

## Ticket Sales Open For Tour de Hunter Mill

NEWS, PAGE 2

Cyclists participating in the Inaugural Tour de Hunter Mill will enjoy the paved Washington & Old Dominion Trail and marked crosswalks in the Town of Vienna.

## FCPS To Offer Four Days a Week In-school

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## Hot Market in McLean, Great Falls

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



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From left (top) Julia Toloczko, Scarlett Spano, Keya Umesh, Erin Young (middle) Tess Jannery-Barney, Catherine Knecht, Abhaya Tyrka, Sarah Hilton (bottom) Talia-Rose Diorio, Katie Murchison

# In Search of the First Kiss

## Langley High School's production of 'The Party Hop.'

BY CAROLYN SAXE  
THOMAS WOOTTON HIGH SCHOOL

Unfortunately, things don't seem to have changed much two years in the future. Quarantine and all its struggles were still very present, or at least they were in the universe of "The Party Hop," a one-act play recently written by Natalie Margolin.

Langley High School's production of this play brings eerie nostalgia to a familiar situation. Friends Ava, Emma, and (unexpectedly) Nancy got ready to attend a few parties one night, and it was revealed that Ava had never kissed anyone. Nancy declared that this was the night Ava would get her first kiss! Ava was convinced by the other two to hold onto this dream as they traveled through parties, each one revealing different ways people try and sometimes succeed to connect while distanced. In the final party, Ava's chance finally came along, and she took it. Immediate regret followed with the realization that she just kissed a camera, not a person, and her crush was weirded out. The three friends returned to their own meeting and Ava spoke her thoughts to both friends, frustrated, but ultimately they forgave and felt more connected than when the night began.

All actors involved gave extremely natural performances, to the point that it appeared to be just a recording of a normal Zoom call. Nancy's (Talia-Rose Diorio) extroverted extra-ness filled her little box, even when she wasn't speaking, and the small moments of quiet

vulnerability were moving. In stark contrast was Ava (Tess Jannery-Barney) with subtle yet very relatable reactions. You had to cringe when something awkward happened. Emma (Abhaya Tyrka) was always present and smiling as the mediator between the other two, able to finish Ava's sentences despite lag and share a happy moment with Nancy.

The supporting cast all brought strong, diverse characters to the screen. All the adults at the cocktail party were astoundingly adult. The combo of Nathan and Nora, played by Gunnar Peacock and Gabriella Sanchez respectively, had excellent chemistry (or anti-chemistry, looking at their muted heated arguments). Nora's exaggerated eye rolls added levity, especially making use of the limited framing. At Mary's birthday party, Mary herself (played by Katie Murchison) displayed the strangeness of emotions online with her mostly stoic face describing her emotions.

Impressively, there were zero technical issues. The audio was perfectly clear, the editing was very subtle and well-timed, and the lighting was natural. All the costumes fit the characters, especially Nancy's bright orange party attire. The sets for every character were carefully chosen and perfectly framed, such as the very accurate way Grandma (Erin Young) seemed even smaller in frame with too much distance. The production also made use of Zoom itself, including personalized name tags and somehow making lag nostalgic. The direction of each scene, by Elizabeth Tippens, kept everyone extremely authentic and in character.

Perhaps the world isn't as far away as it would seem in this quarantine. As Nancy pointed out, physical distance doesn't matter online. You could even throw your own Zoom party. Maybe even have your first kiss (in a year at least).

### BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

#### SATURDAY/APRIL 17

Author Shabnam Curtis. 2-3 p.m. at Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. E, Vienna. Shabnam Curtis will read from her memoir, *My Persian Paradox*, and discuss her journey to freedom and how women have to live under Sharia Law in Iran. Streaming through Fairfax County Public Library. Visit the website: <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/7330067>

#### MONDAY/APRIL 19

Virtual Kindergarten Orientation. 2-3 p.m. For Great Falls Elementary School. Parents will receive registration information, as well as required health information such as immunizations and physical examinations. A classroom teacher will also present information on the kindergarten curriculum and the daily schedule. To receive an email with the link, visit [greatfalls.fcps.edu](http://greatfalls.fcps.edu) and complete the Google form.

