

# CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Oak Hill Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

## Reston Hosts Pride 2021

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Reston Pride 2021, free public festival and concert held June 19. In 2018, Reston Pride held its inaugural event, followed by its second festival in 2019. No event was held in 2020 due to the pandemic.

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PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

### One Adult and Two Children Murdered in their Herndon Home

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## COMMENTARY

# Gun Violence Epidemic

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

**T**hree people were shot to death in Herndon last week—a mother and her two children, in an incident the police termed “horrific.” The shootings will not make the list of mass murders as the official definition of a mass murder is four people or more. Over the past several weeks there have been murders of one and two people in Reston in different incidents but not reaching the threshold to be termed a mass murder. Mass or not, it is too many. The number also affects the media coverage. A murder here and there has unfortunately become so commonplace that it makes the back page of print media and barely a mention in broadcast media. The fear is that we are becoming immune to what is happening in our communities, and while we are by no means accepting of what is happening there seems to be less outrage unless a large number of people have been killed or wounded.

A cartoon in last week's Washington Post shows two men looking at a chart with a soaring upward line. One says to the other, “I thought we had COVID under control.” The other responded that the upward line to 50 deaths per day represents the deaths by gun violence, not COVID. Just a couple of months ago I wrote a column “Epidemic Surge in Gun Violence” to draw attention to the understandable fact that while we were closely following the COVID pandemic there was a second dramatic increase that I termed a “surge” in gun violence.

There are many excuses that can be given for the

surge in gun violence at this time that center around the isolation and depression arising from the pandemic. Certainly they are factors, but the fact remains that the overwhelming presence of guns in our society leads to their misuse in domestic disputes, getting even with others, accidents, and suicides among other causes. Recent news accounts indicate that there has been an unprecedented surge in gun sales. In 2020 people purchased more than 23 million guns, a 66 percent increase over 2019. There were 2.5 million guns purchased this past January for the third highest total ever.

The effects of the COVID pandemic are being felt around the world, but the gun violence epidemic is unique to the United States. According to a study by the United Nations, there are 29.7 homicides by firearms per one million people in the United States compared to 1.4 in Australia, 1.9 in Germany, and 5.1 in Canada.

Tragically the number of young children being the victims of gun violence has seen a surge as well. Seldom is there a week or a day without getting the news that a child, sometimes even an infant, and too many teenagers have become the victims of gun violence. Beyond the children who are actually killed are the brothers and sisters of those who have been murdered or the children of adult victims who are traumatized by what has happened in their lives. They are victims as well.

I participate in monthly vigils at the NRA along with many loyal advocates who carry the message that we must take legislative action at the federal level as we have in Virginia to end gun violence. Join me in continuing to press for a response to this epidemic!

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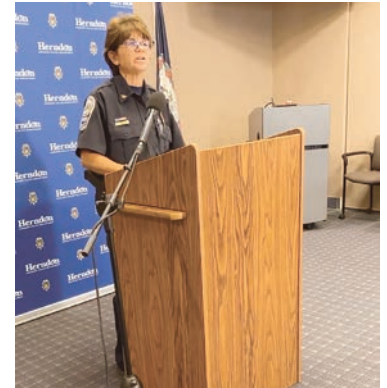
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Claudia Menjivar, 34, of Herndon with her children, Dayana Gutierrez, 12, and Carlos osué, 9.

## Recaudación para funeral de Dayana y Carlitos



GO FUND ME- RECAUDACIÓN PARA DAYANA Y CARLITOS  
Carlos Josué Gutierrez, 9, and his sister Dayana, 12



Herndon Police Chief Maggie DeBoard discusses details of the town's triple homicide during a news conference held Saturday, June 19.

# Triple Homicide in Town of Herndon Home

## Families grieve the loss of two young children and their mother.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

The families of two young Town of Herndon children, a boy and girl, slain with their mother Saturday morning, June 19, are devastated by the triple homicide and the loss. On June 19, Carlos Gutierrez organized a Go Fund Me for Dayana Gutierrez, 12, and Carlos Josué, 9. In Spanish, Carlos asked that people pray and give them strength and comfort to bear such a heavy load.

A fourth person connected to the murders died by suicide at a commercial parking garage in Reston Town Center early the same morning. According to Anthony Guglielmi, Director, Public Affairs Bureau Fairfax County Police Department, police arrived at the garage before 6 a.m. Saturday morning. "While talking to officers, the man made statements referencing potential harm to individuals located at [a] home in Herndon," Guglielmi said. Reston Town Center is an

unincorporated area covered by FCPD Reston Station.

