

CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station

Volunteers Emily Chen and Sue Lee Park plant southern red oak seedlings as part of the Laurel Hill Park Volunteer Team and the Celebration of Trees campaign organized by Plant NoVA Natives.

PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION
OPINION, PAGE 6 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 8, 9, 12 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 14



Republicans Sweep
Statewide Races

NEWS, PAGE 4

Plant Native Trees

ENVIRONMENT, PAGE 10

Local Scenes
From Election Day

NEWS, PAGE 3

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ROUNDUPS

Fairfax City's Veterans Day Ceremony

VFW Post 8469 and American Legion Post 177 will jointly conduct the Fairfax City Veterans Day ceremony on Thursday, Nov. 11, at 10:30 a.m., and the public is invited. The new location this year will be Old Town Square at North Street and University Drive. Dignitaries including Fairfax Mayor David Meyer, members of the Fairfax City Council, Del. David Bulova (D-37th), Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34th) and U.S. Rep Gerry Connolly are expected to attend.

CFTC Fundraising Cabaret, Silent Auction

The City of Fairfax Theatre Company's (CFTC) annual Fundraising Cabaret and Silent Auction is slated for Friday, Nov. 12, at the Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Hwy, in Fairfax. Doors open at 7 p.m. for cocktail hour and the start of the silent auction. The performance begins at 8 p.m.

CFTC members will entertain and present a live cabaret, and silent-auction results will be revealed at the end of the night. Items up for bid include a 30-minute, meet-and-greet with Broadway star Kate Baldwin; a Bluemont Vineyard experience; dinner prepared by CFTC's gourmet chef, Michael O'Dell; a tour of Fairfax City Hall and lunch with Mayor David Meyer; and tickets for two to The Kennedy Center to see "Ain't too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations."

Event tickets are \$50 and include hors d'oeuvres and cocktails to be enjoyed outdoors, both before the performance and during intermission. To purchase them, go to: <https://fairfaxcitytheatre.ticketleap.com/2021-cabaret-and-silent-auction/>.

More silent-auction items and experiences are being added each day. For information about them, visit <https://www.32auctions.com/CFTC2021Cabaret>.

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNews-papers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

THURSDAY/NOV. 4

Reimagining Our Homes. 7-8:30 p.m. Via Zoom. Industry experts will discuss how we can transform our homes to meet the goal of carbon neutrality. To learn more and to register visit <https://www.ecoactionarlington.org/get-involved/events/>.

Arts Center and meet nearly 100 Resident and Associate Artists, creating art in the studios or exhibiting in galleries. Performances of dance, cabaret, comedy, big band, jazz, and theater. Indulgent classes in the art of mixology or cuisines from around the globe. Art exhibitions in nine galleries of the region's finest sculpture, painting, glass, ceramics, and fiber art works. <https://www.workhousearts.org/>

SATURDAY/NOV. 13

Second Saturday Art Walk at the Workhouse Arts Center 6 - 9 pm on the Second Saturday of each month to discover all the Workhouse

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 5

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Many Vote the 'Traditional Way' on Election Day

Early voting was popular.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County voters who cast their ballots on Election Day, Nov. 2, were greeted by dark, rain-threatening skies and below average temperatures when polls opened at 6 a.m. Opening lines at precincts in Springfield ranged from almost two dozen at Sydenstricker to more typically only four or five at other nearby polling places. After the initial opening, voter arrivals were steady but paced, with little or no wait times. This, in part, because 163,000+ people in Fairfax County had voted early.

The 2021 election is the first year that Virginians had the option of both, early in-person voting without a reason, and mail-in voting by mail or drop box. In 2020, with some accommodation changes driven by COVID-19 concerns about avoiding polling places, early voting numbers were very high. That year, 2.8 million Virginians, (including 413,816 Fairfax County voters), chose absentee options; up dramatically from prior years. Early voting numbers in 2021, though high, fell significantly behind 2020 totals, even though this year Republicans embraced early voting as part of their voting strategy. Both Democrats and Republicans encouraged early voting. At the end of early in-person voting Oct. 30, 1,142,155 votes had been cast throughout the Commonwealth.

Changed this year, too, early voting and absentee ballots, previously reported last as a group, were reported within an hour of poll closing. New state law permits their separate reporting; and jurisdiction by jurisdiction decisions determine the order of reporting. Fairfax County's new election registrar, Scott Konopasek, decided to report early voting first, to avoid seeing a large chunk of votes showing up after the precincts had reported.

While the 2021 vote saw many changes to past practices, there were many who voted in the traditional way, on Election Day. Here's why.



Doug Marshall, Sydenstricker Precinct, voted for McAuliffe. "I like the [traditional] process, because I'm old. It's what I'm used to."



Volunteers at the polls reported a steady, but spaced arrival of voters at various polling places throughout the Springfield area of the county.



Cassie Tillman with daughter, Lily, at the Sydenstricker Precinct. Cassie said, "We homeschool and had put it [voting] off, but had to do it today."



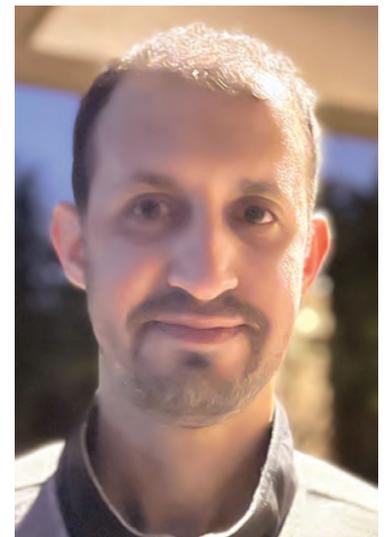
Donny, Francine, and son Jordan Bullock, Sydenstricker Precinct. Donny said, "No reason. We talked about it several times but I prefer to [vote] as a family."



Marquitta, Kevin, and Sandra Foster, at the Hunt Valley Precinct. Sandra said: "This time felt like a primary [in terms of expected turnout] and we wanted to be among many other voters; I thought being here would be more like major election [turnout]." Kevin added, "Voting [in person on Election Day] is something I've always done as a kid and will always do."



Saip & Meena Srinivasan, Hunt Valley Precinct, voted for Youngkin. Meena said, "The early voting period starts too early. Some information comes out later in campaigns. Many who voted early want to change their votes, but they can't."



Abderrazzak Mhainy, Pohick Precinct. "Just moved here, so no time to vote early. It is a great option."

Republican Sweep

Democrats lose statewide for the first time since 2009.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

Virginia has a long tradition of offering a counterpoint to presidential elections starting after the election of Democrat Jimmy Carter for president in 1976. Virginia responded by electing Republican John Dalton. Ever since then, it's been a pretty predictable pattern. After the Reagan Revolution in 1980, Virginia elected Democrat Chuck Robb governor. The election of Democrat Bill Clinton brought on the election of Republican George Allen, and the answer to Republican George W. Bush was Democrat Mark Warner.

Only one candidate for governor has been able to break the spell — Terry McAuliffe, who bucked the trend in 2013 by defeating Republican Ken Cuccinelli on the heels of Barack Obama's reelection. Democrats were hopeful that McAuliffe could pull it off again. But his campaign attempting to tie Republican Glenn Youngkin to former President Donald Trump failed as a wave of voters raised objections to anti-racism curriculum in schools and transgender students using the bathroom of the gender their choice.

"Unfortunately, Virginia's long-standing trend of electing a governor from the opposite party of the president continues," said Noam Lee, executive director of the Democratic Governors Association. "Sidestepping the issues that mattered to voters, the GOP lied and schemed to hide their candidate's extreme positions, and their far-right agenda won out."