#### TUESDAY/APRIL 20

Caregivers Support Group: Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia (SCNOVA). Virtual via Zoom. SCNOVA hosts a support group for caregivers of adult family members with dementia the first and third Tuesdays of each month. Their virtual, facilitated meetings are from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Contact facilitator, Jack Tarr, at [jtarr5@verizon.net](mailto:jtarr5@verizon.net) for details on joining the meeting via zoom or to see the SC web site flyer: <https://www.scnova.org/announcements>.



Tour de Hunter Mill offers three routes to accommodate cyclists of all abilities.

# Ticket Sales Open for Tour de Hunter Mill

## The tour promotes 'Unity in Our Community' and mobility by bicycle.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill District) announced the Inaugural Tour de Hunter Mill. It is a community bike ride for a maximum of 150 ticketed riders on May 15. The Hunter Mill District, Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling, and Reston Bike Club organized the event to be held rain or shine beginning at 8:30 that morning with a welcome by Alcorn. Cyclists riding the three routes, one family and two long with staggered start times, leave from Reston Community Center Hunters Woods and end there to enjoy the post-ride food, fun, and prizes.

According to Alcorn, Tour de Hunter Mill showcases "Unity in our Community." Cyclists discover or rediscover the many hidden treasures, cultural and environmental resources the district offers in Reston and the Town of Vienna. The ride is modeled after the Annual Tour de Mount Vernon.

"There are multiple routes depending upon how ambitious different riders are," he said.

Fairfax County's webpage of the event describes the short Family Route as less than five miles and staying within Reston, mostly on paved Reston Association paths. Cyclists visit five different public art locations, and children enjoy a Public Art passport game to earn a reward at the end of the ride.

The two Long Ride routes go from Reston to Vienna and back to Reston. The difference

is whether cyclists pedal the entire route or ride the Metro for a portion of the return route. The Tour de Hunter Mill Route Long Ride, No Metro, is 20.3 miles. Cyclists take the W&OD to Vienna for the first rest stop. Then they take quiet roads and trails to the Spring Hill Metro station in Tysons Corner for the second rest stop. From there, cyclists turn around and head back to Reston and Hunter Mill using paved trails, quiet roads, and roads with bike infrastructure.

The more interesting long route, according to Alcorn, is the Tour de Hunter Mill Long Ride Using the Metro. It is a 15-mile route. After the first portion, cyclists catch the Metro at Spring Hill. Riders have to use their Metro cards. This option saves cyclists 475 feet of climbing over six miles. Supervisor Alcorn said he is picking up a bike at a Capital Bikeshare station and looking forward to the Long Ride Using the Metro.

"It is for those of us that actually want to see what it's like and have not ridden a bike then taken the bike onto a Metro rail car," Alcorn said.

The fee is \$25 per rider. If registering as a family, up to 5 people, purchase one ticket per adult and send an email to [huntermill@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:huntermill@fairfaxcounty.gov) to inquire about family pricing. If individuals would like to participate but cannot afford the registration fee, email [huntermill@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:huntermill@fairfaxcounty.gov) for a scholarship or volunteer opportunities. Put Tour de Hunter Mill in the subject line.

## FCPS To Offer Four Days a Week In-school

Phased plan to start April 20 for most vulnerable students.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Some students in the Fairfax County Public Schools system could be poised to clean off the family dining room table by April 20.

Fairfax County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Scott Brabrand, in a phone interview the morning of April 6, said that FCPS will offer four days a week in-person school instruction to some students beginning April 20.

"This expansion to four days is really the next to the last step before returning kids to five days of instruction in the fall," said Brabrand. "It will help us get additional experience with more students that are in buildings and making sure we're doing our safety measures well."

FCPS is mindful of the CDC's most recent guidance related to physical distancing in schools and other measures, Brabrand said. The division will continue to implement mitigation strategies such as monitoring disease data and it will be expanding vaccination opportunities for students and staff.

FCPS will extend the first opportunity to return to four days of in-person learning to its

most vulnerable children. Any student struggling now, virtual or in-person as determined by school officials, will be offered four days a week of in-person instruction. Brabrand said that school staff is looking through students' academics, especially third-quarter progress, IEPs, and the 504 processes. That is happening this week and next week.

