

Ready to enjoy their first Vienna Halloween Parade and hoping to make it their annual tradition, Dan Giacomangeli and his wife, Olivia Yancey, their son, Brayden, 1, and dog, Gus.

## 75th Vienna Halloween Parade

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Voters  
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In McLean, from left, Ronnie Raju, Heidi Appel, and Jennifer Adeli (former candidate) are the Democrat volunteers. Raju: "I voted early because I wanted to be sure to get it in, and I voted the straight Democratic ticket." Appel: "I voted early. We are in the process of moving to Arlington. I knew it would be too close to re-register." Adeli: "I always work Election Day, sunrise to sundown. I voted early last Saturday."



People line up to vote in Vienna.



From left, Marcia Close and Jane Yue in McLean: Close. "I early voted and voted straight Republican; always do. I'll be here all day, and they wanted us to vote early. But I wanted to vote today because it just feels right."

## Snapshot of Election Day Morning, 2021

### Insight from voting and volunteering neighbors.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
<2B>THE CONNECTION

On Nov. 3, voters from across Fairfax County turned out for the off-year General Election, which took place in the absence of a presidential or midterm election. Virginia is one of only two states in the country, New Jersey being the other, that holds gubernatorial and state office elections during a non-presidential year. The rest of the nation may be watching how Virginia and New Jersey vote to foreshadow the possible outcome of the 2024 presidential election.

Here are some snapshots and viewpoints from these precincts. Others are covered in different Connection newspapers.

Reston-Precinct: 222 Reston # 3, polling place: Reston Community Center-Lake Anne, 1609-A Washington Plaza, Reston, in the Hunter Mill District

Great Falls-Precinct: 306 Great Falls, polling place: Great Falls Elementary School, 701 Walker Road, Great Falls, in the Dranesville District

McLean-Precinct: 304 Cooper, polling place: Cooper Middle School, 977 Balls Hill Road, McLean, in the Dranesville District

Vienna-Precinct: 214 Vienna #2, polling

place Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna, in the Hunter Mill District and

Herndon-Precinct: 320 Herndon #2, Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Avenue, Herndon, in the Dranesville District.

Comments from voters and others at the polling places said that the governor and other state office races were their primary reasons for voting in the off-year election. They also shared why they voted early or voted on Election Day, some telling how they cast their ballots and why.

The chief election officers at the named Reston, Great Falls, McLean, Vienna, and Herndon polling places reported their voting tallies, time-stamped 11:30 a.m. on Election

Day. McLean-Vienna, Reston-Herndon and Great Falls Connections all go to press before the polls close on Election Day. For more, see [www.ConnectionNewspapers.com](http://www.ConnectionNewspapers.com)

Chief Election Officer Geoff Emmer, precinct 306 Great Falls, reported 347 ballots cast by 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday.

Chief Election Officer Elizabeth Schreffler, precinct 222 Reston #3, reported 385 ballots cast by 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday.

Chief Election Officer Lori Krause, precinct 214, Vienna #2, reported 692 ballots cast by 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday.

Chief Election Officer Steve Wales, precinct 320 Herndon # 2 reported 521 ballots cast and one provisional ballot by 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday.



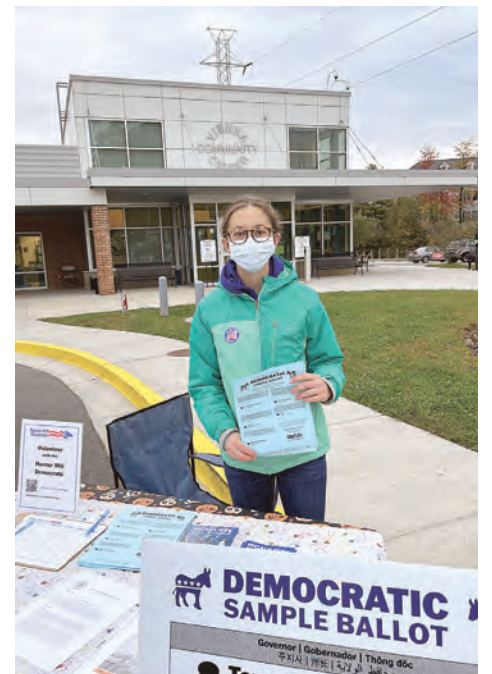
Marykay Ruwe of Vienna. "Forty years I've volunteered because I believe in democracy. I'm going to vote later today and bring my husband."



