

# CONNECTION

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Fireworks explode once again over the Herndon Centennial Golf Course, lighting the night for the 4th of July 2021.

## Two Men Charged with Chantilly Murder of Herndon Man

NEWS, PAGE 3

## Schools Provide Free Grab and Go 7-day Meal Kits

NEWS, PAGE 4

## Herndon Celebrates Independence Day

NEWS, PAGE 2

CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 6 ♦ OPINION, PAGE 5

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# NEWS

People gather in blocked off streets, eyes upward during the 4th of July Fireworks Display 2021 in the Town of Herndon.



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## Herndon Celebrates Independence Day

**Patriotism and independence shine bright on dual fronts.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
 THE CONNECTION

The Town of Herndon celebrated the 4th of July after canceling last year's event due to the pandemic. What made the evening extra special was that the firework display launched from the Herndon Centennial Golf Course was the first large group community gathering for town residents since the COVID-19 lockdown in March of 2020.

The opportunity proved to be freedom for friends and family. They gathered at neighborhood picnics as the people living on Nash Street did at their 'island' located in the center of the cul-de-sac.

When dusk fell, families made their way to the barricaded streets with sightlines where the firework display could easily be seen. Children held sparklers, dads plopped their little ones on their shoulders, and friends who had not socialized in person for over a year hugged each other.

Jonathan Savitch and his family recently moved into a historic property downtown. "It's been a year," he said. His son Luke Savitch, unmasked, looked at others around him. "I'm very comfortable with spacing between people," Luke said.

Patriotism rang high and loud, especially among a group of college students. They expressed the joy to be out and free, the pandemic hopefully behind them. "I love America, and I love the beauty of everyone else loving America with me," Nicholas White of Herndon said, cheering and clapping as the firework display went into overdrive.

Daniel Lyons of Herndon held similar sentiments. He voiced his independence and pride as the United States was now moving past the coronavirus pandemic.

As of July 4, 2021, 67 percent of all U.S. adults received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose.

In comparison, 75.1 percent of all Fairfax Health District adults received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose, according to the county's COVID-19 Vaccine Data. The Fairfax Health District includes Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church.



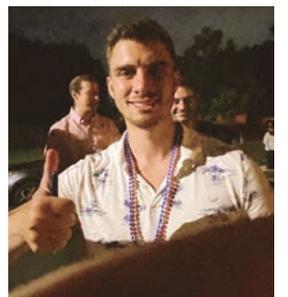
PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION  
 Mallory, Sam, Henry, Domenic, and Theo hold sparklers celebrating the 4th of July in the Town of Herndon.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION  
 (From left) Herndon High School friends now in college, RJ Mosuela, Ian Howell, Nick White, and Daniel Lyons, of Herndon, invite their college buddy, John Saunier of Lynchburg to join them for their 4th of July celebration, then the fireworks over the golf course.



PHOTO BY JABAR BAIG  
 (From left) Johnathon Savage and his son Luke at the 4th of July Fireworks Display 2021. "This seems like a great small-town charm," Johnathon says.



MERCIA HOBSON/  
 THE CONNECTION  
 "I love America, and I love the beauty of everyone else loving America with me," said Nike White of Herndon.

## Two Men Charged with Chantilly Murder of Herndon Man

Homicides surge in the first six months of 2021 in Fairfax County compared to 2020.

By **MERCIA HOBSON**  
THE CONNECTION

**W**ith 13 homicides reported across all of Fairfax County already this year, the unprecedented spike in killings is a concern. Locally, two Sterling men have recently been charged with murdering a 26-year-old Herndon man whose body was found in the Chantilly Shopping Center parking lot in the early morning hours of May 7.

Fairfax County Chief of Police Kevin Davis and Major Ed O'Carroll, Commander of the Major Crimes and Cyber and Forensics Bureaus updated the community on the charges during a press conference at Public Safety Headquarters hours after the charges were filed on July 1.

"It's not acceptable to take a life in Fairfax County, or anywhere else for that matter, and we're proud to announce this morning that at least two killers have been taken off the streets and charged with these crimes," said Chief Davis.

Wilson Navarro Escobar, 29, and Rigoberto Rodriguez Hernandez, 43, both of Sterling, face charges of second degree murder and the use of a firearm in the commission of a felony in the fatal shooting of Brian Constanza-Campos shortly before 4:45 a.m. on May 7, according to Chief Davis.