"By April 20, kids that had selected two days of in-person will have, as school staffing and capacity allow, the opportunity to do four days of in-person. ... All of that will help prepare us to have five days of in-person instruction in the fall," said Brabrand.

BRABRAND said the expansion is not a pilot program with small numbers of students but a significant expansion across all its schools. "We're going to have tens of thousands of additional students receiving in-person instruction. This is a major step forward and the last step before going to five days of in-person instruction."

Brabrand said that the in-person acceptance rates per school have varied from 20



PHOTO BY FCPS  
Dr. Scott Brabrand

"We're going to have tens of thousands of additional students receiving in-person instruction. This is a major step forward and the last step before going to five days of in-person instruction."

— Scott Brabrand, superintendent

percent of students being in-person to 80 percent. That variability means in-person learning will look different at each school. Variability is one of the nuances in the expansion. The plan, though, is dependent upon staff availability. Staff "really stepped up," according to Brabrand.

Meanwhile, FCPS is working closely with the health department and monitoring additional opportunities for younger students to get access to the vaccine. Currently no one younger than 16 can be vaccinated but trials are underway for younger children, and vaccination could be expanded before the start of school in the fall.

"We may get authorization for kids even younger than 16, to have an aggressive campaign ... to vaccinate as many of our kids

who are eligible to receive the vaccine before school starts in the fall. That'll be another layer of safety and security for students and staff."

LOOKING BACK on the past 13 months of the pandemic, Brabrand said he would have appreciated receiving CDC guidance "sooner and clearer." "The confusion at the beginning of the pandemic set the course for a lot of confusion and mixed messages throughout the pandemic. Our first priority was keeping students and staff safe. We've gotten more clarity. We've gotten the guidance we've needed. And we're using that guidance to move our schools back to normal operations as quickly as possible and as safely as possible."

## Hot Market in McLean, Great Falls

Market Comparison: First Quarter 2021 to 2020 and 2011 for McLean and Great Falls.

BY KAREN  
BRISCOE



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED  
Karen Briscoe

### REAL ESTATE

market in McLean and Great Falls has rebounded a whopping 75.9 percent.

Drilling down, one of the segments that experienced strong improvement with over double the number of sales is

the \$1 to \$1.25 m price point inside the Beltway McLean 22101. Low inventory for below \$1 m single family homes is due to strong competition between entry level home buyers and builders pursuing in-fill lots. Home buyers in many cases are electing to "buy up" due to greater affordability with low interest rates. Compared to one decade ago in 2011, there is nearly four times the number of sales.

The \$2 to \$3 m home also ex-

perienced a "hot" market in first quarter 2021 with 40 sales in McLean and Great Falls compared to 13 in 2020 and only 5 a decade ago in 2011. These homes are most typically estate type properties which allow for natural physical distancing and outdoor living amenities, features highly sought after as the nation enters the post pandemic phase.

There is an abundance of buyers ready willing and able to purchase a home in Northern Virginia in 2021 and they are finding that there is considerably less supply than in previous years. Since the three month-stay-at-home orders in Spring 2020, inventory levels remain at all-time lows. As homeowners recognize appreciation not experienced in over 15 years and want to take advantage of an UBER sellers' market, predictions are that more homes will come available.

Today, people are seeking out the security of home as a safe haven. Strong indicators are that even