Youngkin declared victory at a raucous victory party in Chantilly, thanking his family and outlining his agenda for the next four years. At the top of the list was education reform. He made no mention of critical race theory, the law-school concept that he has vowed to ban from public school classrooms. But he did promise the largest education budget in history, and he said he would expand charter schools. He also said he would deliver the largest tax refund ever, and he vowed to eliminate the grocery tax.

"This is our moment," said Youngkin. "Together, we will change the trajectory of this commonwealth."

"Together, we will change the trajectory of this commonwealth."

— Governor-elect
Glenn Youngkin



Republican gubernatorial candidate Glenn Youngkin addresses a crowd Oct. 30 at Market Square in Old Town Alexandria. Youngkin upset Democratic nominee Terry McAuliffe in the Nov. 2 general election.

The blame game has already started among Democrats, who are critical of the McAuliffe campaign for focussing too much attention on Trump and for not fighting back harder against allegations that critical race theory is taught in Virginia classrooms. As Democrats saw power slipping from their grasp Tuesday night, they were particularly angry that Republicans were able to seize on the issue of education — a campaign issue Democrats have long considered their own personal

realm.

"You cannot lose education," said Brian Moran, a former Democratic caucus chairman in the House who now works in the Northam administration. "It's bread and butter: Health care, education and safety. That's what Democrats talk about, and that's what we care about. We

cannot forfeit those issues."

Since Democrats seized control of the General Assembly two years ago, they've been able to achieve drastic change.

They've legalized marijuana, abolished the death penalty, restricted predatory lending, implemented gun violence prevention measures and overturned restrictions to abortion. For many voters, that may have been too much too soon. The election of Youngkin and the Republican ticket is certain to be viewed as a repudiation of the agenda that Democrats pushed during their brief era of legislative power.

"It's official: Virginians have completely rejected the failed policies of the liberals running Richmond and voted for a brighter future full of supported small businesses, empowered parents and safer streets," said Dee Duncan, president of the Republican State Leadership Committee. "We supported the right candidates, developed the right messages, and executed the right strategies to



PHOTO: JAMAL NELSON/TWITTER

PHOTO: ALCIA ANDREWS/TWITTER

Hundreds turned out in Old Town Alexandria Oct. 30 for a rally for Republican gubernatorial candidate Glenn Youngkin.

overcome a two-to-one spending disadvantage driven by national liberals like Barack Obama, Eric Holder, Nancy Pelosi and Stacey Abrams."

Youngkin launched his campaign initially aiming squarely at economic issues, promising tax cuts as part of a very traditional Republican playbook. But then events caught up with the campaign. A high-profile prosecution in Loudoun gave opponents of transgender students using the bathroom of their choice an opportunity to question safety. And a national movement against so-called critical race theory erupted at local school board meetings across Virginia. Then McAuliffe stuck his foot in his mouth in the second debate saying he didn't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach.

"I think Terry made an unfortunate remark, and that started it," said Del. Kaye Kory (D-38). "Before that, there really was not any talk about this on this scale."

After the debate in Alexandria

at the Schlesinger Center, Republicans recalibrated their campaign to be aimed right at the issue of parental rights. That gave them an opportunity to ride the wave of concern over anti-racism curriculum in the classroom, which they call critical race theory even though that's not taught in Virginia classrooms. And every new detail in the Loudoun prosecution was amplified on right-wing media. McAuliffe's own words were endlessly repeated in Republican television ads, and the McAuliffe campaign was late in walking the statement back.

"We are grateful to Virginians who place their trust in us," said Republican House Leader Todd Gilbert after Republicans won enough seats to take control of the House of Delegates. "We look forward to immediately going to work with Governor-elect Youngkin and his administration to restore fiscal order, give parents the voice they deserve in education and keep our commonwealth safe. Our work begins now."

Election Day



Diane Satsishavingu, who rode her bike about a mile to the Sydenstricker Precinct to vote, voted for McAuliffe. "It's the first time in five years that I wasn't out of town and knew I could bike here the day of election."

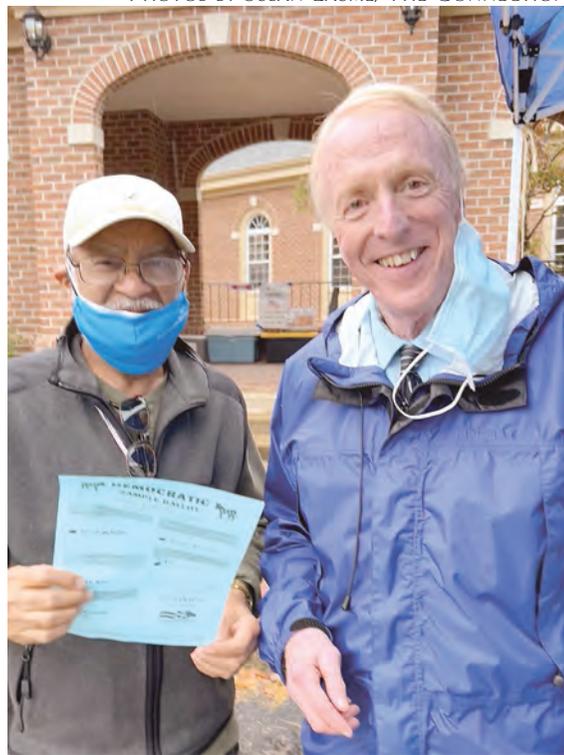


Rosemary & Michael Evanchik, Pohick Precinct, voted for McAuliffe. Rosemary said, "We did [vote] early last time, but we felt traditional this year. I'm a Democrat and we usually have a split vote and vote together so the other doesn't get a one up." Michael added, "I vote Republican at times, but don't like Trump politics or anything like it."

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



State Senator George Barker, 39th District, handed out sample ballots during the afternoon at Sydenstricker Precinct on Election Day.



State Senator George Barker, greets constituent and retired director of the Noman M. Cole Jr. Pollution Control Plant, Kailash Gupta (left) outside the polling station

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 2

NOW THRU NOV. 18

Free ESL Classes. 7-9 p.m. At Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Road, Fairfax. In-person placement testing for free on-line ESL classes. Classes are Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7-9 p.m., on-line using Zoom, 9/14-11/18/2021. Placement testing is in-person at Lord of Life Lutheran Church 9/9/2021, 7 p.m. Must register at www.lordoflifeva.org/ESL. Class sizes limited. Visit the website: www.lordoflifeva.org/ESL

SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthy-minds/fairfax or www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html. Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke sponsors a monthly meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, noon-1:30 p.m., for caregivers to

learn and to share with others experiencing similar challenges. Before attending, contact the facilitator, Eileen Thompson at 703-451-8626 or eileen.thompson1@gmail.com. Haven of Northern Virginia provides support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. To become a Haven volunteer, please call 703-941-7000 to request an orientation. Volunteers must complete a 30-hour training and commit to one year of service answering Haven phones (2.5 hours weekly). Next training is scheduled for fall 2017.

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The Grim Reality of the High Maternal Death Rate among Black Women

Racism and access to medical care are among the causes.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Chest pains during and after her pregnancy were the first sign that something might be wrong. When Corretta Lewis of Alexandria visited her doctor, she was told that her pain was the result of low iron levels and a nutrition-deficient diet. She was skeptical of her physician's diagnosis.

"I had a friend that died at 21 with her 3-day old baby in her arms because the doctors didn't take her seriously, so I was scared," said Lewis.

She adjusted her diet but the discomfort persisted.

"I nearly died while in labor with my son and then I was dismissed by my OB-GYN during postnatal care," she said. "After giving birth, I was still experiencing severe chest pain and after a few weeks my wife forced me to go to another doctor to have them look into it further."

A cardiologist ordered an echocardiogram. "It turns out that the doctor saw something on an ultrasound of my heart," said Lewis. "I could have died. I was dismissed because I was a young black woman."

