

# CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Herndon ♦ <sup>Oak Hill</sup> Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

## Beautiful, Inside and Out

PAGE 12

Jade Jones and  
Evan Ruggiero  
portray Beauty  
and the Beast.

CALENDAR, PAGE 8 ♦ HOMELIFESTYLE, PAGE 9

PHOTO COURTESY OF TERESA CASTRACANE PHOTOGRAPHY

Herndon Fire Displaces 44

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Wrestling with  
Repairs in Reston

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# ENTERTAINMENT

## NOW THRU JAN. 2, 2022

**LuminoCity Festival.** 6-9 p.m. At Roer's Zoofari, 1228 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna. The LuminoCity Festival, immersive light display experience, unforgettably 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. [www.roerszoofari.com](http://www.roerszoofari.com).

## NOW THRU DEC. 12

**"Secret Things."** Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road in Tysons. "Secret Things," a deep and heartfelt story of truth, discovery, and romance imbued both with gorgeous magical realism and fascinating true history of Sephardic Judaism in the American Southwest. General admission tickets are \$50. Senior (65+) tickets are \$47. Student, educator, and military tickets are \$15. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.1ststage.org](http://www.1ststage.org) or by calling the 1st Stage box office at 703-854-1856.

## NOW THRU DEC. 19.

**Holiday Lights on the Farm.** Fridays thru Sundays 5:30 to 8 p.m. At Frying Pan Farm Park, 2739 West Ox Road, Herndon. What is "Holiday Lights on the Farm"? It's where you tour Frying Pan Farm Park in the safety and warmth of your car and see an amazing display of holiday decorations lighting up the 135-acre park. The cost is \$20 per private vehicle. Or you can take

the tour on a tractor-drawn wagon ride with up to 20 of your family or friends for \$150 per group. Last year this event sold out, so get your tickets early at <https://bit.ly/FPLights>.

## NOW THRU FEB. 19

**New Art Exhibits.** At McLean Project for the Arts, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. MPA will open its two newest exhibitions on Dec. 2, 2021. Give and Take: Building Form (Emerson Gallery) will feature abstract wood sculpture by Emilie Benes Brzezinski, Rachel Rotenberg, Foon Sham, and Norma Schwartz, while the Atrium Gallery will feature Intersectional Painting: Works by Sheila Crider. Both exhibitions run through Feb. 19, 2022. Visit [www.mpaart.org/](http://www.mpaart.org/) or call 703-790-1953 for gallery hours.

## NOW THROUGH DEC. 18

**"A Child's Christmas in Wales."** Presented by Vienna Theater Company, Vienna. This holiday season, experience a musical celebration of Welsh poet Dylan Thomas' iconic story, A Child's Christmas in Wales, the "never to be forgotten day at the end of the unremembered year," when songs are sung, cakes and sweets are abundant, and the frozen city parks are laden with mysteries and adventures for wild boys and girls to explore. Performance Dates and Times: 7 p.m.: Fridays and Saturdays: Dec 17, 18; 2 p.m. matinees: Sunday Dec 5, 19; and 10 a.m. matinee: Saturday, Dec 18. Tickets: \$15/\$10. Visit <http://www.viennatheatrecompany.org>.



**"A Klezmer Hanukkah"** with Seth Kibel and the Klezmet will be held on Saturday, Dec. 11 at the McLean Community Center.

## THROUGH DEC. 19

**"Every Christmas Story Ever Told (And Then Some)."** At NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Santa Claus, Rudolph, the Grinch, and just about every other seasonal character you can think of make an appearance in this racy comedy that will have you

laughing all the way to the New Year. <https://www.nextstoptheatre.org/>

11: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Sunday Dec 12: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tickets: \$10 in advance; \$12 at the door Senior discount available; children under 12 free. Ticket information: [www.CapitalArtAndCraftFestival.com](http://www.CapitalArtAndCraftFestival.com)

## DEC. 10-12

**Capital Art & Craft Festival.** At Dulles Expo Center, Chantilly. Featuring 150 juried artisans. Friday, Dec 10: noon - 5 p.m.; Saturday Dec

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 10

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## Two People Critically Injured in Herndon Fire

44 displaced when electrical event sparks fire; no working smoke detectors in apartment.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department reported that nine people were taken to the hospital, two of them with life-threatening injuries, following a two-alarm fire in the Town of Herndon Thursday, Dec. 2, around 5:34 p.m. Units from Fairfax County Fire and Rescue, Loudoun County Fire and Rescue, and the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority Fire and Rescue responded to an apartment fire in the 800 block of Park Avenue. The blaze left 44 residents displaced and 11 apartments determined to be uninhabitable.

While en route, crews were informed that occupants were jumping out of third-floor windows. The second alarm was immediately requested based on that information. The first units on the scene reported fire showing



FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

**A mother and three young children, self-evacuated by tying sheets together and climbing down the improvised rope to safety.**

from the upper floor and smoke filling the stairwell.