"Brian [Constanza]-Campos, no criminal history, hard-working man was shot several times and killed in the middle of the night, in a parking lot and left for dead... We've had ten homicides in Fairfax County. That's an increase from where we were last year. That doesn't sit well with us. It doesn't sit well with our community," Chief Davis said. "These cases will continue to receive the highest priority investigative and patrol and leadership attention from the Fairfax County Police Department," Davis said.

President Joe Biden will speak on Wednesday, July 7, about what he "is going to do to help address" rising crime, especially gun violence, "as we've seen around the country it is a concern of many Americans," said White House press secretary Jen Psaki the same day Chief Davis made his announcement.

O'Carroll said that while charges against the two men were filed, an important step towards justice for Constanza-Campos, the case remains active. Reviewing the process, O'Carroll said members of the FCPD detective bureau were called to the scene.

"Our team went to work. Six days later, on May 13, Rigoberto Rodriguez Hernandez



(From left) During a press conference held July 1, Major Ed O'Carroll, Commander of the Major Crimes and Cyber and Forensics Bureaus and Fairfax County Chief of Police Kevin Davis update the community on charges filed against suspects in the murder of Brian Constanza-Campos.

### Tracking Homicides Within the Boundary of Fairfax County

Thirteen Homicides in Fairfax County, Virginia [January 1-June 30, 2021]- ten reported by Fairfax County Police Department and three reported by the Town of Herndon Police Department.

#### ❖ FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Victim 1: February 10, Samuel Onyeuka, 20 years, male, shooting in Reston - Reston Homicide Suspect Arrested in Newport News- Connection Newspapers

Victim 2: February 19, Anthony Isai Benitez, 18 years, male, shooting in Annandale - Fatal shooting reported late Friday in Fairfax County, police say + Fairfax shooting victim identified Washington Post

Victim 3- March 11, Santos Antonio Trejos, 40, male shooting in Reston - Man dead, another person injured in Reston shooting | WTOP

Victim 4: April 17-Hernan Leiva, 58 years, male, beating/stabbing in Falls Church - Man found slain in Fairfax County, Washington Post

Victims 5 and 6: April 25- two juveniles, shooting in Springfield- Social Media Argument Results in Homicide of Two Teenagers- Connection Newspapers

Victim 7: May 7- Brian Constanza-Campos, 27 years, male, shooting in Chantilly- Man Fatally Shot in Chantilly Parking Lot Connection Newspapers

Victim 8: May 22- Kenneth Jahelka, 66 years, stabbing in Reston- Detectives Investigate Domestic-Related Homicide in Reston- Connection Newspapers

Victims 9 and 10: May 26- Col. Edward McDaniel, 55 years and Brenda McDaniel, 63 years, -shooting in Springfield- Husband, wife fatally shot in Springfield, Fairfax County police say - Connection Newspapers

#### ❖ HERNDON POLICE DEPARTMENT

Victims 11, 12, and 13: June 19 - Claudia Menjivar, 34, Dayana Gutierrez, 12, and Carlos Josue Gutierrez, 9, shooting in the Town of Herndon - Triple Homicide in Town of Herndon Home Connection Newspapers

dez was arrested for a separate shooting that occurred that same day [May 7], in the same vicinity, but several hours prior to the murder. We believe that the first shooting occurred around 1 a.m.," O'Carroll said. He added that Hernandez was charged with malicious wounding, discharging a firearm in a public place, and brandishing a firearm relevant to the 1 a.m. event on May 7. Since that time, Hernandez has been held in custody at the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center with those charges against him.

As for the second suspect, Escobar, O'Carroll said he is in custody at the Loudoun County Adult Detention Center. "The day after the murder, on May 8, deputies from the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office arrested Escobar on unrelated charges. They found him in possession of a firearm... [Loudoun

County] called us immediately and notified us of their arrest, and that the weapon was recovered," he said.

O'Carroll added Escobar's weapon remains in evidence in addition to another firearm that FCPD has in its possession. They will be forensically examined to determine if used in Constanza-Campos' murder.

O'Carroll said detectives identified a connection between the suspects, Hernandez and Escobar, and Constanza-Campos. They also believe, O'Carroll said, that the two men charged were involved in an earlier dispute with Constanza-Campos. "This case illustrates several indisputable facts. Crime knows no boundaries, nor does justice."