Noah Flaxman of McLean cycled to the polling place on his way to work and cast his ballot.



Lauren Staadecker of Vienna gets some help from her son, Ari, 5, a future voter. Asked why she chose to vote on Election Day and not early, she said, "I have no idea; I have kids."



Gretchen Schmitt, 13, of Vienna. "I'm here for service hours, and so people can know who they are voting for."



# 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 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.”

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 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.”

SEE BODY-CAM, PAGE 11

# 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.



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.

“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

“We work on addressing institutional racism and 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.

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.



# 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."

**"We have 3,614 fewer overall crime victims in Fairfax County."**  
— Police Chief Kevin Davis

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# HAPPY HALLOWEEN



Ready to enjoy their first Vienna Halloween Parade and hoping to make it their annual tradition, Dan Giacomangeli and his wife, Olivia Yancey, their son, Brayden, 1, and dog, Gus.



Fairfax County Police Motor Squad



Title Sponsor: Virginia Tire & Auto



Northern Virginia Firefighters' Emerald Society Pipe Band

## 2021 Vienna Halloween Parade

PHOTOS BY  
MERCIA HOBSON/  
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

### Annual tradition returns for 75th Annual celebration.

MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

On Wednesday, Oct. 27, the 75th Annual Vienna Halloween Parade returned in its entirety, unlike last year's limited "Wave Parade," due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Town of Vienna Parks and Recreation and the Vienna Business Association coordinated, the hour-and-a-half-long parade featured 64 floats and other forms of entertainment marching down Maple Avenue, from Branch Road to Center Street.

The lineup included the Vienna Police Department, Town Council, local and regional politicians, businesses, schools, Northern Virginia Firefighters' Emerald Society Pipe Band, children in costume and more. "The Roaring Twenties" served as the theme for this year's procession.

Along the half-mile parade route, people crowded in rows five and six deep, shoulder to shoulder, many

dressed in costumes, to watch the parade. Spectators set up their viewing spaces with blankets, chairs, and grab-and-go dinners purchased from local restaurants, as they settled in for an evening of small-town fun. No vendors were allowed at the Halloween Parade.

The Adams and Kapoor families of Vienna were among the first to arrive. According to Christie Adams, this was their first year. Veteran parade goer Emily Kapoor said, "I expect it to be at least as good as 2019, if not better." The Cerney and Geesaman families of Vienna set up their viewing area a short distance down the sidewalk. Sawyer Cerney, 3, said that she came to try out her cat costume.

Organizing a Halloween parade for the enjoyment of local children and their families has been an annual tradition in Vienna since 1946. This year, Rustic Love Vienna <https://rusticlove.org/> and the Vienna VA Foodies served as Grand Marshals. Virginia Tire & Auto served as the event's title sponsor.



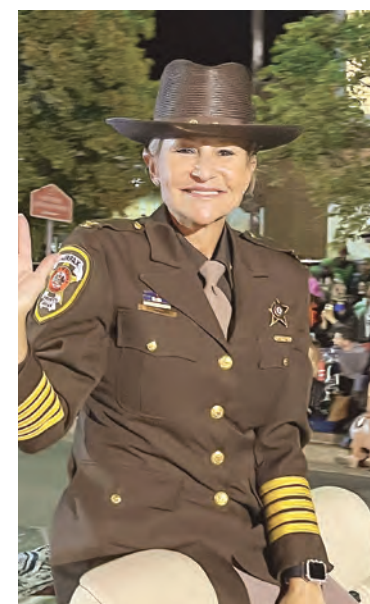
At the judging stand, (from left) David and Carey Sienicki with Bill and Kathy Georgen



One of the Grand Marshals of the parade, Rustic Love



Town of Vienna's Mayor Linda Colbert (second from left), Town Council, and Town Manager.



Sheriff Stacey Kincaid, Fairfax County Sheriff's Office



2021 Vienna Halloween Parade spectators



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# NVTA Looks at Post-Pandemic Transportation

Survey results tabulated as part of 'TransAction,' plan, with biking and walking in the forefront.