"That's when HPD [Herndon Police Department] was contacted and assumed the homicide investigation," Guglielmi said. "The man jumped around 6:30 a.m.," he said.

During an HPD news conference, held Saturday afternoon, June 19, Herndon Police Chief Maggie DeBoard said the statements by the male subject in Reston prompted FCPD to reach out to Herndon Police to perform a wellness check at a residence located in the 500-block of Florida Avenue. According to DeBoard, after a preliminary investigation and assistance from neighbors, HPD officers entered the home where they "discovered a very horrific scene.

"The bodies of three individuals who were victims of an apparent homicide were discovered inside," DeBoard said. She confirmed the victims as one adult and two juveniles, members of the same family. DeBoard said the Office of the Medical Examiner was involved. She added that the male [in Reston]

who died had a "personal relationship" with the adult victim.

Fairfax County's victim services unit was dispatched to Herndon to assist with family affairs and support services for extended family members, according to Guglielmi, the FCPD spokesperson.

"I think we will close this fairly quickly," DeBoard said. "I can tell you for sure that there are no public safety concerns at this time."

Erlinda Gutierrez told the Washington Post the deceased were Claudia Menjivar, 34, and her children, Dayana Gutierrez, 12, and Carlos Josué Gutierrez, 10. Gutierrez described Menjivar to the Post as "a good mom...a hard-working girl. She didn't have problems with anybody." Gutierrez said her brother used to be in a relationship with Menjivar and is the father of the two children. She said police told her brother a gun was involved.

DeBoard said that HPD officers exposed to the scene received support from the FCPD

Peer Support Team and resources HPD has in place in the town. According to DeBoard, since juveniles are involved, it "truly makes it a very difficult case for us to deal with." She noted that many of the officers have children, and the department worries about the exposure, wanting to make sure they are "whole and healthy." "They are getting the assistance that they need to continue to work this traumatic event and cope with the exposure to trauma...but this was a bad scene," she said.

DeBoard said their hearts grieve for the victims' family and friends, especially as the murders happened the day before Father's Day.

Guglielmi expressed similar sentiments on behalf of FCPD. He said, "Our condolences go out to the family on this tragic incident, and thoughts are with the Herndon community as we all attempt to seek answers as to how this man could have committed such a devastating act of violence."

As on Monday, June 21 10:20p Go Fund Me, Recaudación para Dayana y Carlitos cited \$3,095 raised of the \$20,000 goal.

### AREA ROUNDUPS

## Coffee with the Commander

Join the commander of the Sully District Police Station, Capt. Allegra, for coffee, on Wednesday, June 30, from 9-10:30 a.m. He'll be outside Peet's Coffee, at 14383 Newbrook Drive in Chantilly. No agenda, no speeches, just casual coffee and conversation.

## Summertime Pet Safety Presentation

On Wednesday, June 30, at 6:30 p.m., Fairfax County Police Department's Sgt. Chase will discuss the role of Animal Protection Police Officers and provide information on how to keep pets safe. Join via Zoom at: <http://bit.ly/petsafety0630>.

## Meet New County Police Chief

Fairfax County's Communities of Trust is hosting new Fairfax County Police Chief, Kevin Davis, on Thursday, July 1, at 7 p.m., at the American Turkish Friendship Assn., 14120 Newbrook Drive in Chantilly. To join in person, register at <http://bit.ly/mtc0701>. To join via Zoom, go to <http://bit.ly/mtczoom0701>.

### 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/JUNE 26

Fill the Truck for WFCM. 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Clifton Presbyterian Church Parking Area. The Clifton Presbyterian Church Mission Committee encourages you, your friends, and your neighbors to help fill the back of Mark Reimers' truck with non-perishable food items to be taken to WFCM to assist those experiencing food insecurity in the area. You are welcome to leave donated items in the white coolers in front of church entrance before the event.

#### MONDAY/JULY 12

Fore CORE Foundation Golf Classic. At the International Country Club 11875 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. Purchase your registration sponsorship which includes a foursome, signage, goodie bags, networking reception luncheon, and exclusive partner benefits. Additional muligans, 50/50, and tickets for our

raffle prize table will be available at check-out. Mail your check to: CORE Foundation, Attn: Fore CORE Foundation Golf Classic, P.O. Box 3631, Reston, VA 20195. Email: [info@corefoundation.org](mailto:info@corefoundation.org).

#### KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Oak Hill Elementary School, 3210 Kinross Circle, Herndon. Children who are age 5 by September 30, 2021 are eligible to enter kindergarten for the 2021-22 school year. You will need to register your child at the school he or she will attend. To confirm Oak Hill Elementary School serves your particular address, go to the FCPS website, [www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu) and click on Registration.

You will see the boundary locator where you can type in your address and confirm which FCPS school you are zoned for. Registration packets are available online.

Visit the Kindergarten Registration page on the FCPS website: [www.fcps.edu/registration](http://www.fcps.edu/registration) for steps to register your student. If you're within Oak Hill boundaries, contact Oak Hill ES registrar, Katherine Dillard, at [KJDillard1@fcps.edu](mailto:KJDillard1@fcps.edu) or by calling 703-467-3500 to schedule an appointment to register your child or if you have any questions.

#### NOW THRU OCT. 2

Winedown Weekends in the Tea Garden. 12-7 p.m. At Elden Street Tea Shop, 714 Pine Street, Herndon. Enjoy the new wine bar in the tea gardens with music (mostly live) every Friday and Saturday. Will have seasonal wine selections, snack items, and food trucks (coming soon). Local caterers and more available for purchase. Visit the website: <https://www.eldenstreettea.com/>

Reston Pride 2021, free public festival and concert held June 19. In 2018, Reston Pride held its inaugural event, followed by its second festival in 2019. No event was held in 2020 due to the pandemic.



PHOTOS BY  
MERCIA HOBSON/  
THE CONNECTION

# Reston Hosts Pride 2021

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

The freedom to celebrate one's authentic self and raise the voices of LGBTQ+ individuals as part of its rainbow are only two segments of Reston Pride engagement. Founded in 2018, the local grassroots Northern Virginia organization Reston Pride held a free public concert and festival with a reported 43 market vendors on June 19 at Lake Anne Plaza in Reston.

Individuals and local elected officials celebrated. They spoke one-on-one and at the microphone of victories toward inclusive education, community outreach, and resources for LGBTQIA+ individuals and their straight allies in Reston and surrounding communities.

But they also reminded those gathered that hard work and meaningful change remain to support, affirm, and celebrate all LGBTQIA+ individuals, especially transgender and gender diverse people. These individuals experience marginalization within the

## VIEWPOINTS

### Elected Officials Speak



"For students out there, I want you to know, I hear you; I see you. I know that these policies and regulations don't always play out the way you need them to. But I want to tell you; I am here to help you... It's not ok if you feel isolated or not being respected. Our school values you. You are part of our community," said Fairfax County School Board member Melanie Meren, representing the Hunter Mill District, which is mostly Vienna, Reston, and parts of Herndon.



"I want to be your voice in Richmond. I will take every vote I can that we are an equal Virginia; we are a loving Virginia, and we are an accepting Virginia. So, know that is my commitment to you today and always. Happy Pride," said Delegate Karrie K. Delaney, (D) representing the 67th District, which includes Chantilly, parts of Centreville, Herndon, Oakton, and South Riding.



"It gives me great pride, and I mean pride, to be at a Reston Pride event. Look how well it is attended. How exciting it is that our community is open. I'm honored to represent this community," said Virginia House Delegate Kenneth (Ken) R. Plum (D), representing the 36th District which is mostly the entirety of Reston. Plum is wearing the black t-shirt rainbow printed "Disarm Hate."



"While we've made a lot of progress on inequality, there's still so much more that we need for our trans brothers and sisters, our Black and Latino fellow pride members," said Kyle Rohen of Herndon (far right), joined by Seth Koberg of Herndon.

general community and school systems. They are victimized by prejudice, discrimination, disrespectful comments, and violent crimes because of their gender identity or expression.

Clark Braxton, 10, of Reston and her brother Ethan, 12, read one of the display boards featured at the Juneteenth celebration held at the historic Frying Pan Spring Meeting House on Centreville Road sponsored by the Friends of Frying Pan Farm Park.



## Juneteenth Celebrated at Historic County Site

Walking on grounds where slaves worshipped, and Confederates camped.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

The Friends of Frying Pan Farm Park sponsored its inaugural Juneteenth Celebration on June 19 at Frying Pan Spring Meeting House on Centreville Road. While generally not open to the public, the integrity of the historic 230-year-old Meeting House and its adjoining springs, baptismal pond, grounds, and cemetery proved an appropriate location for the celebration.