FCPD detectives worked with a multitude of agencies from Northern Virginia. They went to West Virginia to follow up on "critical leads that were involved in this case,"



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Brian Constanza-Campos, 26, of Herndon



Wilson Navarro Escobar, 29, of Sterling, faces charges of second degree murder and the use of a firearm in the commission of a felony.



Rigoberto Rodriguez Hernandez, 43, of Sterling, faces charges of second degree murder and the use of a firearm in the commission of a felony.

according to O'Carroll. He added that FCPD has evidence that shows what happened before Constanza-Campos' murder, what happened after, and probable cause.

"Our work is not done," O'Carroll said. "If you have any information; you saw something; you heard something, contact the Fairfax County Police Department. We can be reached at 703-246-7800. You can contact Fairfax County Crime Solvers and provide information. You can remain anonymous."

In a fundraising post for the funeral of Brian Constanza-Campos, his brother, Sebastian, wrote, "Brian was truly one of the kindest people I have known throughout my life. As a kid, he would always try to care for injured birds or mice. I think he felt bad that most of those injuries were caused by our cats and wanted to make that right with the universe... I know as an adult he has helped friends get through extremely rough times in their lives. His second family at the Chantilly Shopping Center, where he was employed as a server for 14 years, all loved to work with him... Brian was taken before his time, and I will miss him dearly. I wish I had spent more time with him over the last few years...Please make the time for the people you care about and tell them you love them."

Anthony Guglielmi Director, Public Affairs Bureau Fairfax County Police Department provided data to the Connection relevant to Chief Davis' statement regarding homicides in Fairfax County increasing this year.

"Homicides in Fairfax County are up 100 percent, with 10 through July 1, compared with 5 in the same period last year," Guglielmi wrote in an email.

He clarified, "Homicides in independent cities or towns like Herndon or Vienna are counted by those jurisdictions because they are considered separate governments and they have their own FBI ORI number to report crime." Another example, Guglielmi said, would be if the Virginia State Police investigated a homicide on the highway within Fairfax County.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Coolers full of 7-day meal kits, planned by registered dietitian nutritionists and prepared daily by trained food service professionals pack a Fairfax County Public School bus for its Bus Route Meal Service, Summer 2021.



Hutchinson Principal Sarah Aiello takes part of a meal kit from an FCPS employee to give to a parent with little children in her car during the first day of the Bus Route Meal Distribution.

# School Buses and Sites Provide Free Grab and Go 7-day Meal Kits

**No questions asked, no IDs needed — County children under 18 and all FXCO students eligible.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**T**en Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) buses began rolling Monday, June 28, on a mission to deliver their precious cargo, coolers full of nutritious breakfast and lunch items packed in seven-day, bulk meal kits, grab-and-go style. It is a lifeline for some children living in the county's 406 square miles, who depend on USDA's child nutrition programs for the nourishment they need to grow and thrive.

According to FCPS, nearly one-third of its students qualified for free and reduced-price meals in the fall of 2019. Families who earn less than 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals, and those with incomes between 130 and 185 percent of poverty level qualify for reduced-price meals. Fairfax County Summer Meal Program runs under the USDA Summer Food Service Program and enters its second week on July 5.

"The distribution of the meal kits fulfills an essential service to our community. The meals provide much-needed support to our most vulnerable students and families. Upon pickup, parents are not asked for any information other than the number of meals they require," said Dr. Ricardy Anderson, Fairfax County School Board Chair. "It is important to continue to spread the word that the distribution of meals is still available at FCPS schools and bus routes because the fami-

lies who have the greatest need may not be aware the service is continuing throughout the summer months."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that school districts could continue serving free meals to all children regardless of family income and allow the meals served in a drive-thru or walk-up setting, offered as "grab-and-go" meals through June 2022 under its Summer Food Service Program.

The program is vital, particularly for communities hardest hit by COVID. According to FCPS, all county children under eighteen years of age, and all FCPS students, regardless of age, are eligible to receive the no-cost, weekly Meal Kits, which can be provided to parents or caretakers without the presence of a child.

FCPS made the free meal kits available in two ways. Parents, guardians, and students can access the kits at the weekly Bus Route Meal Service distributing throughout the county through Thursday, Aug. 5. The second option is to visit one of the Meal Kit Sites (every Monday) through Aug. 2.

**PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS** can let the FCPS employees know how many children need a meal kit. No other questions are asked, nor is identification required. Students may also pick up the meal kits.