### McLean & Great Falls Quarterly Market Analysis of Home Sales (Based on List Price):

2021 Sales Compared to 2020 and 2011						
2021 Total Sales: 292						
	>\$3 Mil	\$2-3 Mil	\$1.25-2 Mil	\$1-\$1.25 Mil	\$750k-\$1 Mil	<\$750k
Zip Code						
22101	7	21	34	23	29	15
22102	5	7	13	5	9	55
22066	4	12	31	9	12	1
Total: 16		Total: 40	Total: 78	Total: 37	Total: 50	Total: 71
Combined Total Upper Brackets: 134			Combined Total Lower Brackets: 158			
2020 Total Sales: 257						
Zip Code	>\$3 Mil	\$2-3 Mil	\$1.25-2 Mil	\$1-\$1.25 Mil	\$750k-\$1 Mil	<\$750k
22101	7	9	40	11	31	2
22102	1	2	14	11	9	57
22066	1	2	21	13	24	2
Total: 9		Total: 13	Total: 75	Total: 35	Total: 64	Total: 61
Combined Total Upper Brackets: 97			Combined Total Lower Brackets: 160			
2011 Total Sales: 166						
Zip Code	>\$3 Mil	\$2-3 Mil	\$1.25-2 Mil	\$1-\$1.25 Mil	\$750k-\$1 Mil	<\$750k
22101	1	2	11	6	21	25
22102	2	2	6	3	8	42
22066	2	1	14	6	8	6
Total: 5		Total: 5	Total: 31	Total: 15	Total: 37	Total: 73
Combined Total Upper Brackets: 41			Combined Total Lower Brackets: 125			

as more people are vaccinated, home will continue to represent the central place where people live, work, play, educate their children and enjoy physical activity and entertainment.

The traditional spring season is opening with a strong start in 2021 and market indicators show that real estate sales in McLean and Great Falls will experience another banner year. As homeowners find themselves in situations where they have a need to make a move,

this could be the year to take advantage of considerable pent-up buyer demand!

Karen Briscoe, Lizzy Conroy, and Jenny McClintock with HBC Group at Keller Williams are active and experienced Realtors® in the Northern Virginia marketplace. They work with sellers, buyers, investors, and builders in all price ranges and are available to assist with your real estate needs! [www.HBCGroupKW.com](http://www.HBCGroupKW.com), 703-734-0192, [Homes@HBCGroupKW.com](mailto:Homes@HBCGroupKW.com).

## Earth Day – Then and Now

BY PAUL GILBERT  
NOVA PARKS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Fifty-one years ago, in 1970, the first Earth Day took place on April 22. The issues of that time were quite different than what we face today. In 1970 our nation was awash in pollution. In 1969 the Cuyahoga River in Ohio caught fire due to so much oil and chemicals on the surface. The same year a large oil rig spill off the coast of California happened. A new report at the time documented the endangered Bald Eagle and the impact of DDT pesticide on the eagle and other species. American cities were choked with high levels of lead smog from cars and trucks, and litter was everywhere.

Today, we have addressed many of these issues, and new ones face us. The EPA was established in 1969, and pollution has decreased dramatically. DDT was banned, and species like the Bald Eagle have recovered. Lead was removed from gasoline, and our air is much cleaner, and litter is not the problem it was decades ago. All of this has meant better health for people and nature. So, let's take a moment and appreciate the great work that has been accomplished!

Today, while our rivers are not on fire, and we breathe and eat fewer toxins, our challenges are still great. Global warming is the central environmental issue of our generation. The global average temperature in March 2020 was over 2 degrees higher than the average for the 20th Century, and this trend is growing. The results are more extreme storms, wildfires, hurricanes, and more. And the cause is too much carbon in the atmosphere. The solution has two sides: reducing the use of fossil fuels and the expansion of natural areas that absorb carbon.

At NOVA Parks, we have been doing what we can to address both sides of the carbon issue for



New parkland at Pohick Bay.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NOVA PARKS

some time. Since 2007 NOVA Parks has tracked every gallon of gas and kilowatt of electricity consumed and converted it to carbon. Many investments have been made to improve energy efficiency. In 2018 NOVA Parks completed its second new building with a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold certification. The new Jean R. Packard Building features recycled building materials, cutting edge stormwater, HVAC, and lighting, and even has solar panels on the roof.

But the most significant contribution the regional park system has made to address the causes of global warming is the expansion of protected forested parkland. As the region's original conservation organization, by 1970, NOVA Parks had already assembled 3,600 acres of parkland. With new parkland acquisitions almost every year, the Regional Park system is currently up to 12,200 acres, including 37 acres of waterfront land in Fairfax County added over just the last year and 600 acres of managed parkland added in Loudoun County in 2018. Over 85 percent of the Regional park system is in a natural, mostly forested condition. This level of forested land absorbs 15,000 tons of carbon from our air per year! Forests are the air filters of our region, absorbing carbon and releasing fresh oxygen.