Lewis' experience is not uncommon. Black women are three-to-four times more likely to die of pregnancy-related causes at a higher rate than white women in Northern Virginia and parts of Montgomery County. A lack of access to healthcare and racism from medical professionals are among the top reasons for this gap.

Most pregnancy-related deaths are preventable, according to the CDC. Racial and ethnic disparities in pregnancy-related deaths have persisted over time, the CDC reports. Even in states with the lowest pregnancy-related deaths per 100,000 live births, and among women with higher levels of education, significant racial differences persist. These findings suggest that the disparity observed in pregnancy-related death for Black and American Indian/Alaska Native women is a complex national problem, according to the CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2019/p0905-racial-ethnic-disparities-pregnancy-deaths.html>

"Institutional racism, implicit bias, toxic stress, and intimate partner violence ... are contributing factors to the staggering disparity among black women," said Joanna Hemmat, assistant director, Health Services Division, Fairfax County Health Department.

The actions that are associated with these behaviors are dismissing a patient's symptoms, making assumptions and generalizing.

"We work on addressing institutional racism and



PHOTO COURTESY OF CORRETTA LEWIS

Corretta Lewis, pictured with her wife Mea and their son Caleb says that she almost lost her life due racism in healthcare.

implicit bias –in collaboration with One Fairfax, our county-wide initiative to bring an equity lens to all areas of operation throughout the county, including health," Hemmat said.

"Institutional racism, implicit bias, toxic stress, and intimate partner violence ... are contributing factors to the staggering disparity among black women."

— Joanna Hemmat, Health Services Division, Fairfax County Health Department

A lack of access to prenatal and postnatal healthcare is another barrier to closing the maternal mortality gap between Black and white women. "Uninsured women are less likely to seek routine health care and more likely to receive episodic care in the emergency department," said Hemmat, "The diagnosis and management of chronic health conditions may be delayed and follow-up care is not coordinated."

To address the issue of a lack of healthcare, local counties are partnering with medical facilities to offer services on a sliding scale for uninsured patients. For example, Arlington County teams up with the Virginia Hospital Center to provide services to pregnant women, says Kurt Larrick, assistant director of Arlington County Department of Human Services. "They do all deliveries and we actually send any high risk pregnancies to them immediately as well," he said.

Addressing pre-existing medical conditions and creating an overall healthy lifestyle can help lower maternal mortality rates among women of color. "Mental Health screening, screening for intimate partner violence and substance use, as well as subsequent referrals, are essential components of care provision during the prenatal and postpartum periods. In order to reduce maternal deaths due to suicide, overdose, and intimate partner violence," said Hemmat.

Though she survived her pregnancy and now has a happy family of three, Lewis is still concerned about the plight of other women of color.

"It's not asking a lot for all black women to live long enough to see the child they carried celebrate their first birthday, and many others," Lewis said.

Chief Puts Brakes on Pursuits

Police pursued 580 vehicles from 2017-2020; 451 were for traffic offenses.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County police have stopped vehicle pursuits for traffic offenses.

"Our pursuit policy needed to be changed. I know it was included as one of the main tickets on our community matrix. It's now a best practice," said Fairfax County Police Chief Kevin Davis.

"We now have a gold standard policy regarding pursuits," he said to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors at a Public Safety Committee meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 26.

Fairfax County Police pursued 580 vehicles between 2017-2020, according to Davis. "Of those 580 police pursuits, 451 were for traffic offenses only, so that's a huge chunk," he said. "Now police officers are consistent with best practices across the country and in the DMV we don't pursue for traffic offenses only."

In both September and October, police recorded only one pursuit in each month.

"We will pursue for violent crimes against persons, that's built into the policy, we absolutely will. And then there are exceptions built where we can have command and supervisory approval for the unique circumstances that inevitably arise in our professions," Davis said, in his 100-Day Plan update to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, Oct. 26 during its Public Safety committee.

One pursuit in 2017 resulted in critically injuring 12-year-old Amran Djama of Herndon. On Dec. 27, 2017, Amran rode with four other children in the family minivan that evening, driven by her mother, Filsan Duale. As their vehicle entered the signalized intersection of Centreville and Frying Pan Roads, carjacking suspect Brandon Stefon Vinson, 28, of Adelphi, Md. led FCPD officers in a vehicle pursuit with the department's helicopter assisting overhead. Vinson drove a pickup truck with an attached

SEE CHIEF PUTS, PAGE 11

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
south@connectionnewspapers.com

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

Bonnie Hobbs
Community Reporter, 703-778-9415
bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com

Mercia Hobson
Community Reporter
mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com

Mike Salmon
Contributing Writer
msalmon@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](mailto:MaryKimm)

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

Managing Editor
Kemal Kurspahic
Art/Design:
Laurence Foong, John Heinly,
Ali Khaligh
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION
Circulation Manager:
Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com



Unofficial Results from Virginia Board of Elections

	Votes	Percent
Governor		
Glenn A. Youngkin - R	1,663,755	50.68
Terry R. McAuliffe - D	1,593,741	48.55
D Princess L. Blanding - LP	22,625	0.69
Leutenant Governor		
Winsome E. Sears - R	1,659,942	50.82
Hala S. Ayala - D	1,603,076	49.08
Attorney General		
Jason S. Miyares - R	1,649,034	50.48
Mark R. Herring - D	1,614,724	49.43
Fairfax County PUBLIC SCHOOL BONDS		
Yes	174,236	67.82
No	82,676	32.18
Delegate District 34		
Gary G. Pan - R	17,109	43.15
Kathleen J. Murphy - D	22,496	56.74
Delegate 35th District		
Kevin E. McGrath - R	11,132	31.6
Mark L. Keam - D	24,044	68.26
Delegates 36th District		
Matthew J. Lang - R	10,220	28.4
Kenneth R. "Ken" Plum - D	25,701	71.41
Delegate 37th District		
Kenny W. Meteiver - R	9,491	33.36
David L. Bulova - D	18,914	66.47
Delegates 38th District		
Tom L. Pafford - R	7,468	31.12
L. Kaye Kory - D	16,451	68.55
Delegates 39th District		
Maureen T. Brody - R	9,950	33.32
Vivian E. Watts - D	19,850	66.46
Delegates 40th District		
Harold Y. Pyon - R	17,021	45.91
Dan I. Helmer	20,025	54.01
Delegates 41st District		
John M. Wolfe - R	12,361	34.88
Eileen Filler-Corn - D	23,016	64.94
Delegates 42nd District		
Edward F. McGovern - R	14,097	40.09
Kathy K. "KL" Tran - D	21,012	59.76
Delegate 43rd District		
Brenton H. Hammond - R	9,341	29.92
Mark D. Sickles - D	21,838	69.95
Delegates 44th District		
Richard T. Hayden - R	8,568	32.45
Paul E. Krizek - D	17,795	67.41
Delegates 45th District		
Justin D. "J.D." Maddox - R	10,924	26.15
Elizabeth B. Bennett-Parker - D	30,733	73.57
Delegate 46th District		
Charniele L. Herring - D	20,024	92.1
Delegate 47th District		
Laura A. Hall - R	8,473	21.61
Patrick A. Hope - D	30,616	78.1
Delegates 48th District		
Edward William Monroe, Jr. - R	10,709	27.71
Richard C. "Rip" Sullivan, Jr. - D	27,847	72.05
Delegates 53rd District		
Sarah White - R	8,749	28.14
Marcus B. Simon - D	22,292	71.69
Delegates 67th District		
Bob L. Frizzelle - R	13,958	39.42
Karrie K. Delaney - D	21,407	60.46
Delegates 86th District		
Julie Anna Perry - R	10,113	34.65
Irene Shin - D	18,988	65.05

Scouting for Food on Nov. 13, 2021

On Saturday, Nov. 13, Scouts and their adult leaders from Troops and Packs all over Northern Virginia will be gathering food from their neighbors and bringing it to local charities in the annual Scouting for Food collection. Operating the food drive safely during the pandemic is a primary concern for Scout Leaders. Scouts will be masked and will conduct the food drive outdoors for maximum safety while serving their community.