On Tuesday, June 29, Delmay Sandoval of Herndon was first in line at Hutchinson Elementary school parking lot for that Bus Route Meal Service location. She sat in her

car with the windows rolled down with her two children and baby in the back seat. The temperature registered 95 degrees, and the sun was blazing. "I received this message last night from the school. It's in Spanish," Sandoval said. "I didn't know about the meals before that."

According to Sarah Aiello, Principal at Hutchinson, she texted the community multiple times the night before "to prep them because it's something new." She stood in the school parking lot as the bus arrived and called out to people, "Once a week, every Tuesday, 11:37."

Parents, caretakers, and students exited their cars to receive the meal kits off-loaded from the bus's rear. "I need it for three kids," one woman said. "Dos ninos," said a man.

Seeing small children in some vehicles, Aiello and other school staff hurried toward them with meal kits and loaded them into the trunks. Aiello later reported 80 meal kits distributed.

Registered dietitian nutritionists plan the meals and trained food service professionals prepare them daily using fresh high-quality ingredients. The grab-and-go meals "are tasty, well-balanced, and contain protein, whole grains, fruits and/or vegetables, and low-fat or fat-free milk," according to the Fairfax County Office of Food and Nutrition Services.

Ten FCPS buses run designated Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday routes to schools and other locations, once a week

## Monday Meal Kit Sites

June 28 - August 2 - 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.  
or until supplies are exhausted.

### Dates of distribution

- June 28
- July 6 (Tuesday, July 6 due to the Monday, July 5 holiday)
- July 12
- July 19
- July 26
- August 2

### Meal Kit sites

- Centreville HS- 6001 Union Mill Rd, Clifton
- Edison HS 5801 Franconia Rd, Alexandria
- Falls Church HS 7521 Jaguar Trail, Falls Church
- Hayfield SS 7630 Telegraph Rd, Alexandria, VA
- Marshall HS 7731 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church
- Mount Vernon HS 8515 Old Mt Vernon Rd, Alexandria begins 07/06
- South County HS 8700 Laurel Crest Drive, Lorton
- South Lakes HS 11400 South Lakes Dr, Reston
- West Springfield HS 6100 Rolling Rd, West Springfield
- Westfield HS 4700 Stonecroft Blvd, Chantilly
- Woodson HS 9525 Main St, Fairfax

A list of the Monday Meal Kit sites open for pick up.

with scheduled arrival and departure times for the Summer Meal Bus Routes. The routes stay the same for the 6-week program. The last day of the Summer Meal Bus Routes is Thursday, Aug. 5. Search Bus Route Meal Service- Summer 2021 | Fairfax County Public Schools for a list of the Monday through Thursday routes for the ten buses.

**THE MONDAY MORNING FCPS** Summer Meal Program Meal Kit Sites are open 8:30 - 10:30 a.m., for the remaining weeks in the season -July 12 through Aug. 2. Like the bus routes, meal kits containing seven days of breakfast and lunch items are packed in bulk. Adults may purchase kits for themselves and other adults for \$28 each at the Monday sites. Meal kits are not available off the buses for purchase by adults.

The Monday morning FCPS Summer Meal Program Meal Kit Sites are Centreville HS, Edison HS, Falls Church HS, Hayfield SS, Marshall HS, Mount Vernon HS, South County HS, South Lakes HS, West Springfield HS, Westfield HS, and Woodson HS.

Search Meal Kit Sites (Every Monday) June 28 through August 2 for more information.

# Rewriting the Constitution of Virginia

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



COMMENTARY

The celebration of the fourth of July this week reminds us that not only did the colonies in America break free from the Mother Country in 1776, but they embarked on a course of independence that included written constitutions. While common law and precedent continued to play a role in their governance, their basic structure of government was detailed in a written document. Constitutions, however, are not static documents. They can be amended over time to reflect changes in society.

The Commonwealth of Virginia is on its seventh constitution. Its first constitution of 1776 opened with George Mason's Declaration of Rights that with some changes is still a part of the present constitution and which influenced the Bill of Rights in the federal constitution and in the constitutions of many other states. Virginia's current constitution was approved by the voters in a referendum and became effective on July 1, 1971—50 years ago.

The current constitution replaced a horribly racist document that had been written by 100 white men in 1902 in reaction to the growth and influence of Black voters in the state under the state constitution that had been adopted

during the Reconstruction Era in 1870. The imposition in the constitution of 1902 of such voter requirements as payment of a poll tax six months before an election three years in a row along with a literacy test disenfranchised almost all Black voters and half the white voters. When asked about the discriminatory aspects of the proposed constitution, Carter

Glass who was one of the leaders in the convention and who later became a senator exclaimed: "Discrimination! Why that is exactly what we propose. To remove every negro voter who can be gotten rid of, legally, without materially impairing the numerical strength of the white electorate."