PHOTO BY ERICA HAWKSWORTH, NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

The pandemic has impacted life as we know it, so the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority reached out recently to find out how transportation habits will adapt for people in the Northern Virginia area. This survey was part of a plan they are developing called "TransAction," a look at the near-future transportation priorities for the evolving transportation network.

There were 2,318 responses to the survey divided between 2,164 responses in English, 89 in Korean and 65 in Spanish. According to NVTA. About a third of respondents anticipate changing their post-pandemic travel habits compared to pre-pandemic. Transportation priorities were considered, and transit was lower on the list of preferred routes than it had been in the past.

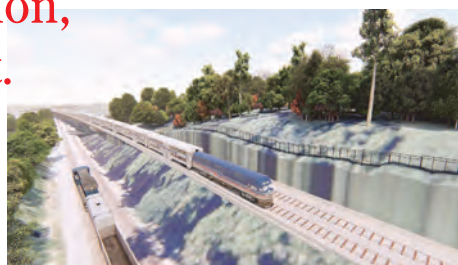
People would be more likely to use transit if it got them to their destination faster (44 percent); if there was more transit near their home and/or work (36 percent); and if it provided a more predictable travel time (28 percent). Twelve percent of respondents

reported they were not interested in trying transit.

The respondents laid out their transportation priorities starting with the number one priority of "more transit, walking, biking options," the survey said. The second and third most commonly selected priorities were "reduce traffic congestion" and "improve travel time predictability."

Monica Backmon, CEO of Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, led a discussion on Wednesday, Oct. 20, focusing on the survey results. As it is with most transportation objectives, funding is a big factor. "We are waiting for some of the revenue forecasts that are coming out of the Commonwealth," she said.

One thing NVTA is doing for the rail commuting aspect is the Franconia-Springfield Passenger Rail Bypass. The Franconia-Springfield Passenger Rail Bypass Project is a dedicated passenger rail bridge that will stretch for nearly one mile across the Franconia, eastern-Springfield area. It will have a maximum height of 36.6 feet, and will include one new track with capacity for a second track in the future, NVTA said. This bridge will reduce the number of rail



This artist rendering of the Franconia-Springfield Passenger Rail Bypass, which is aimed at rail delays through the Springfield area.

delays particularly for the VRE trains. When approved, construction will start in FY2026. NVTA will \$22.95 million to this effort.

## Metrorail Cars

In mid-October, the Metrorail system took a hit when there was a derailment of a train using the Series 7000 cars, causing rail commuters longer wait times, and many to seek other commuting options for a few days while the problem was investigated.

Between Oct. 18-25, WMATA advised customers to anticipate trains every 15-20 minutes on the Red Line and every 30-40 minutes on all other lines to account for any unplanned disruptions. Silver Line trains will operate between Wiehle-Reston East and Federal Center SW only. There is cur-



Monica Backmon of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, speaking during the recent W&OD Trail ribbon-cutting event in the City of Falls Church. Biking had high ratings in the recent NVTA survey.

rently no capacity to fill unforeseen gaps, which will result in longer wait times. Crews are working as quickly as possible to put more trains into service, WMATA said.

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# CALENDAR

## NOW THRU NOV. 7

A Disco Musical Comedy - Disaster. At NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. By Seth Rudetsky and Jack Plotnick. Concept created by Seth Rudetsky and Drew Geraci. Additional material by Drew Geraci. Directed by Evan Hoffmann. Choreography by Ashleigh King. Music Direction by Elisa Rosman. Visit [www.nextstoptheatre.org](http://www.nextstoptheatre.org).

## NOW THRU JAN. 2, 2022

LuminoCity Festival. 6-9 p.m. At Roer's Zoofari, 1228 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna. The LuminoCity Festival, a one-of-a-kind, immersive light display experience, will be a festive experience for guests of all ages. Be ready to enter a world straight out of your wildest imaginations as you step into an unforgettable spectacular night of lights. The festival includes African, Asian, Arid, and Ancient-themed exhibits of spectacularly lit art displays set up in the zoo's walk-through area. Visit the website: [www.roerszoofari.com](http://www.roerszoofari.com).