All food is donated to local charities that distribute the food to those in need in our community. All of the charities will also observe pandemic safety precautions.

Four charities will accept food donations between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Nov. 13 and the public is also welcome to drop off nonperishable food. The charities are:

- ❖ **LINK** receiving food at Trinity Presbyterian Church at 651 Dranesville Road, Herndon;

- ❖ **Community of Faith UMC Food Pantry** at 13224 Franklin Farm Road, Herndon;

- ❖ **Cornerstones**, receiving food at the 11484 Washington Plaza West, Reston, and

- ❖ **South Lakes High School PTSA Food Pantry**, will receive food from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church at 1133 Reston Ave, Herndon.

Betty Eidemiller, of the LINK charity on Scouting for Food: "LINK is doubling the number of families that we are serving this holiday season to accommodate the new clients that LINK has been serving during the pandemic. Food insufficiency in Herndon, Sterling, and Ashburn is great and LINK volunteers are working hard to provide, thanks to all the generosity that we see from the community."

Rev. Robert Vaughn, of the Community of Faith UMC Food Pantry on Scouting for Food: "Scouting for Food is an important link in providing food for families in our neighborhoods. Eighty-five percent of all the non-perishable items come from the annual collection - every can, box and bag make a difference in the lives of our clients. Some of our families receive their entire week's groceries from the food ministry." The number of families served by Community of Faith has grown by about 60% during the pandemic.

Roberta Gosling of the South Lakes High School Food Pantry on Scouting for Food: "Since COVID -19, the SLHS PTSA Food pantry has pivoted to a contact-free distribution system. We pack 20-25 pound bags of food and distribute that along with many other items to [each of] approximately 140 families each week at South Lakes High School. This number continues to grow every week. These groceries serve students and families in the SLHS Pyramid. Prior to the pandemic, we knew that approximately 30% of the students at SLHS were food insecure - that's approximately 730 students. Many have told us that these groceries and other products have been a life-saver for them."

Minnie Orozco of Cornerstones on Scouting for Food: "Scouting for food as well as other food drives are really important to Cornerstones food pantry - they help us provide food for our community who are in need and who cannot afford to buy food."

Last year, over 400 scouts and 300 adult leaders collected 38,978 pounds of food in the Powhatan District covering Great Falls, Herndon, Reston, Oakton, and Chantilly.

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'An Emotional Core that'll Resonate with People'

Fairfax High presents Harry Potter-themed play, 'Puffs.'

By BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax High's upcoming play, "Puffs," takes place in England during the exact, same, seven years Harry Potter attended Hogwarts. And similarly, it's about a trio of friends and how they come of age.

"The story follows the most unpopular house group, the Hufflepuffs," said Director Chris Whitney. "It shows how – just because you're not the main character – doesn't mean your story isn't important."

The curtain rises Thursday-Saturday, Nov. 11, 12, 13, at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$7, students; \$11, adults; at the door and via www.fxplayers.org.

The iconic Harry Potter characters – Harry, Hermione, Ron, Voldemort, etc. – are all in this show. But the audience also gets to see other people who attend the school react to Harry's achievements.

This comedy features a cast of 39 and crew of 15; and, said Whitney, "They've been amazingly hilarious. They make me laugh every day. After everything we've been through, last year, we're just trying to have fun. They're a really hard working group and, whenever there's been a setback, they've stepped up."

Whether attendees are Harry Potter fans, or not, he said everyone will get something out of this play because it's so "outrageously funny." But it's recommended for ages 13 and up because of language and adult content.

The costumes will be the traditional, Hogwarts outfits, but with a pop-culture twist. "At its core, there's a lot of heart to the story and characters, and the audience will feel empathy toward them," said Whitney. "Live theater is back at Fairfax High, and we're really excited to present our first, in-person, fall play in two years."

Senior Trevor Sloan portrays Oliver Rivers. "He's the archetypal nerd, but with a twist, when it turns out he's bad at magic," said Sloan. "He's used to excelling at academics; but at the wizard school, he's leagues behind the other kids. He's insecure – which builds during the play – until he comes into his own. He's nervous around people, especially girls, but eventually becomes more self-assured."

Calling his role fun and interesting, Sloan said its "fast-paced humor and lots of physicality is a joy for me. I see a certain amount of myself in him. I'm not always the most confident person in the room; and in this part, I get to take that to the extreme."

He said the audience will enjoy the show's humor and absurd, verbal word play. "They'll also like the relationships between the three, main characters, and how they grow and mature," said Sloan. "It's the classic, coming-of-age story, with the nerd, the edgy goth girl and Wayne, who's the audience's viewpoint, so he's relatable to people."

Playing Sally Perks is senior Sarah Zakreski. "She's a Puff, just happy to be at the school and included," said Zakreski. "She's spritely and spunky and does her own thing, and she's not particularly good at magic. She eventually becomes her own character and forms as a person."

She loves her role because "There's so much I can do with it. I get to run around casting spells and become more confident as a girl and a wizard. Sally's character traits are so unique that she gives me a lot of variety to work with."

Zakreski said this show has "a really good heart and, basically, is about being a good person and caring about people – and I think that's really special. It follows the story that almost everybody knows and loves. But even if you've not seen the Harry Potter movies or read the books, you can for sure enjoy it."

Senior Maddie Tyler portrays Megan Jones. "She's a Puff trying to find herself," said Tyler. "She's always idolized her mother and has some issues with her mother leaving her because she went to prison. She wants her mother to love her as much as she idolizes her. She's also spunky and confident that she's not a Puff when, in reality, she is. So it's a journey of acceptance for her. She sees Puffs as not useful, so she tries to change herself and be part of the other houses."

"It's a fun part because it gives me lots of elasticity to try different acting choices," continued Tyler. "I'm especially excited about my costumes because her style is kind of goth. I also like playing her because of my co-stars, Hank and Trevor, and the friendship our characters forge."

She said the show involves the audience and even has "Easter eggs," such as characters sitting in the audience. And she noted that the lighting, sound effects and music play a bigger part in this play than in others. "We have entrance



Year-Four Puffs cheering on their leader and star Puff during a challenge.



(From left) Hank Hawkins, Maddie Tyler and Trevor Sloan strike a pose with their magic wands.

songs for lots of our characters, plus some cartoonish sound effects," said Tyler. "And the lighting emphasizes plot points and character themes, plus changes in time and feeling, throughout the show. And it's so nice to work with people in person again and put on live theater, and the audience will enjoy our energy."

Playing Wayne Hopkins is junior Hank Hawkins. "He's self-centered, yet loyal to his friends," said Hawkins. "But he also gets wrapped up in his own ambitions and what he wants for his life. He wants to be chosen by fate to be special. He wants his lucky break, but it never comes – and that's the contrast between him and Harry, the boy

who succeeds. But when he learns that not everyone can be the leader – somebody has to be on the team – he learns to be a better friend."

Hawkins is excited about his role. "Every time I go on stage, I find something new about my character that I connect with," he said. "He's comedic, and his emotions are all over the place, and it's fun to be such a big part of the story."

He said audiences will be surprised at how much they'll relate to this show. "It has an emotional core that'll really resonate with people – especially if they've ever felt they're wasting away on the sidelines," explained Hawkins. "And they'll learn what happiness means and how they can find it in the little things."

Woodson High presents 'A Midautumn Night's Dream.'

By BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Featuring a cast and crew of 55, Woodson High puts its own twist on a Shakespeare classic with its presentation of "A Midautumn Night's Dream." And the school's new theater director, Chris Rushing, couldn't be prouder of his young thespians.

"The students are incredible," he said. "This is my first year teaching at Woodson, and the kids have blown me away. I'm particularly impressed by how they've weathered the past 18 months and come back with passion and energy. I picked comedies this year to celebrate joy and bring happiness and laughter to our community."

Show times are Saturday, Nov. 6, at 2 and 7 p.m.; Sunday, Nov. 7, at 6 p.m.; Friday, Nov. 12, at 7 p.m.; and Saturday, Nov. 13, at 2 and 7 p.m. Tickets, at the door and via <http://wtwdrama.org/tickets>, are on a pay-what-you-can basis, ranging from \$5-\$20.

Six VIP tickets to sit onstage during the play-within-the-play will also be sold; see the website for details. The show will be performed in an outdoor courtyard at the school, and guides will direct

attendees to it.

Set in a rural area and forest in Athens, Greece, the story involves fairies, love potions and mechanicals, who are creating a play for the royals. The duke wants his daughter, Hermia, to marry Demetrius. But Hermia and Lysander love each other, and Hermia's best friend, Helena, loves Demetrius.

Meanwhile, the fairy queen, Titania, and fairy king, Oberon, are fighting, which disturbs nature. Deciding to pull a prank on her, Oberon tells mischievous fairy Puck, to put a spell on Titania so she'll fall in love with the first thing she sees. He does, but also enchants both Lysander and Demetrius to fall in love with Helena. Chaos and hilarity ensue.

Junior Rachel Sper portrays Titania. "She's the strong, independent leader of the fairy kingdom," said Sper. "She's elegant and powerful – a serious spirit, not to be messed with – and very passionate."

"I like playing her because, as a fairy, she's an ethereal, mythical character, and it's fun to interpret her," continued Sper. "She uses her abilities to get her way, and I enjoy playing such a strong character who then becomes absolutely smitten and goofy."

Sper said everyone connected with this show wants it to be good, and the audience "will see each actor's intentions. It's definitely fun because there's so much ridiculousness – especially when a person named Bottom is turned into a donkey who spellbound Titania



Gus Abbruzzesi (Oberon) and Rachel Sper (in center) confront each other while (at far left) Cady Denk and Alyce Visioli (fairies Puck and Robin) and (on right) a group of Titania's fairies watch.

falls in love with."

Playing Hippolyta, a royal queen in the mortal world, is Ava Acosta. "Hippolyta and Hermia are in the same royal court, and she's motherly to Hermia and tries to advise her," said Acosta. "But she also has an inner conflict because her husband, Theseus, isn't a good guy. Their marriage was arranged, and she didn't want to marry him, but she has to keep her head high and carry on."

Acosta likes her role because, "During the play-within-the-play, Hippolyta and Theseus banter with each other while commenting on that play. And for me, that's the funniest part of the show."

Although the actors speak in Shakespearean language, Acosta said they do a great job of conveying what the lines mean. "It's a fun show, good for all ages," she

said. "And it's interesting because it switches back and forth between the mortal and fairy realms, with different costumes and backgrounds for each. The fairy realm is set in winter, and the mortal realm is in midautumn, and that makes it visually appealing to the audience."

Senior George Sullivan plays Bottom. "He's an actor, and very pretentious about having a big role in the play-within-the-play," said Sullivan. "He's also boastful, but that's to protect his insecurities. However, even though he thinks he's better than the other actors, he supports them and does have a heart."

Bottom's fun to play, said Sullivan, because of his personality. "He overacts everything, and I like his relationship with the other characters. At one point, he turns into a

donkey and develops comical, donkey mannerisms. And he also gets to break the fourth wall and interact with the audience."

Sullivan said the audience will enjoy seeing how much fun the actors are having playing their characters – which have many layers. "It's rewarding working with Mr. Rushing because he takes our ideas and improv bits into consideration," said Sullivan. "And people will also like the unique setting; we're performing outside in one of our courtyards."

Portraying Helena is freshman Charlotte Willmore. "She's desperate to win the love of Demetrius, who doesn't love her back," said Willmore. "She's bubbly, optimistic and hopeful, but doubts herself and needs more confidence. But she's determined and not giving up."

"I love playing Helena because

she's kind of crazy, at some points. I like characters that push me out of my comfort zone. She's loud and not afraid to speak her mind. Her personality's so different from mine that it's fun to step into someone else's shoes and really act. But we're both a bit of a hopeless romantic, so I can still relate to her."

She said the audience will also relate to the characters because "lots of people have been in similar situations, such as unrequited love and people who'd be in their everyday lives. It's also a really funny show. We've put a lot of work into giving the best performance, and I think the audience will really enjoy it."

Rushing said they're "playing with the themes of harvest and rebirth, so the set pieces will include hay bales, pumpkins, gourds and fall flowers. Titania represents fall, and Oberon, winter. The fairies will wear flowing costumes in fall and winter colors; the royals' and lovers' costumes will have a rustic, Americana, farmer-like feel; and the mechanicals will wear tattered, smudged, working clothes."

He said the play starts in a dark place, but then the characters grow and change to become better versions of themselves. And when Titania and Oberon make up, the seasons are set right. "It's a family-friendly show with comedy for everyone, from wordplay to slapstick," said Rushing. "My main goal is to share the joy the actors are bringing with our whole community."

'We're Excited to Contribute to this Community'

New GreenDrop location at University Mall in Fairfax.

By BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

GreenDrop converts donated items into critical dollars for three charitable organizations, and there's now a GreenDrop at University Mall in Fairfax. It's behind the Giant Foods, across from McAlister's Deli.

It's the 36th location in the Mid-Atlantic and recently held its official ribbon cutting. "We're excited to be here and contribute to this already flourishing community," said GreenDrop General Manager Matt Lomberg. "GreenDrop enables us to keep items out of the landfill and support our charitable partners."

Tax-deductible donations of lightly used clothing and household items are collected by GreenDrop on behalf of the American Red Cross, Military

Order of the Purple Heart Service Foundation, and the National Federation of the Blind. The charities then sell these items to 2nd Ave Thrift Superstores and similar outfits to raise money for their own programs.

The American Red Cross offers care to people in crises, in the U.S. and throughout the world. The Military Order of the Purple Heart Service Foundation provides resources and support for veterans and their families. And the National Federation of the Blind lobbies for resources, while helping blind individuals overcome obstacles and challenges.

In 2019, charity proceeds from the sale of the donated goods to the thrift stores exceeded \$3.7 million. GreenDrop accepts clothes, shoes, blankets and bedding, as well as tools, collectibles, kitchenware, toys, small appliances, electronics, books, musical instruments, sporting goods and small items of furni-

ture.

Things to be donated should be packed in large, plastic bags or sealed boxes; any fragile items should be marked as such. The attendant on site will remove them from the donor's vehicle and email the contributor a tax receipt for his or her selected charity.

At the ribbon cutting, Jennifer Rose, executive director of the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, told Lomberg and various GreenDrop personnel there for the ceremony, "We're excited to be here with you. And you've got GMU, right across the street."

Similarly, Supervisor James Walkinshaw (D-Braddock) said, "We're very happy to have you in the Braddock District. I think you'll find that people here love to contribute, support charities and do it in a clean way."

Also there was Erwin Stierle, executive director for the Loudoun/Prince William chapter of the Amer-



Supervisor James Walkinshaw (D-Braddock) is about to cut the ribbon for the new GreenDrop at University Mall. To his right are GreenDrop's Matt Lomberg, Jennifer Rose and Donna Stoll of the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, and Erwin Stierle (gray shirt) of the American Red Cross.

ican Red Cross. "It's great to be part of this GreenDrop family," he said. "We're excited to continue this partnership."