Before their arrival, the occupants of one apartment, a mother and three young children, self-evacuated by tying sheets together and climbing down the improvised rope to safety. Three residents were rescued by ladder.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

**Families displaced by the fire return Friday morning to retrieve salvageable items.**

### Donations Needed

Fairfax Neighborhood and Community Services and Office for Emergency Management, the Red Cross, and Cornerstones have been assisting displaced residents. Donations of food and grocery store gift cards are currently the greatest need. All donations will go directly to the affected families and residents.

Donations may be taken to either:  
The Town of Herndon Police Department- Lobby, 397 Herndon Parkway, Herndon, VA 20170

Cornerstones Connections for Hope Partnership, 1141 Elden Street, Suite 200, Herndon, VA 20170, 703-429-5000

Requested Donations: Gift Cards (grocery stores, Target, Wal-Mart, Kohl's); Personal Hygiene Items (Adult & Child); NEW Clothing and Undergarments (Adult & Child); Food and Snacks; Activities, coloring books/ crayons, small toys and games, books, magazines; Diapers; Pajamas (Adult & Child); Coats (Adult & Child)



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION

**A family's decorated Christmas tree can be seen through the broken out window the morning after the fire.**



PHOTOS BY FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE DEPARTMENT

**Interior of units destroyed by the fire which displaced 44 people.**

Fairfax County Fire/Rescue reported that the bulk of the fire had been knocked down by 6:02 p.m., with crews hitting hot spots and checking for extension.

At the time of the fire, there were four occupants in the apartment of origin. They evacuated themselves after discovering the fire. The apartment where the fire started had no working smoke alarms. Another building resident noticed smoke coming from the apartment and dialed 911.

Fire investigators determined that the fire was accidental and started in an apartment

bedroom by an electrical event involving a charging cable. Damages as a result of the fire were approximately \$287,500. There were no reports of firefighter injuries. Red Cross was on scene assisting the displaced residents.

The morning after the fire, Christian Diaz assisted family members in removing items from their apartment and stacking them on the curb. When asked how many people were in his family, Diaz replied, "Six." Diaz went on to say that he did not know yet where they would go.

### ROUNDUPS

#### Centreville High's Winter Concerts

Centreville High is presenting two upcoming concerts to put people in the holiday spirit. An orchestra concert is set for Thursday, Dec. 9, and a choral concert is slated for Thursday, Dec. 16. Both free events are at 7 p.m. in the school auditorium – and the public is invited.

#### Meet Sully Police Commanders

The community is invited to meet the commanders of the Sully District Police Station, Capt. Jason Allegra and Lt. John Lieb, on Monday, Dec. 13, from 6-8 p.m. The event will be held on the second floor of the Cub Run Rec Center, 4630 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly, and refreshments will be served.

Hosted by the station's Citizens Advisory Committee, it's a drop-in event, so attendees don't need to stay the whole time. This relaxed, informal evening is an opportunity for [www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

people to ask questions or voice any concerns they may have, and it's open to businesses and area residents.

#### 'Hidden in Plain Sight' Training

Hidden in Plain Sight is an interactive program for adults to learn about the signs of risky behavior in teens and young adults. Topics include drug and alcohol use, mental-health concerns, eating disorders and risky sexual behaviors. It'll be presented Wednesday, Dec. 15, from 7-9 p.m., in the Sully District Governmental Center, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Sign up at <https://bit.ly/fcpdhps>.

It's a hands-on learning adventure for parents and guardians only. Their eyes will be opened to notice important clues right in front of them – beginning with a setup of a teenager's bedroom which contains nearly 100 "red flags" that indicate risky behavior.

They'll see why these clues are important and receive

up-to-date statistics, plus information about local trends. Law-enforcement officers will share experiences they've had in the community identifying risky behavior and helping place youth on the right path to a healthy life.

#### Car Seat Inspections, Dec. 16

Parents are invited to get their children's car seats inspected Thursday, Dec. 16, from 5-8:30 p.m., outside the Sully District Police Station. It's at 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Inspections are done on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants are asked to wear a mask and adhere to social-distancing and safety precautions.

They should install the child safety seat themselves, so the inspection can be performed. The seat will be properly re-installed, if necessary, and parents will be taught how to install the seat properly, in the future. Another car-seat inspection is scheduled for Dec. 30, at the same place and time.

## The Most Important Thing We Do

DELEGATE KENNETH R. "KEN"  
PLUM



Last week I attended the Virginia Education Summit 2021 at Old Dominion University in Norfolk. I could hardly recognize the location where I attended undergraduate school in the early 1960s when it was the Norfolk College of William and Mary. Unfortunately I could recognize many of the topics on the agenda for they were the same topics discussed during my 30-year career in public education that ended with my retirement from Fairfax County Public Schools in 1996.

The Summit was designed to educate legislators on current education issues, but it was not organized by the Virginia education establishment. It was organized by the Hunt Institute, a non-profit institute named for former four-term North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt who has been described as America's first education governor. Governor Hunt was known for saying, "Education can't be just another thing we do. It's the most important thing we do!"