## NOW THRU NOV. 7

The Turn of the Screw. At NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Adapted by Jeffrey Hatcher from the story by Henry James, this classic ghost story depicts the trials of a young governess, haunted by ghosts while caring for two orphaned children on a remote estate in the English countryside. This innovative adaptation is a spine-tingling, tour de force for two actors and will be directed by Christopher Richardson. Visit [www.nextstoptheatre.org](http://www.nextstoptheatre.org).

## NOW THRU NOV. 28

Artworks by David Alexander. At the Jo Ann Rose Gallery, 1609-A Washington Plaza N, Reston. "In Between: Phantom Algorithms Joining Worlds" artworks by David Alexander use the totem motif to bridge the digital, physical and spiritual worlds. Nov. 1 through 28 2021. Call 703-476-4500. Visit <https://enoarts.com/press>

## NOV. 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13

Sound of Music. 7:30 p.m. at Capital Community Church, 20430 Ashburn Village Blvd., Ashburn. The Pickwick Players present Rodgers & Hammerstein's "The Sound of Music," starring local talent from the Northern Virginia area. Cost: Adults \$22, Seniors/Children \$17, Group discount available for 8 or more. Visit the website: [thepickwickplayers.com](http://thepickwickplayers.com)

## NOV. 5-6

Everything Christmas Sale. Friday 3-7 p.m. and Saturday 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. At Herndon Moose Lodge, 779 Center Street, Herndon. You'll find thousands of items related to Christmas - from artificial trees to ornaments. Many are one-of-a-kind items. Sponsored by The Closet, a nonprofit organization impacting the local community. Visit the website: [www.theclosetofgreaterherndon.org](http://www.theclosetofgreaterherndon.org)

## NOV. 5-31

"The Artist's Palette." At Great Falls Studios Gallery, 756 Walker Road, Great Falls. "The Artist's Palette" features the work of members of

NOVA Plein Air Artists. Founded in 2016, NOVA Plein Air Artists was initiated due to a shared desire to explore the idea of painting outdoors. Since then, Plein Air Artists has evolved into a creative, educational and social network of local artists committed to painting weekly at organized "paint-outs." Plein air locations are chosen for their diversity, varying from state and county parks to rustic farms, vineyards, and urban settings within the Northern Virginia and Greater Washington, DC area. NOVA Plein Air Artists is primarily a plein air group but members also engage in painting other subjects including still life, genre, and portraiture.

## SATURDAY/NOV. 6

Clifton Lions Pancake Breakfast. 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. At Clifton Presbyterian Church 12748 Richards Lane, Clifton. Come and enjoy a yummy breakfast, with pancakes, bacon, orange juice and coffee. 100% of proceeds go to local charities. Cost: \$10 Adults, \$5 Children under 12, under 5 Free

## SUNDAY/NOV. 7

Pilobolus "Come to Your Senses." 7:30 p.m. At The Alden, McLean Community Center, McLean. Engage with childlike wonder in the miracle of your senses through both classic and brand-new repertoire that begins by examining our biology and ends by utilizing the senses in a refreshing immersion in the



The Left Bank Quartet will perform at Church of the Holy Comforter in Vienna on Nov. 7. (From left to right): Eric Kutz, Sally McLain, Katherine Murdock, David Salness.

biosphere. To purchase tickets or for more information, visit: [www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org).

## SUNDAY/NOV. 7

Traditional Celtic Concert. 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. At the Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Part of a five-concert series of top quality music from the British Isles, Brittany (France), the Celtic areas of Northern Spain, and the Americas, staged in the listening room Snuggery (dining room). Tickets must be purchased in advance at [oldbrogue.com](http://oldbrogue.com) - \$20 general admission.

## SUNDAY/NOV. 7

Into Vietnam War. 2-3:30 p.m. At the Cold War Museum (online only)

in the Museum's Zoom Room), 7134 Lineweaver Rd., Warrenton, Va.. The Vietnam War was the most controversial US war since the Civil War. How did we get in...and how did we get out? An eyewitness tells you. Cost is \$20.