While the constitution of 1971 eliminated the discriminatory and racial aspects of the previous constitution, many of which had been voided by federal law and court decisions, the new constitution added two very important articles: the provision that had been in the past constitution that "white and negro children could not attend the same school" was replaced with a new article that provides for free public and elementary and secondary schools for all children of school age. The 1902 constitution also added a new section on conservation providing

that "it shall be the Commonwealth's policy to protect the atmosphere, lands, and waters from pollution, impairment, or destruction, for the benefit, enjoyment, and general welfare of the people of the Commonwealth." Both these additions were strongly advocated for by the late Delegate Dorothy McDiarmid who represented the Town of Vienna and parts of Fairfax County in the House of Delegates.

To learn more about the writing and rewriting of the Constitution of Virginia, go to <https://www.lva.virginia.gov/71constitution/>. There are many links to articles, videos, and events on the subject. Constitutions as the basic framework of our government deserve periodic review and amendments and revisions as necessary to ensure that government is responsive to the needs and interest of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

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**CALENDAR**

**NOW THRU JULY 29**  
Pathway Homes Art Exhibit. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Monday through Saturday). At Vienna Arts Society, 513 Maple Ave., West, Vienna. Pathway Homes, Inc. is hosting its 10th Annual Summer of the Arts Exhibit—both in studio and online, where Pathway Homes' residents who have mental health challenges showcase and sell their own art, poetry, and crafts. Pathway Homes is a nonprofit providing mental health services—starting with safe, stable housing—to individuals marginalized by poverty and inequity. Art and creativity are an integral part of recovery for Pathway Homes' residents. Visit [www.sota.pathway-homes.org](http://www.sota.pathway-homes.org)

**FRIDAY/JULY 9**  
Friday Night Live. At Herndon Town Green, Herndon. Popular free outdoor concert series returns to regular performances. This will be the 27th season for the concert series which is produced by the Herndon Chamber of Commerce.

Schedule  
July 9 -- Turtle Recall;  
July 16 -- The Rockets;  
July 23 -- Herr Metal + Dr FU;  
July 30 -- Kristen and the Noise;  
Aug 6 -- Social Call;  
Aug 13 -- It's All Good;  
Aug 20 -- JunkFood;  
Aug 27 -- All-Star Band;  
Sept 3 -- Shake the Room;  
Sept 10 -- Keeton + 8 Track Jones;  
Sept 17 -- The Reflex;  
Sept 24 -- Screaming Mönkeys.  
Friday Night Live! is produced by the Herndon Chamber of Commerce and brought to you by its title sponsor Volkswagen Group of America.

**SUNDAY/JULY 11**  
Summer Sunday Concerts in the Park. 5 p.m. At McLean Central Park Gazebo 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean.  
Sunday, July 11 -- Sun Dogs: A Tribute to Rush.  
Sunday, July 18 -- The Sensational Soul Cruisers: A Tribute to Motown.  
Sunday, July 25 -- Nashville Girls Night Out.

**WOLF TRAP SCHEDULE**  
Visit [www.wolftrap.org](http://www.wolftrap.org) for tickets. By phone at 877.WOLFTRAP  
July 7 -- Watchhouse (formerly Mando-lin Orange)  
July 8 + 9 -- Beethoven and Bologne with National Symphony Orchestra, Jonathan Heyward (conductor), Francesco DeGo (violin)  
July 10 -- Aria Jukebox, The Audience Gets to Choose! (streaming online beginning July 10)  
July 10 + 11 -- Max Weinberg's Jukebox

**TUESDAY/JULY 13**  
"Duck Harbor" Web Series. 8 p.m. Episode Seven. Sponsored by 1st Stage in Tysons Corner. Duck Harbor is a web series about a long-distance love in later life. The piece is brought to audiences through a creative series of short scenes in which the actors, just like the characters, are meeting for the first time. Audiences will get to experience the magic of the theater and the excitement of new love between these two lonely hearts reaching out from charming small towns on opposite sides of the country. Every week, each of the two actors, who live on opposite coasts, will be given only their half of the script and will experience the other side of the story with a sincere and genuine freshness, "on stage," in front of our audience. Performances will take place every Tuesday, now through August 17. Get your tickets today at [www.1ststage.org](http://www.1ststage.org).

