a senior women's softball league, is looking for players. Any woman over the age of 40 is encouraged to join. All skill levels are welcome. They play on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in Vienna. For more information, visit the website www.goldengirls.org.

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.

APRIL 9-10

Drive-Thru Play "Midnight Mystery." At BASIS Independent McLean, 8000 Jones Branch Dr., McLean. Audience members will view the performance from their cars as they drive from scene to scene in the parking lot. Midsummer Mystery follows a community theater's matinee of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" that loses its magic when a wealthy donor's car becomes drama central, and the potent potions within it fly away. Can a clever stage manager connect the clues in time to call the cues for the evening show? This theater's future depends on it!

SATURDAY/APRIL 10

Cherry Blossom Community Market & Workshops. Starts at 11 a.m. At the Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. Spend the day browsing the cherry blossom-themed Workhouse Arts Center Community Market and participate in several workshops, including origami making,

haiku contests, and Japanese drumming. Enjoy art work inspired by the spring blooms in all of the Workhouse galleries, snap photos with the beautiful LOVEworks sign, and admire the property's own cherry trees. Admission is always free. (<http://www.workhousearts.org>; 703-584-2900)

SATURDAY/APRIL 10

Nature Photography. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. Work on developing your photography skills with the "Nature Photography for Beginners" class at Lake Fairfax Park. Explore a trail and learn how to use a DSLR and tripod to capture images of the hidden wonders in the natural world. Try out a variety of techniques to compose creative images of animals and landscapes. Learn how to upload, enhance and print images, too. For beginning photographers age 16 to adult. Be sure to bring your own DSLR camera. Cost is \$24 per person. Call 703-471-5414.

SUNDAY/APRIL 11

Kayak Fishing. 1:30-5:30 p.m. At Royal Lake Park, 5344 Gainsborough Drive., Fairfax. Spend a Sunday afternoon aboard a kayak in search of that perfect catch. Learn about the fish in local lakes and pick up tips on how to catch them safely and efficiently from a kayak. Kayaks and fishing gear will be provided. The "Kayak Fishing (12-Adult) by Vendor" program at Royal Lake Park runs from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m. The cost is \$114 per person. Call 703-569-3464.

SUNDAY/APRIL 11

Atomic Spy's Son. 2-3:30 p.m. Online. At The Cold War Museum, 1734 Farm Station Road, Warrenton. What's life like in a Cold War U.S. family when Dad is an atomic spy for the Soviets? Cost: \$20. Visit the website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/atomic-spys-son-discovering-the-reality-of-your-fathers-secret-life-tickets-137043377431>

Two Lawsuits Threaten Virginia Public Schools

FROM PAGE 3

ACCORDING TO FCPS PRIDE, The Family Foundation of Virginia sent a letter to all school boards and superintendents in the state to back off whatever they were doing. "It can't hurt for us to email our school board members and superintendents (in Fairfax, Dr. Scott Brabrand at ssbrabrand@fcps.edu) with "support for trans and gender expansive children, and a plea not to back off of what it is doing," FCPS Pride posted.

"These guidelines are long overdue and will save lives. If we are truly committed to fostering a caring and inclusive culture in our schools, transgender and gender-expansive students must be treated with the same dignity and respect as everyone else. They need to know they are safe and accepted," said Karl Frisch, Providence District Representative on the Fairfax County School Board. "These lawsuits are little more than a mean-spirited attempt to turn the clock back on equality in Virginia. Our students deserve better than bigotry and hate."