## SUNDAY/NOV. 7

String Quartet Concert. 4-6 p.m. At Church of the Holy Comforter, 543 Beulah Road NE, Vienna. Concert by the Left Bank Quartet featuring Schubert's well-known "Death and the Maiden" string quartet together with works by Haydn and the 20th-century composer Erich Wolfgang Korngold. Visit the website: <https://holyccomforter.com/>

## NOV. 12-14

"The Eye of the Beholder." The McLean Art Society, a local group of professional artists and art enthusiasts is sponsoring an Art Show and sale on Friday Nov. 12, 5-8 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 13, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., and Sunday Nov. 14 10 a.m.-1 p.m., hosted by Walker Chapel United Methodist Church, 4102 N Glebe Rd, Arlington. There will be all original framed paintings in many styles with a large variety of subject matter as well as less expensive matted pieces and originally designed greeting cards. Everyone is welcome in a Covid safe environment.

## We Need Your Voice!

The McLean Community Center is seeking public input as it develops its strategic plan. McLean Community Center is seeking residents of Dranesville Small District 1A to participate in upcoming Community Listening Sessions hosted by consultant AMS Planning & Research. These sessions will inform the center as it works to improve the programs and services it provides to district residents.

**WHEN** Thursday, Nov. 18, 6-8 p.m.

**WHERE** McLean Community Center  
1234 Ingleside Avenue  
McLean, Va. 22101

**WHY** This is an opportunity for MCC district residents to give valuable input and express their ideas about the future programming and strategic priorities of the center.

**WHO** High school youth (9th through 12th grade) through adults, who reside in Dranesville Small District 1A.

**HOW TO REGISTER**

Visit [qrco.de/MCCvoice](http://qrco.de/MCCvoice) or scan:



As a "thank you," all participants will receive a \$25 voucher that can be applied towards a future performance at The Alden Theatre or MCC class and/or camp registration fees.

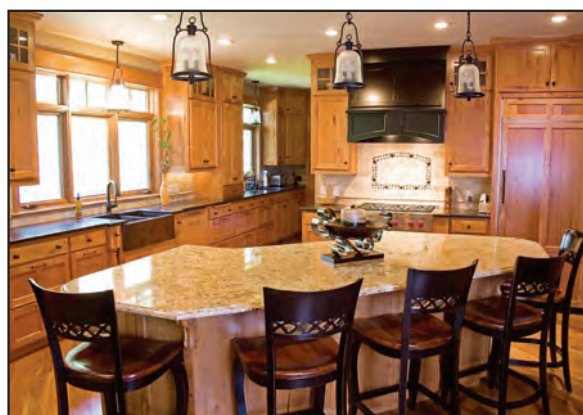


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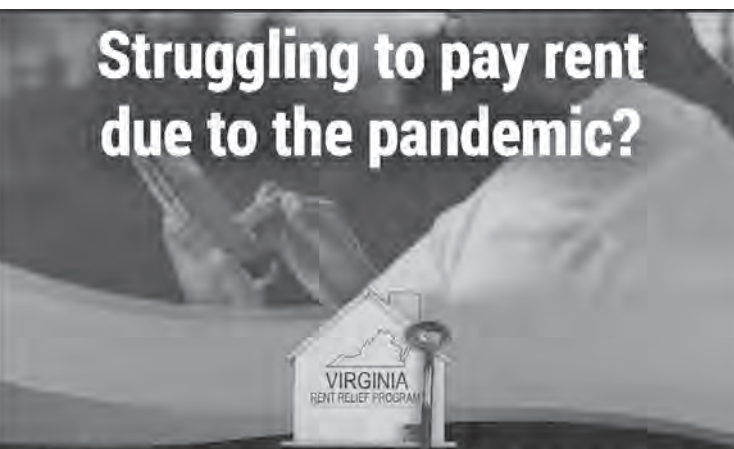
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Housing Opportunities Made Equal conducts the outreach and engagement initiative for the Virginia Rent Relief Program to provide one-on-one application assistance.

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

# Chief Puts Brakes on Pursuits

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

BY KEN MOORE  
 THE CONNECTION

**F**airfax 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 helicop-

SEE PURSUITS, PAGE 11

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# 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 non-perishable 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



**Webelos Scout Luke from Pack 160 with food gathered at a Pack event for Scouting for food in 2020 in Oak Hill.**

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.

# Body-Cam Footage Lessons

FROM PAGE 4

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.

# Chief Puts Brakes on Pursuits

FROM PAGE 10

ter assisting overhead. Vinson drove a pickup truck with an attached 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.

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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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