Holding her certificate, Pranamyia Jindal celebrates her performance in the National Kid-Wind Challenge.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

# Centreville Student Receives National KidWind Award

## Cardinal Ridge Elementary School fourth grader Pranamyia Jindal won at the KidWind Challenge.

BY JESSICA FENG  
THE CONNECTION

Cardinal Ridge Elementary School student Pranamyia Jindal won first place in the elementary-school division under the team name Nature Wings. This was the Centreville resident's first time participating in the renewable energy competition. The 2021 National KidWind Challenge was hosted virtually from June 8-10 on Zoom.

The competition is a project where students test their knowledge of renewable energy.

"I got the option of making a wind turbine or solar powered project. In both challenges, you get to learn a lot about wind energy or solar energy, and you make a model of a wind turbine or a solar powered project," Pranamyia Jindal said.

KidWind was originally introduced to Jindal through her mother who later on acted as her coach.

"My mom was online one day and she found out about it and shared it with me," Jindal said.

As a coach, Richa Jindal focused on guiding her daughter instead of directly teaching her.

"I learned the importance of letting kids learn independently while being provided with material, a platform to actually make a difference to real-world problems," Richa Jindal said.

During her preparation, she researched the components of wind energy and created various turbine blades.

"We tried checking out what the KidWind app had to offer. Then, once the material that KidWind gave arrived, we started exploring it. Afterwards, we tried to make, test, and experiment with the blade designs," Pranamyia Jindal said.

Despite her hard work, the award came as a shock to Jindal. It gave her confidence to



Pranamyia Jindal created a wind turbine in the Nature Wings team.

explore more about steps she can take to the causes she believes in.

"I was really surprised, like I was quite sure that because of my Quizbowl score I wouldn't have made it - I was so happy," Pranamyia Jindal said.

Moving forward, Jindal plans to continue learning about renewable energy and participate in the 2022 KidWind Competition.

"During the summer I'm going to research a little more and learn more about the competition so that next year I can perform even better. Maybe I'll even try doing a solar project," Jindal said.

The mother-daughter team was especially thankful for the guidance they received and the team at KidWind for hosting the event.

"We want to thank Ms. Remy and Ms. Grace from CASE. We also cannot express enough how much we appreciate all the support and the opportunities provided to us by KidWind," Jindal said.

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## I'm the Big Winner



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

(Not a cancer column.) For the past six months or so, I have been the email-recipient of \$50 gift cards to numerous to count/tally. They have run the gamut from Ace Hardware to Zappos.com and everything in between like CVS, Kohls, Walmart; you name it. I have rarely clicked on any of these "give-aways" because the one time I did, the answers required on the site - to claim my winnings, seemed a bit intrusive, as in what they were asking was none of their business. If they truly want to incentivize me to spend money at their store/site, they need to leave my personal business out of their equation. You don't need to know my mother's maiden name or the name of the city where I was born, to give me money, and you definitely are not getting my credit card number into which you'll make "the transfer." I've been down that rabbit hole before, and it's not good.

For a time, I was naively open and curious about these presumptive money/data grabs. I figured that in a pandemic world where millions of potential buyers are quarantining at home, and brick and mortar businesses are left fending for themselves, finding an alternate route to my wallet/credit cards while many of us were less inclined to go out and mix with the masses, a gift card teaser seemed prudent and reasonable. Moreover, given the very extenuating circumstances we've all endured these last 18 months, it was safe even; given our collective evolution in terms of purchasing goods and services online over the last decade to buy remotely. Throw in the same day service available with some vendors and there really is very little need to leave your house.

But after being nearly hooked and gutted by a phishing expedition once before, I've become extremely cautious about taking any bait/ tipping my toe in the figurative computer water, especially when the offers seem to be pulling at my heart's strings: free/easy money. Certainly I am mindful of the advisory: "If it sounds too good to be true, ..." yelled from the highest mountain tops in the past decade. However, the fraudulent pursuit of our almighty dollars are not being sent by idiots/ innocent target marketers. Hardly. These callers, with whom you eventually have to make verbal or online contact are quite proficient at answering your questions and/or allaying any fears that the about-to-be-extremely-unlucky mark is exhibiting. And once the caller/responder to your query has control of your computer - which you provided (it seemed like the logical thing to do to close/finalize the deal), the gift card party is officially over. The "free" money you had anticipated receiving is now going to cost you real money, as opposed to the offer you initially received which, as it happens, wasn't real/free at all.