According to a marker on the site, the Meeting House attracted local farmers, free blacks, and slaves. "Blacks were listed as members, baptized in the springs behind the meeting house and interred in the adjacent burial grounds." No tombstone markers for Blacks are visible in the cemetery today.

A County spokesperson said that the Meeting House was the first interracial congregation in Virginia. "Everyone was welcome, but it was segregated...White people sat down-

stairs and Black people in the galleries."

Visitors to the site wandered through the Meeting House and around the cemetery. One of the most looked at items was the learning boards. One board cited enslaved people as a portion of Fairfax County's population. In 1860, slightly over one in four people were enslaved.

Another drew two children, Clark Braxton, 10, of Reston and her brother Ethan, 12. "I just read this sentence and didn't learn that in school," said Clark. The sentence referenced told the story of Fairfax County residents Sarah Greene and her children, "free black Virginians." "Despite her status as free, a man took two of Sarah's children by force into slavery in the Carolinas."

The event also featured hands-on activities, music, a presentation by Dr. Kelley Fanto Deetz, author of "Bound to the Fire: How Virginia's Enslaved Cooks Helped Invent American Cuisine," and food vendors highlighting African American cuisine.

### The history of the Meeting House.



PHOTO BY  
MERCIA HOBSON/  
THE CONNECTION

# Centerpointe Church to Build in Centreville

**BZA approves plans for place of worship, childcare center.**

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

A new church is coming to Centreville. The Fairfax County Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) recently approved Centerpointe Church's application to build a place of worship and a childcare center there.

Initially, New Life Christian Church owned the land, but Centerpointe Church later purchased it. In her report about this project, BZA Senior Deputy Clerk Mary D. Padrutt stated that the new plan for this site contains a number of benefits to Fairfax County and to the community

They include "a reduction in [density], increased setbacks from the neighboring properties, the sidewalk and the extended turn lane, which will offset any traffic concerns," she wrote. "In addition, there is the stormwater management plan, and an undisturbed, open-space area of 50 percent, which will be provided through a conservation easement. These are all positives for the area, and consistent with the [county's] Comprehensive Plan."

The site is on 11 acres of land zoned Residential-Conservation at 6611 Cedar Spring Road. And the applicant needed the county's blessings to amend the previously approved special permit for that parcel.

Representing Centerpointe, attorney Lynne Strobel presented details of the proposal to a joint meeting of the Sully District Council (SDC) and the West Fairfax County Citizens Assn. (WFCCA) Land-Use Committee, prior to the BZA's decision. She said the sanctuary would have 500 seats, the

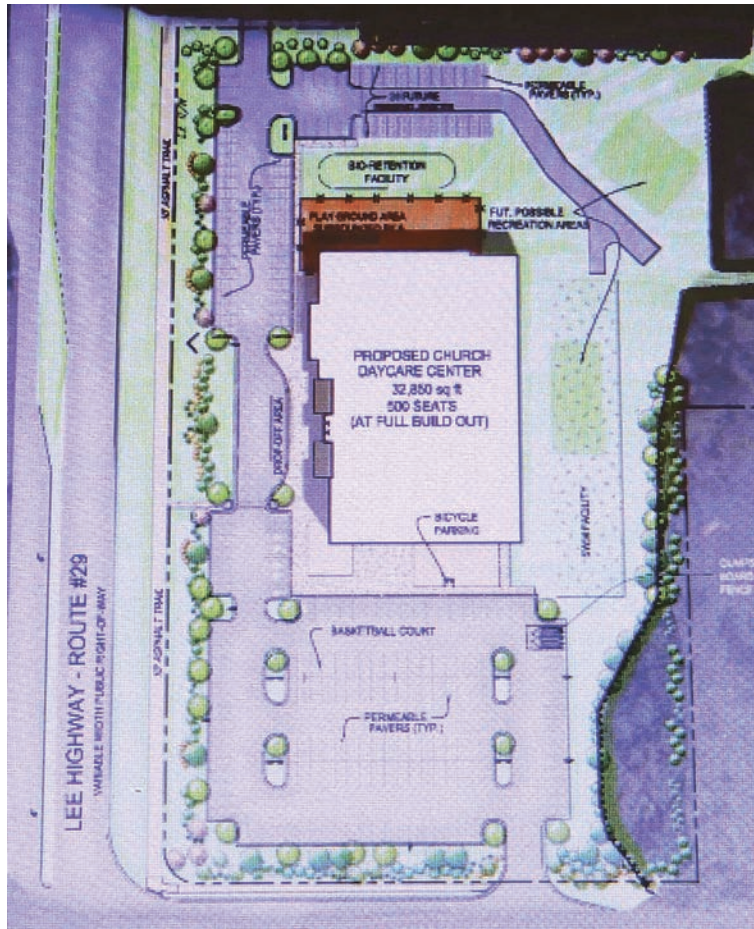
childcare center would have a maximum daily enrollment of 150 children and there'd be 220 parking spaces.

**TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS** will be a 10-foot-wide, asphalt trail on Route 29; a 5-foot-wide sidewalk on Cedar Spring Road; right-out access to Route 29 or interparcel access to the east; one-way, traffic circulation for the childcare center; and a new, left-turn lane on Route 29 onto Cedar Spring. The church also plans to preserve the existing, mature trees on-site, plant landscaping and add a conservation easement, so the trees can't be disturbed unless the county agrees.

"We're providing better buffers than were originally proposed," said Strobel. "And we've had three meetings with the Cedar Springs community. We're providing a police officer for Sundays [to direct traffic] and would move the bus stop to make it safer for waiting, school children. Our construction access will be directly to Route 29, if VDOT permits it."

She said the other side of this property is the Mulford School, and parents bringing their children to Centerpointe's childcare center would enter the site via Cedar Spring and leave via Route 29. "The site doesn't currently have stormwater management, and we'll provide it," said Strobel. "And the church will only be 30 feet high to be compatible with the surrounding community."

WFCCA's John Litzengerger asked how many cars can be stacked in the left-turn



Site plan of Centerpointe Church's sanctuary and childcare center.

lane turning into the church. And Transportation Engineer Will Johnson, of Wells & Associates transportation consultants, replied, "We're proposing a 300-foot turn lane with a 100-foot taper to hold 12 vehicles."

Litzengerger said that turn lane "won't be long enough with 150 kids showing up for daycare."

But Johnson said the students will have staggered hours and arrival times, "depending on their parents' convenience. We don't anticipate a huge crush of traffic."

Still, Litzengerger said Johnson was "underestimating the traffic there. On Route 29, all the overflow traffic from Fauquier and Prince William counties from I-66 will cause the cars there to stack up and go into the left lane of Route 29 southbound during rush hour."

And SDC's Jay Johnston asked how they'd adjust to traffic resulting from other, nearby schools. Johnson explained that "We used VDOT's pre-COVID traffic data" to make this determination. And another traffic engineer, John Levtov, said the turn-lane length limit is 300-350 feet because of the other neighbors' turn lanes there, plus the existing physical features.

**ULTIMATELY**, the BZA unanimously approved the proposal May 19, and Padrutt's notice of approval contained a long list of conditions with which the church must comply, including:

- ❖ The maximum number of seats permitted in the sanctuary is 375 in Phase 1 and 500 in Phase 2;
- ❖ The maximum, daily enrollment for the childcare center is limited to 150 children at any one time;
- ❖ Hours of operation for the childcare center are limited to 6 a.m.-6:30 p.m., Monday-Friday; and
- ❖ Parking must be provided as generally depicted on the special-permit amendment plat. All parking for the church must be onsite.

## Gardens of Note Benefit Two Local Non-Profits

**Event embraces the beauty of gardens, music, and fellowship.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Ticket holders for Gardens of Note 2021 enjoyed the self-guided tour of five residential gardens in Reston plus pop-up musical performances by members and friends of The Reston Chorale, a Fairfax County choir. Held Saturday, June 5, the Chorale, in partnership with The Reston Garden Club, presented the much-loved event that benefited the two non-profit organizations.

"We're very happy to participate and give back to the community with music and beauty in the gardens," said Kathleen Gohn, Chair of Gardens of Note.

The 2021 tour featured five Reston gardens, one being the lakeside prop-

erty co-owned by Cindy Brown and Chuck Daoud. Ground cover plants and flowers gently meandered near the flagstone hardscapes and stepping stone staircases. They transformed the previous sloping terrain into a colorful and textured woodland oasis. Brown said a spontaneous meeting with Gohn triggered the garden featured on the tour.

That morning, Nancy Riley of Herndon played her guitar in one of the garden rooms. She said, "I'm a long-time Chorale member, and Gardens of Note touches two important things in my life, music, and flowers."

Chorale member Melissa Cyrulik of Potomac Falls, Md., said she joined during the pandemic. "Being here in the garden gives me a chance to meet my [fellow] Chorale members."