Environmental leaders fifty years ago did a remarkable job of cleaning up pollution and toxins in our environment, making the world a healthier place to be today. Our collective job



Students in '70s doing water quality testing: the first Earth Day took place on April 22, 1970.

moving forward is to address the carbon in our atmosphere that is driving global warming. We must all look for ways to use fewer fossil fuels, and at the same time, recognize that parkland is more than just a fun place to visit, but is actually vitally important to absorbing the carbon in our air. The progress of yesterday gives hope that the challenges of today can be addressed with focused effort.

## Understanding the Law About Weed

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

During its Reconvened Session last week the General Assembly approved an amendment proposed by Governor Ralph Northam that decriminalizes the possession by adults of a small amount of marijuana effective July 1, 2021. Virginia joins 26 other states and the District of Columbia that have decriminalized small amounts of marijuana. This generally means certain small, personal-consumption amounts are a civil or local infraction, not a state crime (or are a lowest misdemeanor with no possibility of jail time).

Based on the new law in Virginia, adults can grow up to four plants, gift it in private, or have an ounce or less in their possession if they are over 21. Selling, buying, or driving with marijuana remains illegal at this time. People given a summons for possession for an amount beyond the minimum will be issued a summons for marijuana possession for which they have the option of prepaying the civil penalty of \$25 instead of going to court.

I voted for the Governor's amendments as necessary to reflect the realities of marijuana possession and use. The people of Virginia will be no less safe as a result of these changes. Our jails will be less full

of persons who use marijuana recreationally for themselves, and persons who do so will not be labeled a criminal. Previously marijuana possession was a criminal offense punishable by up to 30 days in jail and/or up to a \$500 fine. Public opinion polls have shown that 83 percent of Virginians support lowering criminal possession to a fine and 61 percent support ending prohibition all together.

I also supported the changes in laws related to the use of medical cannabis in 2017. The law enacted at that time permitted patients suffering from intractable epilepsy to use some types of cannabis oil with a doctor's certification. Subsequent

amendments to that law allow patients with any condition to receive recommendations to use and purchase cannabis preparations with no more than 10 milligrams of THC per dose. Extracts sold under the provisions of this law must be produced by processors approved by the Virginia Board of Pharmacy. Thirty-three other states have similar laws related to the use of marijuana for medical purposes.

Retail sales of marijuana will not begin until January 1, 2024. Many complex issues remain to be resolved as to who will be certified to sell the product, how an illicit market will be controlled, and what the limitations on purchasing will

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:  
vienna@connectionnewspapers.com

Kemal Kurspahic  
Editor ♦ 703-778-9414  
kemal@connectionnewspapers.com

Mercia Hobson  
Community Reporter  
mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com

Ken Moore  
Contributing Writer  
kmoore@connectionnewspapers.com

ADVERTISING:  
For advertising information  
sales@connectionnewspapers.com  
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk  
Display Advertising/National Sales  
703-778-9444  
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin  
Marketing Assistant  
703-778-9431  
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment  
Advertising  
703-778-9431

Editor & Publisher  
Mary Kimm  
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com  
@MaryKimm

Executive Vice President  
Jerry Vernon  
703-549-0004  
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

be. The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission issued a 175-page report in November 2020, titled "Key Considerations for Marijuana Legalization" that sets direction with options as to how the state should proceed with full legalization. There is a determination on the part of most legislators that the current system for labeling persons criminal and putting them in jail is not appropriate and that total reform is needed. Minority communities have been particularly hard hit by the current system. Much work remains to be done, but I believe Virginia is taking a responsible route to fixing the laws about weed.

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## VIENNA POLICE HIGHLIGHTS

The following summary contains various incidents of general interest as well as vehicular crashes handled by the Town of Vienna Police Department from April 2 – April 9, 2021.

### INCIDENTS

**Fraud** -- 700 Block Cottage Street, SW Between Dec. 28, 2020 at 12 p.m. and April 1, 2021 at 12 p.m. A resident reported that his ex-wife used his personal information to open a utility account in his name. The resident was not residing in the town when the fraud occurred. He was advised to report the incident to the proper police jurisdiction in Texas.

**Burglary** -- 200 Block Park Street, SE

Between March 15 at 11 p.m. and March 16 at 2 a.m.