Still, even with my previous near-death financial wipeout, I did click on a CVS offer. The site had all the CVS bells and whistles and colors which I've come to recognize and the offer seemed genuine: three choices to click on a box to win a \$50 gift card. And of course, it was the third and final red box on which I clicked that offered up my \$50. That was easy. Too easy.

As it soon became apparent, claiming the money was the problem. Once I answered a bunch of questions about my name, rank and serial number of where I live and so forth, I realized I was leading the caller down the garden path to my identity and all sorts of harrowing misadventures which I'd prefer not to experience first hand. Before it got too late/too personal on the sight, I politely backed out before any damage was done. As a result of this near calamity, I am no longer clicking on anything that seems the least bit enticing with unsolicited offers of direct payments/gift cards to me. If however, there are solicitations to me for gift cards to be mailed to my home without any preconditions or questions answered, I'd be happy to receive them. Otherwise, I won't bother. I've been shamed once, I can't afford, literally, to be shamed twice, then it is my fault (a fool and his money ...).

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

# And What a Year It Was

## Herndon Rotary Club names Signe Friedrichs Rotarian of the Year 2020-2021.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

As the COVID-19 pandemic raged across her Town of Herndon, Rotarian Signe Friedrichs masked up and gathered up other masked service volunteers, business leaders, and nonprofit leaders. Together they collaborated to make their little town's 4.293 square miles a better place for all to live. In tandem with others, Friedrichs advanced the ideas of individuals willing to make a difference and listened to other individuals struggling to survive during the pandemic.

Friedrichs received the distinguished Rotarian of the Year award 2020-2021 at the Rotary Club of Herndon's regular early Wednesday morning meeting held on June 30. The Club had recently moved back to Amphora Diner Deluxe in Herndon after meeting virtually during year one of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike other pre-pandemic years, there was no awards ceremony, no hotel banquet hall, testimonies, nor toasts, just Friedrichs and her fellow Rotarians at the 7:30 a.m. meeting at the local diner.

FRIEDRICHS later said she was surprised when Rudy Tassara, president of the Club, presented her with the award. She earned recognition through her outstanding dedication and demonstration of "Service Above Self" and principled commitment to the organization's Four-Way Test.

According to Tassara, Friedrichs had always been "super active" in the Club. She joined in 2011, but during the pandemic, Friedrichs "definitely was number one."

"The only events we were doing in the Club were Signe's," said Tassara in an interview after the presentation.

As chair of the Satellite Club of Herndon Rotary, Friedrichs' unbridled enthusiasm magnetized others, Rotarians and non-Rotarians, in project after project. "The pandemic has been a tough one for service clubs," said Friedrichs a few days after she received the award.

"The Satellite Club of Herndon Rotary, which I chair, chose to hold food drives and other necessities and children's books drives out of the terrible need in this community because these events could be held safely during the pandemic, and because our membership is powerfully motivated by service to



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON

**Signe Friedrichs, Herndon Rotary Club's Rotarian of the Year 2020-2021, and chair of the Satellite Club of Herndon Rotary, joins Rudy Tassara, past president of the Club at ArtsHerndon for a photo. The site was one of the many that the Satellite Club established during the pandemic as a donation drop-off.**

others," Friedrichs said.

Elysa Berman of Herndon is a member of the Rotary Club of Herndon. She has served with Friedrichs for over a decade in multiple charitable organizations and efforts.