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



(From left) Reston residents and Gardens of Note participants Ginny Cooley, Krista Eaton, and Fran Freedman enjoy a pleasant Saturday morning.



(From left) Reston Chorale members, Nancy Riley of Oak Hill and Melissa Cyrulik of Potomac, Md., enjoy a moment together before ticketed participants in the Gardens of Note 2021 tour arrive at the residential garden of Cindy Brown and Chuck Daoud.

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## Legals

### ABC LICENSE

Auld Irish LLC trading as Ned Devine's Irish Bar & Restaurant, 2465 Centreville Rd, Fairfax County, Herndon, VA 20171. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine & Beverage on Premise and Mixed Beverage On Premise license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Gordon Masterson, 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.gov](http://www.abc.virginia.gov) or 800-552-3200.

## Employment

Apptad, Inc. in Reston, VA is seeking positions for ETL Solution Architects to analyze the source sysys & create a detailed level design for the required ETL components [ID#ETLSA]. ETL Developers to develop & document best practices for ETL related ops & processes [ID#ETLD]. Informatica MDM Administrator to administer, test, & implement comp databases [ID#MDMA]. Sr. Automation Tester to develop & execute SW test plans to identify SW problems & their causes [ID#SRAT]. Sr. MDM Technical Developer to develop, create, & modify general computer appl SW [ID#SMDM]. No trvl; No Telecomm. Job duties are proj-based & performed on long-term assignments at various unanticipated sites w/in the U.S. which may req relo at the end of each proj.; Interested applicants email resume to [Immigration@apptad.com](mailto:Immigration@apptad.com) & reference ID#.

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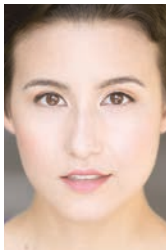
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**THE CONNECTION**  
NEWSPAPERS

PHOTOS COURTESY NEXTSTOP THEATRE



Kari Ginsburg



Nina Marti



Curtis McNeil



Anya Nebel



Jacob Yeh

# NextStop Theatre Returns to Mainstage

## Presents live, indoor production 'White Rabbit Red Rabbit.'

BY DAVID SIEGEL  
THE CONNECTION

It's been a long time. But, NextStop is back performing live inside its cozy venue. Eager to enthrall audiences producing something completely different; the audacious "White Rabbit Red Rabbit."

"White Rabbit Red Rabbit" is all about the unexpected; and I don't think there has been a more universal topic for the past year and a half!" said Evan Hoffmann, artistic director, NextStop Theatre.

"White Rabbit Red Rabbit" is a solo actor play. At each performance a different actor will be handed a script in a sealed envelope just before the production begins. What could go wrong when the actor has not seen the script before?

"We decided to produce 'White Rabbit Red Rabbit' because it represented an opportunity critical to us as a company right now. First and foremost, it provided an opportunity to get back to producing theater inside our theater in a way that feels safe and practical, with a show that only features one performer and is actually well served by having an even smaller, more intimate audience," said Hoffmann.

Written by Nassim Soleimanpour, "White Rabbit Red Rabbit" also provides an important creative goal for NextStop. "The show presents a radically new voice to our audience/community, with a message that feels uniquely well suited for our time," added Hoffmann.

"The entire premise of this show is built

## Where and When

NextStop Theatre presents "White Rabbit Red Rabbit" at 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Performances: Friday and Saturday evenings at 8 p.m. through July 10, 2021. Tickets \$25 general admission. Call: 703-481-5930 or visit [www.NextStopTheatre.org](http://www.NextStopTheatre.org). Note: This is a live, in-person, limited performance production for an indoor audience of 30 patrons per evening. All patrons will be required to wear masks during the performance regardless of vaccination status.

around a completely new experience, both for the audience and the performer each night." noted Hoffmann. "It is completely inevitable when you have a performer before you who has had no rehearsal, no direction, and has not even seen the script prior to walking onto the stage."

Hoffmann added that "White Rabbit Red Rabbit" asks everyone "to wholly submit themselves to experiencing a moment without question or reservation. It is a terrifying and liberating theatrical experiment, unlike anything I have ever witnessed."