An officer located the owner of the property that was recovered in a previous case. The owner returned home from being out of town to find that someone forced entry into his residence. This case is being investigated.

**Vandalism** -- 300 Block Park Street, NE

Between March 28 at 12 p.m. and March 30 at 12 p.m.

A resident reported that someone vandalized his vehicle. This is being investigated.

**Lost Property** -- 100 Block Church Street, NE

March 28, 12 p.m.

A citizen reported that he lost his wallet in the area of the Freeman House Store.

**Stolen Vehicle** -- 100 Block Elm Street, SW

Between March 30 at 12 p.m. and April 5 at 9 p.m.

A resident reported that her vehicle was taken while she was out of town.

**Animal Case** -- 1000 Block Hillcrest Drive, SW

March 31, 10:53 a.m.

ACO Barker received a couple of complaints regarding a resident running with her dogs without having them on a leash. The dogs' owner was advised of the Town ordinance and that they may be issued a summons for the violation if they do not comply.

**Narcotics Violation** -- 400 Block Echols Street, SE

April 1, 8:29 p.m.

An officer observed a driver commit a traffic offense and initiated a traffic stop. Upon the officer's interaction with the driver, he detected an odor of marijuana. The driver had a small amount of marijuana in her possession that was taken for destruction.

**Suspicious Event** -- 1000 Block Westbriar Drive, NE

April 2, 9:14 a.m.

A resident reported that he observed a man riding a bike carrying multiple Amazon packages. The

resident followed the man into Fairfax County in the area of Old Courthouse Road. He advised the man discarded the packages, but was not sure where. Fairfax County Police were also notified.

**Welfare Check** -- 200 Block Park Terrace Court, SE

April 2, 11:43 a.m.

Officers checked on the welfare of a resident who sent a concerning message to her family. The resident was located with her occupational therapist. She advised that she is recovering from some medical issues, and did not need any assistance.

**Animal Case** -- 1200 Block Drake Street, SW

April 2, 1:10 p.m.

An officer responded to a report of an injured raccoon. The officer found the animal in grave condition and euthanized the raccoon.

**Police Service** -- 200 Block Park Terrace Court, SE

April 2, 5:52 p.m.

A resident reported that his neighbor is piling up bags of trash, containing human waste, in the apartment hallway. The resident was advised to contact the condo association regarding the violation of their bylaws and his attorney about the living conditions. The officer notified Mobil Crisis of the incident and requested they follow up with the neighbor to check on her well-being.

## McLEAN COMMUNITY CENTER 2021 GOVERNING BOARD ELECTION



# Open Voting



## Now through Saturday, May 15

Residents of Dranesville Small District 1A are encouraged to vote for members of the MCC Governing Board.

**TWO WAYS TO VOTE:** 1. in person (fill out a ballot at McLean Community Center) or 2. by mail. If you prefer to vote by mail, simply phone, send an e-mail, or fill out an online request form to request ballots for members of your household. The requested ballots will be mailed to your home.

**DEADLINE:** Completed ballots must be received at MCC by 5 p.m. on Saturday, May 15.



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## Legals

### ABC LICENSE

CMC Falls Church Inc trading as CM Chicken, 7121 Leesburg Pike Ste R2, Falls Church, VA 22043. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On and Off Premises & Mixed Beverage Restaurant license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Sean Kim. 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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## CALENDAR

### 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.

### NOW THRU APRIL 17

**Bluebells at Riverbend Park.** At 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls. Celebrate the wildflowers with a week of fun, family-friendly, safe activities. Join them for hikes to learn more about all the wildflowers that make their home along the floodplains of the park and see the eagle's nest. Also visit the learning tables to create a bluebell craft, meet some exhibit animals, and learn about volunteer and camp opportunities at the park. Preregistration is required for all hikes and numbers will be limited to follow safe social distancing guidelines. Call 703-759-9018.

### WEDNESDAY/APRIL 14

**(The) Unruly Theatre Project's Virtual Improv Show.** 7 p.m. Sponsored by The Alden. Join in (the) Unruly Theatre Project's virtual spring improv shows from the comfort of your couch. You can register for one show or as many as you like, but participants need to register at least two hours in advance of a show to see it. A Zoom link and password for the show will be emailed to registrants. For more information or to register, visit: [www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org).