Lomberg said Fairfax was "an obvious choice" for GreenDrop's newest location because "It's a wonderful community. There's a need for people to declutter and clean out their homes, and we can provide

that with great customer service. We're growing and really focusing on the Northern Virginia area, which is underserved."

"We already do pickup here, but we wanted to offer a drop-off option for people's convenience," he continued. "Fairfax has a great population in a nice area, and we want to be part of it and contribute to it."

Donations are accepted at this site, seven days a week, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. All items require approval from

the site attendant prior to acceptance. After-hour drop-offs are not allowed. To schedule a pickup, instead, go to www.gogreendrop.com or call 1-888-944-3767.



Fairfax Releaf's Taylor Beach demonstrates correct tree planting for best success.



Volunteer Colin Wilson reads a poem about oaks to celebrate the trees start in their new home.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Tree Ceremony Adds Native Seedlings

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

The Laurel Hill Park Volunteer Team planted southern red oak seedlings (*Quercus falcata*) on Oct. 30 as part of the Celebration of Trees campaign organized by Plant NoVA Natives. The event, one of many planned across the area this Fall, is part of a five-year campaign to preserve native trees and see more planted in Northern Virginia.

The planting at the historic Barrett House replaced three mature oaks lost last year after a period of several year's decline. The seedlings will grow to medium sized trees, providing shade, with a large root system for watershed protection, and with a beautiful red leaf color in late summer and the Fall, from which the trees get their name. All oak species provide high food value and shelter for wildlife, including insects, mammals, rodents, birds and deer. This particular oak is the larva host for the Banded hairstreak and White hairstreak butterflies.

In coordination with Fairfax County's Natural Resources Branch of the Park Authority, additional seedlings were planted in the park's reforestation area. The reforestation project, under the management of ecologist Darko Veljkovic, will include the planting of hundreds of native trees of various species this December, to reclaim forest habitat from invasive shrubs and vines. The Laurel Hill Park Volunteer Team's planting of



Ecologist, and reforestation project manager, Darko Veljkovic, shows how to protect this tree species, enjoyed by deer, from predation.

six southern red oak seedlings was the symbolic start of that reforestation effort.

Fairfax Releaf, an independent non-profit organization promoting the planting and preservation of

native trees, provided the seedlings for the Laurel Hill planting. The organization makes trees available to Virginia residents and businesses to "lessen the impact of development on the environment" in our



Volunteers Emily Chen and Sue Lee Park team up to plant southern red oak seedlings, among the first in the area designated for reforestation.

fast growing county. (fairfaxreleaf.com) A variety of tree species are available, most of which are grown at the Virginia Dept. of Forestry nursery in Augusta County. The state's nursery grows hardwood

and pine trees from donated acorns and seeds gathered by volunteers around the state. The Laurel Hill volunteer team effort brought the process full circle, from acorn donation to tree planting.

New Director of Special Events at Workhouse

Scott Rumberger has been appointed as the Director of Special Events & Rentals for the Workhouse Arts Foundation. He is an experienced special events related professional and he will begin his new role on Nov. 16, 2021.

Rumberger has over 10 years of experience in several high-profile Marriott locations: Wardman Park, Marquis, International Headquarters, and most recently, the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree (Dramatic Arts) from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and has successfully completed the Foundation of Leadership program associated with the Marriott International Training Center.

Leon Scioscia, President / CEO of the Workhouse Arts Foundation, said: "Rumberger ... brings the right mixture of skills and creativity to grow our special events and rentals business model in new and exciting ways."

His experience in developing,



Scott Rumberger

and executing, large scale events, in his previous positions, will enable him to hit the ground running and build upon the foundations already established." The Workhouse Arts Center is a special location for weddings, mitzvahs, birthday parties, corporate events, milestone family celebrations, drive-in movies, cross county runs, concerts or retreats. The Workhouse Arts Center offers a welcoming and helpful staff, adaptable spaces, and preferred catering partners for small or large events.

"Bringing people together to celebrate, collaborate, or congregate is something I take great pride in," Rumberger said. "The ability to provide this to a community I have called home for over 30 years is an amazing opportunity."

Chief Puts Brakes on Pursuits

FROM PAGE 6

trailer through the red light at the intersection. The truck collided with the minivan, and the impact ejected Amran from the vehicle. She went through a window and

landed on the road.

Amran survived but with ongoing disabilities. Her family moved out of the area because it was too painful to see the location of the crash, her father said.

Needed: Tasers and Deescalation

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

The Board of Supervisors thought every officer in the police department would carry a Taser (electronic control weapon or ECW) after the program was initiated.

The Board of Supervisors also thought that every officer was going to be trained in de-escalation techniques (crisis intervention or CIT) to respond to crisis situations. Only about 34 percent of Fairfax County officers have received CIT training.

And currently, the police and Community Services Board have implemented a co-responder pilot program to ensure that a crisis intervention specialist assists police in responding to situations that involve mental health or behavioral crisis.

But on July 19, 2021, police entered a group home in Springfield with guns drawn through the back door.

They were called to the house
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because of a 911 call that a resident was "being violent, throwing things in her room, running up and down the house, threatening to kill staff and herself," according to police reports.

"This group home in Springfield is known to the Fairfax County Police Department," said Police Chief Kevin Davis at a briefing just after the incident. Police have responded to other 911 calls there. He described the scene the officers entered as "chaotic."

"They were confronted and advanced upon by a woman with a large knife," Davis said.

Police shouted commands for the woman, who was holding a Cuisinart knife, to "drop it" and "stop."

The woman appeared to be further provoked by the officers yelling at her. She screamed, "I will not stop." She took steps from the kitchen sink where she had been standing toward the two officers and yelled at them, "I will stab you."

SEE TASERS, PAGE 15

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Virginia Opera's 'La Bohème: Rudolfo Remembers'

Be swept away by music and passion at Center for the Arts.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION



COURTESY VIRGINIA OPERA COMPANY

Keturah Stickann, Director,
Virginia Opera's "La Bohème"

The memory driven plot for "La Bohème: Rudolfo Remembers" follows a band of passionate young Parisians seeking higher aspirations than material wealth through the pursuit of their art. And the memory of a passionate romance as a once-starving artist who has found success still thinks about his mis-spent younger days and the time a young woman knocked on his door. And with that knock, they quickly fell in love. But, the course of that feverish love is not an easy one.

With its intermission-less length of about 90 minutes, with trimmed production elements and an adjusted cast size, Puccini's emotionally driven music propels "La



COURTESY VIRGINIA OPERA COMPANY

Adam Turner, Artistic Director,
Virginia Opera

Bohème: Rudolfo Remembers" as a timeless romance with arias and duets. The opera features the award winning and Virginia Opera veteran Matt Vickers as Rodolfo with Raquel González (Mimi), Luis Orozco (Marcello), Marlen Nahhas (Musetta), Eric J. McConnell (Colline), Nicholas Martorano (Schaunard) and Ricardo Lugo (Alcindoro). The Virginia Symphony provides the music.

For "La Bohème: Rudolfo Remembers" stage director Keturah Stickann, since the pandemic, "I imagine many of us have been spending a lot of time floating around in our own memories: the memory of being in a certain restaurant, the memory of a friend's hug, of the pre-pandemic world before

Where and When

Virginia Opera Company presents "La Bohème: Rudolfo Remembers" at Concert Hall, Center for the Arts, 4400 University Ave, Fairfax, VA. 22030.

Performances: Sat, Nov 13 at 8 p.m. and Sun, Nov 14, 2021 at 2 p.m.

Tickets: Call 703-993-2787 or visit www.cfa.gmu.edu. Tickets are: \$110, \$70, \$40 with half-price for youth through Grade 12. Sung in Italian with English Surtitles.