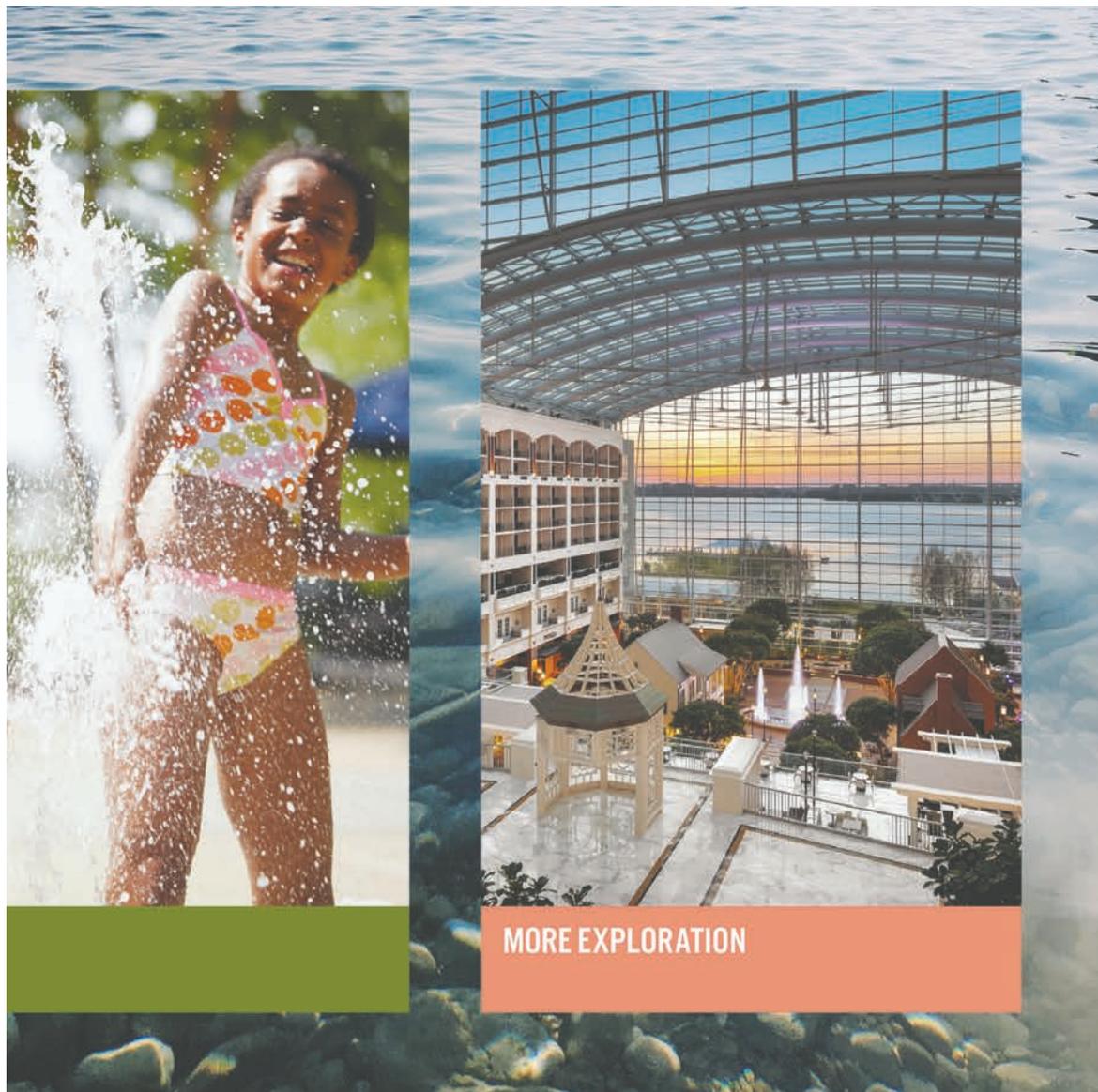
"Signe has done so much over the 2020-2021 year, including organizing multiple food drives, holding weekly clean-ups, creating a safer and healthier environment, and so much more," said Berman. "Signe truly exemplifies Service Above Self and is a shining star for Rotary and the Herndon community," Berman said.

"Thank you to ArtsHerndon, Green Lizard Cycling, and Weird Brothers Coffee for providing shelter and support, and to the Green Lizard Foundation for their generous donation," said Friedrichs, not wanting to forget anyone.

**SHEILA OLEM**, Mayor of Herndon, wrote to Friedrichs as mayor: "Your service to the community through food drives has made a positive impact on the lives of others, and I am happy to see you being recognized for your service."

On Tuesday evenings, community members can find Friedrichs seated on the Town of Herndon dais representing all constituents within the town. Third-term Herndon Town Councilmember Friedrichs is the former Executive Director of ArtsHerndon, previously known as the Council for the Arts of Herndon, the town's recognized arts agency. She demonstrates a history of working in the nonprofit administration industry and is a member of the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce.

The Main Club, Herndon Rotary Club, as of July 3, meets every Wednesday at 7:30 a.m. at Amphora's on Elden Street in the Town of Herndon. The Satellite Club meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of every month, at 6 p.m. at various locations in the town. For more information, email the Club's Executive Secretary, Stevan Porter.



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