### THURSDAY/APRIL 15

**Virtual '80s Music Drag Bingo (Virtual).** 7 p.m. Sponsored by The Alden Theater, McLean with Miss Fluffy Soufflé. Fluffy Soufflé takes you back to the '80s! Part bingo, part drag show, your music bingo card is made up of songs, and instead of calling out numbers, Fluffy plays music clips! Singing along and '80s-themed costumes encouraged. \$10/\$5 MCC tax district residents. One ticket per bingo card. Zoom link and bingo cards will be emailed separately.

### FRIDAY/APRIL 16

**Campfire Fridays.** 7:30-9 p.m. At Lake Accotink Park, 7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield. Bring the whole family for an evening devoted to the wonders of the natural world. "Campfire Fridays" may include nature walks, interactive activities, animal presentations or other opportunities to learn about nature and our place in it. Topics vary, but all the programs include s'mores. These Friday night



**Miss Fluffy Soufflé will perform Virtual '80s Music Drag Bingo on Thursday, April 15 at the Alden.**

programs are designed for participants age 3 to adult. Cost is \$12 per person. Call 703-569-3464.

### FRIDAY/APRIL 16

**Musical Road Trip.** 2-3 p.m. Via Zoom. Zoom off to revisit classic songs and guess trivia about different USA destinations with Benjamin Pernick, Music Therapist, Musical Comedy Actor, and Award-Winning Comedy Film Director. Funded by the Friends of Burke Centre Library. Register at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library) to receive Zoom link.

### APRIL 16-17

**Spring Nesting.** At Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Spring has sprung and the birds are singing! Spruce up your house décor with an egg-cellent art idea. Register your family for the "Spring Nesting" program and learn how to create colorful birds' eggs using the wet felting technique. Place them in a natural nest to bring a little springtime into your home. This program is for a family or pod of up to four people, ages 5 to adult. The 45-minute programs at Sully Historic Site run at 10 a.m., 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. on Friday, April 16, and at 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 17, 2021. The cost is \$20 per family. Call 703-437-1794.

### SATURDAY/APRIL 17

**Spring Fling Fundraiser.** 1 p.m. Shu-Chen Cuff, choreographer and artistic director, will be the guest speaker at the Springfield-Annan-dale Virtual Spring Fling fundraiser. Ms Cuff is a ballet teacher, performer, and owner of the Gin Dance Company. She will discuss her background as well as the style of ballet and modern dance used by her company. There will be some video of performances. Tickets are through Eventbrite at the following link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/spring-fling-enriching-lives-through-dance-tickets-144259729735> To obtain tickets by check, send an e-mail to [aauwspringfieldannandale@gmail.com](mailto:aauwspringfieldannandale@gmail.com)

## WEEK IN VIENNA

# Drive-thru Spaghetti Dinner' to Be Held in Vienna

The Auxiliary to the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department is hosting a "Drive-Thru Spaghetti Dinner" fundraiser. The event will be held on Saturday, April 24, from 4-8 p.m. in the back parking lot of the fire department at 400 Center Street South Vienna.

The delicious to-go dinner will include spaghetti with Marinara sauce – with or without meatballs, salad with Italian dressing, roll and butter. Dinners will be \$10 each.

Reserve your pick up time on line when you place your order. Place orders on the website at: [www.vvfd.org](http://www.vvfd.org). Pre-orders only will be accepted, and must be placed by 5 p.m. on Thursday, April 22, 2021. Monies raised will go toward purchasing lifesaving equipment for the community.

Order today at [www.vvfd.org](http://www.vvfd.org) to reserve your dinners and help the fire department.

For questions, contact [joanie@vvfd.org](mailto:joanie@vvfd.org).

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# Hitting The Nail On the Head



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

What are all these "Toe Nail Clipper" emails I receive nearly every day? And how do these senders know that I'm actually the perfect recipient. Toe nail clippers and cuticle trimmers have been the bane of my existence going back as far as I can remember. And as recently as I care to mention, these two accessories have been front and center on my bedside table, in a drawer in my living room coffee table, in my car's console/glove box and in any suitcase/overnight bag I take with me out of town. The fact of what has been the matter with me is that I bit my nails and trimmed my cuticles constantly, not out of appearance but due apparently, to some undiagnosed mental condition, according to family and friends who were subjected to my relentless pursuit of whatever ailed me.