Highlights of Residents' Comments:

FROM PAGE 6

"I've lived in this neighborhood for 29 years and always breathed a sigh of relaxation when I drove into the neighborhood—the stream was so beautiful. Now we have a concrete monstrosity. Homeowners living on Scenic View Terrace and Carpers Farm Ct. can make no changes to our houses without first obtaining approval from Fairfax County because we are located in the Colvin Run historic district. So how can this stream be destroyed as it's also located in the historic district?" - Hope Reynolds

"If you compare this work to the stream restorations being done now by the coun-

ty, you see what could have been had they cared about the community and the stream." -- Stella Koc

"I think the appeal of Fairfax county is its natural beauty. We lost that with this construction. I'm disappointed. Please at least plant new trees and vegetation to offset what has been done." - Jeff Kin of Vienna

"It is unfortunate that the very beauty we all crave for our communities was so summarily destroyed by a thoughtless vision for redirecting a natural stream. We are all disappointed for the County and the state not allowing a more generous approach to our environment." - Phil and Deonne Snare of Vienna provided joint comment.

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Being Driven Only Slightly Crazy



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

So this is what it's like to be out of the house and driving around: mask on, surgical gloves in the console, hand sanitizer in the glove box; not so different than before my than before my two covid-19 vaccinations. Today, Sunday, April 4, is my "day of liberation," as I've heard it called, the day two weeks after your final shot when the vaccine is supposed to reach its peak effectiveness. Not that I anticipate acting/living any differently than I have for the past 12 months, nevertheless; the shackles feel like they're off a little bit. I can now go out and about and be less fearful for my life.

Still, I'm not going to throw caution to the wind. Considering I'm a 66-year-old man with cancer, the definition of "comorbidity," which places a covid-19 target squarely on my back, front actually given the location of my chest/lungs, I am unlikely to ever unmask. And underlying that "comorbidity," is that my oncologist thinks that I have non small cell lung cancer, stage IV, and my endocrinologist thinks I have papillary thyroid cancer, stage IV; two for the price of one, you might say. As a result of this dual diagnosis, I tend to envision my future with lingering trepidation. Ergo, I don't see myself footloose and fancy free anytime soon. Presumably, my doctors talk with each other about my "unique" two-cancer status, but I wouldn't know, would I? As the Brits often question the end of their sentences.

I know that I can email them anytime I want though, but the covid-19 norm is that we see each other on video, not in person. And not that I'm overly concerned, but a face-to-face appointment, one that occurs while we're in the same examining room, might one day save my life. In addition, one other day, I'd love to have a Team Loure meeting with both my doctors present in the same examining room at the same time which would allow me to be my own judge and jury to determine a prudent way forward.

Though this kind of meeting would alter my "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" philosophy (since in the 12-plus years since my diagnosis, we've never had a group-think like this) still; to quote my late father, the idea has merit. And even though my father died in early December, 2006, I still hear his parental advisories and invoke them at most every turn, especially when I recycle his jokes. Most notably: "You're very seldom wrong, but this time, you're right." If I heard that once in my life, I've heard it a thousand times, maybe literally.

Thankfully I, along with my brother Richard, inherited our father's sense of humor and positive attitude. Whenever I've contemplated a change in my treatment, whether because of a blip on my radar, or an anomaly in one of my diagnostic scans, generally speaking, I've viewed it all as just another cancer-treatment step that has to be taken. No big deal. And diagnosis to date, fortunately, I've taken more steps forward than backward even with my primary cancer being changed recently to thyroid from lung. For clarity in the midst of this turnabout (which I'm not exactly sure is fair play), I remember asking my oncologist what type of cancer I had now, after being diagnosed originally with non small cell lung cancer in Feb., 2009. He said I still have lung cancer, but I also have thyroid cancer (lucky me). When I followed up by asking him which is better to have, he unequivocally said thyroid cancer which is the only cancer for which I am currently being treated. The immunotherapy that I had been taking to fight the lung cancer has been stopped for almost a year. As far as my current treatment indicates, I have thyroid cancer (though both cancers are stage IV and are considered "termina

In a "Three Stooges" episode entitled "Restless Knights," Curly was asked how he wanted to die: "to be burned at the stake or have his head chopped off." Curly replied: "I'd rather be burned at the stake." His explanation: "a hot steak is better than a cold chop." All cancers/protocols considered, I'd rather be diagnosed with thyroid cancer, so long as there are no covid-19 complications.

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



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