NextStop's "White Rabbit Red Rabbit" cast includes eight NextStop veterans. The diverse cast includes Curtis McNeil ("The Mountaintop"), Nina Marti ("East of Eden"), Sophie Schulman ("Bad Jews"), Anya Nebel ("Caroline, or Change"), Katelyn Manfre ("Pride and Prejudice"), Jacob Yeh ("East of Eden"), Kari Ginsburg ("Much Ado About Nothing") and Elena Velasco, who was to direct NextStop's pandemic-cancelled musical "In The Heights."

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## Wait. What?



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

After each individual appointment with my oncologist, either virtual or in person; all my prescription needs and my next round of appointments are scheduled while I wait. Typically, my oncologist will ask me which days and times are convenient. Our cycle for such responses is every three months, after my quarterly scans. Since it's a regular routine, we've come to know our schedules three months in advance so we can make suitable and available arrangements - both medically and socially so as to not upset any previously scheduled apple carts. It's not that often that any non-cancer activities might conflict with a Wednesday morning in Gaithersburg. Nevertheless, scheduling is preferable to rescheduling. And since time is a wastin', there's no time like the present to smooth out any potential blips on the calendar.

When we were scheduling this week's on-site day at the facility back in March, we knew we were going to Montana this month. The original Wednesday, June 16, when I should have been scheduled for my scans, was not totally inconvenient but it was the day before we were leaving town. No problem. My health comes first so I was ready to okay the 16th. Then my doctor suggested that I wait a week, until the 23rd, the day after I will have arrived home, because he said "Nobody wants to get bad news before a vacation." It seemed the lesser of two evils so I decided on the 23rd. Then it hit me: "What bad news?" Not that I have been particularly symptomatic of late or have emailed my oncologist every step of the way. Hardly. But I can't believe my oncologist's suggestion was totally innocent. Though he most definitely meant well (he's always talking about quality of life), it unfortunately ruffled my feathers and got me thinking about results and consequences - and of course, life expectancy. And since bad news travels fast, I didn't see a point in speeding it up. Whatever will be will be and there's nothing I can do about any of it before my vacation which somehow affects my results after. If I've learned anything during these 12-plus years in the cancer world, it is that there's no need to hurry things along. Cancer works at its own pace and being flexible in the face of such imminent danger is the only way to roll.

But that's the dilemma us seriously ill/diagnosed patients experience. Do we delay the inevitable or do we naively hope for the best. I mean, how much respect do we give cancer? Somehow, we have to live our lives and occasionally "damn the torpedoes." And if we're not able to find a break in this very serious action, I imagine our wherewithal living forward might be adversely affected. Cancer has a way of getting under your skin (no pun intended) and then seeping into your subconscious. Before you know it, "the cancer" as "Forrest, Forrest, Gump" said will likely make you a very dull boy or a "dismal Jimmy" as the Brits say.

I chose to throw caution to the wind and live my life with the usual weight and not compound an already heavy burden by having my scan results emailed to me while I'm on vacation. I'm pretty good at compartmentalizing but I saw/see no reason to test my credentials. As a cancer patient, if I'm being honest/realistic, something bad could happen to me. I don't see any advantage to making matters worse, potentially, by forcing the issue.

I think why I'm focusing - and possibly over-reacting, to this presumptive unpleasantness, is that it hadn't ever been suggested to me before by my oncologist in quite this context. Oh sure, he's talked about my health and various percentages of survival but this last meeting, its directness caught me off guard. Sure we all laughed, but for a moment it raised the stakes and reminded me how fragile our existence is. I'm a very positive person so I can usually fend off most emotional trauma. In fact, the title of one of my earlier columns was "Positive About the Negative." And though I've been quite able to keep my "terminal" diagnosis in perspective, hearing 'nobody wants to get bad news before a vacation' may be considerable to suggest, but some things are better left unsaid, especially to a cancer patient.

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

## CONNECTION

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A Fairfax County police helicopter flying above the area.

# ‘We Fly Where Other Aircraft Are Restricted’

Police share information about their helicopters and drones.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION



PHOTO COURTESY OF  
JOSH LAITINEN  
Capt. Mike Shamblin

In his 29th year with the Fairfax County Police Department, Capt. Mike Shamblin has headed the Helicopter Division for a year. And he recently addressed an online meeting of the Sully District Police Station’s Citizens Advisory Committee to discuss the police helicopters and drones.

“We have two Bell 429 helicopters, and we do both police and Medevac missions,” he said. “We can also fly in areas where other aircraft are restricted. We’re a 24/7, 365-day operation; the only time we can’t fly is because of bad weather.”