The constant gnawing and "cuticizing" of my nails drove my parents nearly around the bend. Whatever they tried, which was not professional help, couldn't stop the train, so to speak. Unfortunately, they weren't alive to see me stop. What joy they would have felt for this change. Exultation. Unfortunately, the change occurred quite by accident and with no intent of mine. What happened was that I was diagnosed with cancer, rather than make me a nervous wreck about my original "terminal" diagnosis, and bite my nails for a good reason, I just stopped, and it's been over twelve years now. I still haven't been to a manicurist, but I no longer scoff at the suggestion. And though neither of my parents lived to see me stop biting my nails, they also both died before learning about my lung cancer diagnosis, for which I was extremely grateful.

Aside from the obvious reason why my mother would have been upset about her "baby" being diagnosed with lung cancer was the fact that throughout my childhood, my mother smoked four packs of Chesterfield Kings every day. Then suddenly, she stopped, cold turkey, the coldest you can imagine. It happened in the early 60s when the anti-smoking campaign about the association between smoking cigarettes and lung cancer began in earnest in this country. From that point forward, my mother never wavered in her commitment. There were no more cigarettes and she lived to age 87, almost, when she died from natural causes, not cancer.

Oddly enough, it was her non-smoking son, yours truly, who was diagnosed with lung cancer, part of an ever increasing percentage (upwards of 25% most recently) of non-smokers so diagnosed. Whether second hand smoke or environmental exposure to certain chemicals, the numbers of lung cancer patients who were non-smokers has been steadily increasing. And in a fortuitous twist of fate, it was this increase specifically in the number of non-smokers being diagnosed with cancer which led to a huge increase in research funding. Funding which has spawned an increase in the numbers of drugs approved by the FDA which have directly affected my treatment and subsequent survival. Now what percentage of nail-biters are diagnosed with cancer, I can't say.

But this hyper-targeted email campaign - which features almost daily emails from people who are on a first-name basis with me and I them, according to their sender's name, is remarkable in its having reached a prime candidate, and one with a history of having used imperfect and/or failed implements for this very purpose. If anybody would appreciate the possibilities of this product, the relief it might provide, it would be me. If my mother were alive today, I'm sure she'd agree, nobody ever bit their nails more than I did. That's how I learned the meaning of the word "quick": "the soft-tender flesh below the growing part of a fingernail or toenail."

With all the self-consciousness I endured while nail-biting (and the visual condition of my fingers as a result), I wish I could take credit for having figured out the underlying cause, or had found a topical solution and/or a hypnotic suggestion that would help me stop. But I didn't. Apparently, the cancer made me stop, and not even consciously. To quote the late B.B.King: "The thrill is gone."

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



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## 1437 Brookhaven Drive, McLean

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## 1566 Great Falls Street, McLean

**\*FABULOUS\* 4BR/4.5 BA colonial home** on 3 levels with a loft in sought-after **Hunting Ridge** location! This beautiful home includes wonderful gourmet kitchen with brand new stainless steel appliances; freshly painted; refinished hardwood floors; lovely deck off the kitchen - perfect for entertaining; large LL rec room with new carpeting, plus guest room, full bath and storage; gorgeous owner's suite with luxury bath featuring quartz counters, separate shower and soaking tub; upper level laundry; 2-car garage; super location - **McLean HS pyramid!**

## 6904 Lupine Lane, McLean

**\*SPECTACULAR\* 6BR/6 full and 2 half bath** colonial home on 3 finished levels located on **OVER an ACRE** in sought-after Parkview Hills location in McLean! Featuring approximately 9500 finished square feet, this expansive home includes marble entrance foyer and sparkling refinished hardwood floors. Freshly painted; island kitchen with granite counters & stainless steel appliances; great room plus sun room and office. Huge walkout lower level; gorgeous owner's suite. Close to Scott's Run and the Potomac River! **Langley High School pyramid!**

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