It was this thought, along with Covid protocols in place at the time, that gave rise to my concept for a streamlined "Bohème."

Virginia Opera's "La Bohème: Rudolfo Remembers;" let yourself be pulled into its aches for love, whether you have seen it before or this will be a first. Its story will resonate with characters struggling "with the universal, timeless pains of being human," said Stickann. And, of course, Puccini's timeless, passionate music.

Health Note: Center for the Arts health and safety guidelines include that attendees at indoor events at the venue must present proof of vaccination against COVID-19 or show a negative COVID-19 test result. Face coverings are required indoors for patrons. Details at www.cfa.gmu.edu

CALENDAR

NOW THRU NOV. 6

Workhouse Haunt. 7-11 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. This year's Workhouse Haunt immerses guests through a highly-themed walk-through experience, as creepy characters deliver contactless scares in multiple scenes. Guests will travel in small groups for a frightening 30-minute experience that brings them next to the site's abandoned, historic buildings and into the dark woods where they will encounter terrifying characters and sights that are not for the faint of heart. Cost is \$25. Occurs Friday, Saturday, and Sunday each weekend from Oct. 3 through Nov. 6. Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/workhouse-events/2021-workhouse-haunt-the-collection-2/>

NOW THRU NOV. 7

"Wicked." Open Wednesday thru Sunday 11 - 7 p.m. At 2905 District Ave. #105, Fairfax. There's a "Wicked" new exhibit at Mosaic District, but wicked in a good way. In today's informal slang, the word "wicked" can mean excellent or even awesome. With Halloween in mind, it is in that spirit that the Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic is presenting its newest show titled "Wicked." Gallery artists will demonstrate the theme in a variety of mediums, including painting, fine art photography, exquisite jewelry, fabric art, printmaking, ceramics and sculpture. The Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic is a satellite



Celebrate the Revolutionary War at Gunston Hall on Saturday, Nov. 6, 2021.

gallery sponsored by the Torpedo Factory Artists' Association.

THURSDAY/NOV. 4

Picture a Scientist. 8:45-9:30 p.m. Online. 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. George Mason University's Visiting Filmmakers Series is proud to present a special screening of the Netflix documentary, *Picture a Scientist*, followed by a discussion with the film's directors, Ian Cheney and Sharon Shattuck.

Picture A Scientist powerfully chronicles the groundswell of researchers who are writing a new chapter for women scientists. They recall their own experiences in the sciences, ranging from brutal harassment to years of subtle slights. The film also offers perspectives on how to make science itself more diverse, equitable, and open to all. To learn more and to register for the event, visit: <https://vfs.gmu.edu/events/11869>

THURSDAY/NOV. 4

Author Event. 12-1 p.m. Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask. In matter-of-fact responses to over 120 questions, both thoughtful and outrageous, modern and historical, Ojibwe scholar and cultural preservationist Anton Treuer gives a frank, funny, and sometimes personal tour of what's up with Indians, anyway. Visit the website: <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/8428259?hs=a>

SATURDAY/NOV. 6

Revolutionary War. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. Discover George Mason's impact on the Revolutionary War during this family-oriented event. All Ages. Visit the website: www.gunstonhall.org

SATURDAY/NOV. 6

Mason Choirs Fall Concert. 4 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts. George Mason University choirs are under the direction of Dr. Lisa Billingham. The choral ensembles perform a wide variety of music each semester ranging from classical styles to multi-cultural works and popular music. The Fall Choral Festival will feature clinics in the morning and performances in the afternoon.

SUNDAY/NOV. 7

Jerusalem Quartet. 4 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Featuring Pinchas Zukerman, violin/viola and Amanda Forsyth, cello. Grammy Award-winning conductor, violinist, and violist Pinchas Zukerman, and Canadian Juno Award-winning cellist Amanda Forsyth join forces with the Jerusalem Quartet for a trio of radiant

Romantic-era works by Bruckner, Dvořák, and Brahms. Cost is \$60, \$51, \$36, half-price for youth through Grade 12. Bruckner: Adagio from String Quintet in F major. Dvořák: Sextet for Strings in A major, Op. 48. Brahms: Sextet for Strings in B-flat major, Op. 18

MONDAY/NOV. 8

2nd Annual Duck Race. 10:30-11 a.m. At Lake Accotink Park, 7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield. Watch the race via Facebook as Lake Accotink is invaded by rubber ducks of all kinds. 1st Place winners in each category will receive an award. For a link to sponsor your duck text DUCKRACE to 243725 or visit us online at www.braininjurysvcs.org/bisduckrace

THURSDAY/NOV. 11

Flag Retirement Ceremony. 7:30-8:30 p.m. at Holy Spirit School Gym, 8800 Braddock Road, Annandale. The Knights of Columbus Assembly #2996 invite everyone to attend a special patriotic evening where we will properly retire several hundred U.S. Flags. All are invited to attend and participate in this solemn occasion where U.S. and state flags are retired by incineration while patriotic music is performed by the West Point Alumni Glee Club. The ceremony is an opportunity for the members of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and other scouting organizations to learn about the U.S. flag and celebrate those who have defended it in times of peace and war.

Customers Make Fairfax Funky Flea a Success

The recent opening day and ribbon cutting for the Fairfax Funky Flea was a big success.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



From left, Becky Howick, associate director of GMU's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and GMU students Sydnee Wright, Vinati Konda, Ha Le and Melis Piroglu selling coffee and tea at the flea market.



Del. David Bulova (D-37th) (in jacket), Fairfax City Councilmember Tom Ross (blue shirt) and Councilmember Janice Miller (with scissors) participate in the Funky Flea ribbon cutting.



Tara Griffin selling everything from stuffed animals to kimonos.



Shoppers browse for bargains at this vendor's booth.



The Funky Flea had a good customer turnout on a sunny day.

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The Virginia Rent Relief Program may be able to help.

Virginia is offering relief for renters who are having trouble paying rent and related fees. A local nonprofit will help renters one-on-one apply for the Virginia Rent Relief Program to receive the help they need.

If you or someone you know is in need of rent assistance call:

877-315-1200

For eligibility, visit: HOMEofVA.org/RRPinfo



Housing Opportunities Made Equal conducts the outreach and engagement initiative for the Virginia Rent Relief Program to provide one-on-one application assistance.

The Virginia Rent Relief Program is administered through the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.

Residents in Fairfax and Chesterfield counties should reach out to their counties' programs.

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NEWS

Reduced Metrorail Service through Nov. 15

Riders on the Blue and Yellow Line will feel the pinch.

By MIKE SALMON
 THE CONNECTION

Metrorail service will remain at the current reduced levels through at least Nov. 15 as Metro continues to work with the Washington Metrorail Safety Commission on a plan to get 7000-series railcars safely back into service.

Trains will continue operating every 15-20 minutes on the Red Line and every 30-40 minutes on all other lines. Silver Line service will continue to operate between Wiehle-Reston East and Federal Center SW only. Customers are encouraged, where it makes sense for them, to use Metrobus service as an alternative.

To make service more frequent and reduce crowding at certain times, Metro is working to grow the number of trains available for daily service from 31 trains to 50. That work entails accessing additional 2000, 3000 and 6000-series railcars and ensuring they are safe for service.

Customers are encouraged to use Metro's trip planning tools for schedule information. Metro's Trip Planner <https://www.wmata.com/schedules/trip-planner/index.cfm> is updated with the current schedule, and Metro's Live Train Map <https://gis.wmata.com/metrotrain/index.html> provides real-time information on where trains are throughout the system allowing customers to better prepare for their commute. Riders should allow additional travel time as a result of these schedule changes.

Information on service and updates will be communicated to customers through MetroAlerts text or email messages, on Twitter @MetrorailInfo and through the Status and Alerts page at wmata.com.