The division started in 1983 when a local businessman donated the helicopters to the Police Department. And Inova flight nurses flew with the police until the 1990s, when the police took over operations completely. Now, it Medevacs victims of car-crashes and traumas to Inova Hospital and burn victims to MedStar Health in Washington, D.C.

“We’re normally based at 4604 West Ox Road [in Fairfax],” said Shamblin. “But we’re currently housed at the Manassas Regional Airport until we can get our new, larger hangar built. It’s due to open in mid-April 2022. We’ve been there since July 2020, and it’s just a six-minute flight from there to the old hangar.”

He said they have a combination of police and civilian pilots. There are 12, full-time paramedics – all sworn police officers, plus six, full-time pilots who are mostly civilians. And their helicopters are the only law-enforcement aircraft in Northern Virginia.

“We fly about 1,500 missions a year,” said Shamblin. “About 70 of them are Medevacs – we fly at least one Medevac per week.

**MEDEVACS** are our number-one priority; police missions are second. We’ll leave police events to do Medevacs, and we’ll leave events in other jurisdictions to do an event in Fairfax County. Our paramedics have even more training than Fairfax County Fire Department paramedics, so we can provide advanced, life-saving techniques that they can’t.”

He said their helicopters are dual-engine aircraft and “are safer that way, in case there’s a problem with one of the engines – which happened recently. Our maximum cruise speed is 155 knots, which is about 175 mph. They each weigh 7,000 pounds and have a range of 400 miles. We often fly to Roanoke for routine maintenance and to Salem for major repairs. And the camera mounted on the front of the aircraft has video and night vision.”

“Our helicopter program is extremely valuable to the county,” said Sully District Station Commander, Capt. Jason Allegra. “And it’s an important asset in keeping our officers and community safe.”

In addition to helicopters, the Police Department began flying UAS (Unmanned Aerial System), or drone, missions in 2019; and by 2020, it had 30 trained UAS pilots. Police have legal authority to fly missions in Virginia as law enforcement. They’re also permitted to operate in national airspace in a particular location.

**THEY MAY USE DRONES** under the following conditions:

With a search warrant; to serve a felony arrest warrant at a wanted subject’s primary residence; when in hot pursuit of someone actively sought for an arrest; when there’s an amber, senior or blue alert; to investigate a reportable traffic crash; in a location where they have consent to be; for training pilots and evaluating equipment; and to “alleviate an immediate danger to any person,” such as a missing, endangered person; suicidal/homicidal person; barricaded/armed suspect; active shooter; explosive ordnance disposal; fleeing suspect considered armed and dangerous; and incidents involving hazardous materials.

“We currently have 12 drones,” said Shamblin. “Our SWAT team has six; the Technical Investigation Unit, one; Fugitive & Apprehension, one; Crime Scene Unit, two; and Helicopter Search & Rescue, two. These drones can help clear a building [to make sure it’s safe for police to enter]. And some can be used to help find missing persons.”

His assistant commander, 2nd Lt. Brian Bowman recommended that people wanting more information go to the FCPD Website and search for UAS. All their drone activity is logged on there, as well as lists of what the drones can and cannot do.

# A Gift of Being a Father

Father’s Day 2021:  
Capturing dad moments.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Being a father is a gift. It offers a man an opportunity for pride in another being, for crazy play filled with giggles and squeals of joy, and for quiet moments to savor life’s simple pleasures with his children. The Connection came upon three such environments in the days before Father’s Day

2021, where dads were with their children. The first was a farmers market, the second a playground, and the third an ice cream shop.

At each location, the reporter asked one father, “What do you love about being a dad?” Unexpectedly all three dads responded in the same manner- a pause of several seconds and a look at his child or children before answering. This is what they said.



“I love being able to watch her grow every day and seeing new developments.” - Adam of Reston with his daughter Ruby riding in his front-facing baby carrier. At the same time, he shopped and socialized at the Herndon Farmers Market.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/  
THE CONNECTION



“I enjoy being outdoors here with my kids and playing tag, keeping them active and keeping me active. I [love] watching them grow and seeing them enjoy everything the world offers. My secret is giving them everything they need to be successful in life.” -- Mike Johnson with his wife Alison and their three children, (from left) Ryan, 10, Nathan, 13, and Caroline, 7, at the Great Falls Grange Playground.



“I love teaching them to uphold our family values, our faith values- loving others, being kind, and being part of a community.”- Johnny Yun enjoying a Saturday treat at the Great Falls Creamery with his three children (from left) Jordan, 13, Hannah, 8, and Noah, 11.