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Overall Crime Down: But Overdoses, Mental Health Crises on the Rise

By KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Crime is notably down in Fairfax County, even though calls mental health crises are on the rise.

Suspects in nearly a third of Fairfax County's 19 homicides this year were sons in their late teens or twenties in mental health crisis, killing their mothers, fathers, or in one case, a sister.

"That's a startling startling statistic," said Police Chief Kevin Davis, in his 100-Day Plan Update to the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, Oct. 26 in its Public Safety Committee meeting.

Hunter Mill Supervisor Walter Alcorn noted the county police department's co-responder pilot program with the county to address

"This is becoming a bigger issue," said Alcorn.

"I want thank you chief for working with [Fairfax County Community Service Board] and others," said Alcorn, "and looking to see where we can do a better job of service to folks that are having mental health and behavioral crises."

See <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/oct/27/alternatives-police-intervention/>

Suicide prevention calls and mental health crises are "dramatically on the rise,"

according to Davis, There were six more carjackings and an increase of 24 non-fatal overdoses compared to last year, Davis said. He described police and Fire and Rescue responding to one scene where they had to administer NARCAN to "all six of those individuals in what was a chaotic chaotic scene." That resulted in two fatalities.

Overall, crime is down and "we have 3,614 fewer overall crime victims in Fairfax County," said Davis. "So what's down? Robberies, burglaries, auto-theft, assault and domestic assault, bias incidents, fatal crashes, fatal pedestrian crashes, fatal overdoses are slightly down."

Lee Supervisor Rodney Lusk chairs the Board's Public Safety Committee.

"I have heard and I have seen so many posts that crime is out of hand in Fairfax County that we are in a desperate situation. Clearly the numbers don't prove that out, we're in the exact opposite situation," said Lusk. "I hope that people are listening and can hear this. We have lower crime in Fairfax County than virtually any of our neighboring jurisdictions. When we talk about Northern Virginia as a whole, the crime statistics for the region are significantly different than the crime statistics here in Fairfax County. Things are going a lot better here than in other places."

Chairman Jeff McKay said, "We owe it to our officers to report these successes, too."

Needed: Tasers and Deescalation

FROM PAGE 11

NEITHER OFFICER was carrying a Taser. The group home resident was shot in the abdomen. She was in critical condition but survived.

See body camera footage, just over three minutes long, here <https://youtu.be/t0J3uDm8vDI>

During the Board of Supervisors' Public Safety Committee meeting on Oct. 26, 2021, Davis said there's been a lot of discussion about Tasers (ECWs) since the shooting in Springfield.

Chairman Jeff McKay asked Davis why all police officers are not carrying a Taser.

"For those of us who were on the Board when the Taser program was approved, we believed that every officer would be issued a taser," said McKay. "Can you help us understand what the challenge might be with getting a taser in the hand of every officer? Some have reasonably asked why that is not an instrument that is issued to everyone who wears a uniform."

Every 2nd lieutenant and below as well as police detectives on the street and captains on duty will be "personally issued a Taser," said Police Chief Kevin Davis. "So there will be no ifs and or buts about whether one is available."

Davis said the department is currently procuring 350 new Tasers.

"You can imagine every couple of years ... they come out with a new model and as the years go by the replacement parts for the older models become impossible or too expensive to obtain so we're in the process now of updating all of the tasers," said Davis.

"It would just be a matter of looking at the

finances and what it would take to outfit the entire police department but we can certainly explore that," said Davis.

"That would be helpful," said McKay.

Davis said police are also reviewing the department's Critical Incident Release Policy. "Now that we have body worn cameras, we need to go back and revise our critical incident release policy to reflect the new realities of body worn cameras and community expectations about the release of body cam footage."

Police released the body cam footage a week and a half after the non-fatal shooting at the group home, but don't appear to have released the name of the officer who fired the shot.

Officers immediately assisted the woman, after handcuffing her, and one of the officers was able to help the critically wounded woman calm down and breathe as they rendered aid.

"It hurts," she said. "I know it hurts," the officer reassured her, as he explained that he needed to stop the bleeding and was applying pressure to the gunshot wound.

Officers were not charged with criminal conduct and their names were not released in Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano's report.

"The officer in question was reasonable in fearing that the resident intended to either kill him, or cause him serious bodily injury, and it was therefore legally permissible for him to use the level of force used to repel the assault. Accordingly, I decline to bring any criminal charge against the officer," said Commonwealth's Attorney Steve Descano.

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Diffusing But Still Losing



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

And not too proud or embarrassed to admit it. Although it's hardly an AA-type situation where I'm also powerless against its pull, I am nonetheless acknowledging my weakness. With five cats living exclusively indoors - under one roof in approximately 1700 square feet, the ruckus is non stop. Trying to integrate into an animal-family unit an older pair of siblings, a single female and a new pair of siblings, has not been easy. Granted, we haven't exactly followed the presumptive advice cat whisperer Jackson Galaxy might have recommended: slowly introducing and acquainting the various cats to one another and into shared areas of the house. Unfortunately, we're way past being able to undo any inadvertent psychological animal trauma we may have caused. Though our house remains standing with relatively minor impact, there does appear to be a path forward to possibly upend the "territorializing" that goes on when new cats are added to a household where older cats have already taken up residence - and staked their claims. The answer is a product called "Feliway." Or so I hope, and have been led to believe - by my wife, Dina.

"Feliway" is a retail product we are now buying online from Chewys, the online pet superstore. It is similar in design and application to a plug-in room freshener. There's a part which plugs into an electrical socket: the diffuser, and another part, a liquid which is inserted into the diffuser. This heated up liquid is supposed to release a sort of calming vibe throughout the house and promote peace among the warring cat factions. Moreover, it's supposed to prevent fighting, staring, posturing and chasing. So far, three-plus months or so into it, the results are mixed. The cat mood in the house seems occasionally tranquil with cats coexisting and tolerating. Though nobody is making new friends, there does seem to be some allowances from some cats for other cats to sometimes occupy similar/familiar spaces. And it's only apparent to us that this is happening when it's not happening. And by that I mean, when our supply of diffuser refills run out - and we don't immediately replace them with new. Then there seems to be an upset/upheaval of sorts among the various cat groups. The cat groups being Andrew and Sloane, the oldest siblings and longest living in the house; Twinkle, the middle cat and not part of a pair; and the newest additions, siblings Louie and Mia. The siblings get along with one another perfectly well, but when any other group appears, aside from feeding time (we feed the three groups in separate rooms in an attempt to keep the peace) when the fighting is minimal, chaos usually ensues. And since diplomacy does not work, Dina and I are forever reacting to the sound of a cat screaming, locating it and running off to protect/prevent any unnecessary fistcuffs (invoking one of my fathers' expressions from my youth). Since we're reacting, we're usually too late, but we do what little we can and try to comfort whomever seems the most distressed.

As a consequence, I am constantly on the phone with Chewy buying diffusers and diffuser refills, and/or checking the fluid levels of the in-home diffuser refills trying to determine how much time/relative peace we may have until war breaks out. It seems unlikely that we'll have enough diffusers in the house, or have enough refills in inventory, to maintain the calm. Quite frankly, we're running out of electrical outlets in which to plug in the diffusers. Our house is over 250-years old and aside from limited closet space, there are also minimal electrical outlets. Throw in the number of outlets which are already being used for non-Feliway uses: lamps, television, stereo, miscellaneous other electrical appliances, and then consider that some of the outlets are old and tired and no longer working and you have a recipe for disaster, at least as far as living in a house with five cats - most of whom don't get along, is concerned. Trying to regulate the peace becomes next to impossible. Feliway may not be the answer, but I'm addicted nonetheless. Their products are all I think about; morning, afternoon and evening.

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



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