The Summit was held at a critical time in the Commonwealth's history. The last two years have seen amazing advances in early childhood

education that a whole body of research has shown to be critical to an individual's future success in schooling and in life. Presently fewer than half of Virginia's three and four year olds attend preschool. Under legislation passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor the multiple programs related to preschool education have been brought together creating a unified public-private early childhood system that needs continuing financing and monitoring in order to ensure that all children have access to programs and services.

Not surprisingly a major theme permeating the Summit was the impact of COVID on our schools. The increased stress of teaching in an often changing environment that included virtual learning has resulted in many retirements and in increased difficulty recruiting teachers to teacher-training programs and to employment as teachers. There are about 106,000 teachers in Virginia whose average pay is 34th lowest in the country. There is a serious need to recruit more men and more persons of color into teaching positions.

Every school system faces the challenge of dealing with learning losses among children

as a result of interruptions in their schooling from the pandemic. I was so impressed with the teachers and school administrators at the Summit and their stories of heroic efforts to continue to deliver schooling to their students during a time of unprecedented challenges. They deserve our commendation and support as we move forward with schooling that has been changed in many ways during the pandemic. Some of those changes are worthy of continuation.

Virginia has made progress in the last several years in reducing excessive testing that limits time for instruction and provides little useful information. We can measure how our schools are doing without the large number of high stakes tests that have been given in the past. A study of our educational system for children with special needs has been shown to have major deficiencies that are now being addressed.

We are about to move to a new administration of state government. The rhetoric I hear about cutting taxes indicates that a sizable chunk would come from education and that charter schools would divert public monies to private schools. These issues cause me a great deal of concern as does the call to strip libraries of books. The new administration and legislators need to heed Governor Hunt's admonition that education is the most important thing we do.

## Red-Letter Day

BY PAUL A. FRIEDMAN, JD

Tuesday, Dec. 14 is the 9th anniversary of the Newtown shooting that took the lives of 20 first-graders and six educators. Just days ago, on Nov. 30, another school mass shooting cost the lives of four more young people. Sadly, there have been so many mass shootings in recent years that we can barely keep one tragedy straight from another.

Thankfully, in 2020, Virginia passed laws to try to stop the flow of blood. Virginia became the 19th state to pass a law that gives every one of us a chance to help reduce gun violence. It's a terrific law supported by many in law enforcement across the state but won't be fully effective unless we all know how to use it – and right now very few people even know it's on the books. That's why Fairfax County is launching a new campaign to alert people that it exists so they can use it to save their own lives and others.

Initiated by and contributed to by the Alexandria-based gun violence prevention non-profit, Safer Country, the County's campaign aims to draw attention to

the state's new "Red Flag" law. Its slogan is "Prevent A Gun Tragedy - Speak Up!" Details may be found at the campaign's website, [fairfax-county.gov/topics/red-flag](http://fairfax-county.gov/topics/red-flag)

The law empowers the police to disarm a person for up to two weeks if a judge believes there is an imminent danger that person will use their guns to harm themselves or others. In one high-profile case, Richard Sherman, a star football player for the Seattle Seahawks and now the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, repeatedly threatened to kill himself. Sherman's family asked for help under a Red Flag law in Washington state and the local police were able to take possession of four handguns and a semi-automatic rifle, defusing the immediate danger. Sherman has since received mental health counseling and resumed his football career without harming anybody.

There's no way to know for certain that Sherman would have carried out his threats, but we know that the Red Flag law made it much less likely. However, had he lived in one of the 31 states that lack such laws it would have been a lot harder for families and public safety officials to keep Sherman

and his family safe.

In most states, there are few options for public safety officials or family to act in advance, even when there are clear signs that somebody is on the verge of using a gun to do harm. That's why this law is so valuable. In the words of Fred Guttenberg, whose daughter Jaime

died in the infamous mass shooting on February 14, 2018 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida: "If Red Flag laws had existed then, my daughter would be alive today." The confessed Parkland shooter had spoken in advance that he had thoughts about using his rifle to kill.

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**Innovation and business development:** Nova Labs facilitates innovation by providing access to prototyping tools and a collaborative community eager to share expertise. In 2020, they opened the Innovation Center, which houses small businesses and entrepreneurs.



Nova Labs is a makers' community that never stops learning, sharing what they know with one another. From STEM to safety classes, arts, and beyond, children and adults challenge themselves.

# Nova Labs: Reston's Loss, Fairfax City's Gain

**New partnership promotes business and student career development.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**N**ova Labs is leaving Reston after ten years and will relocate to Fairfax City in early March 2022. The leadership of the nonprofit makerspace will open the doors of their newly purchased single tenancy space located at 3850 Jermantown Road, just off Route 50 and within one mile of I-66.

Nova Labs is the largest makerspace in the region, and is bringing all the tools from their current 18,000-square-foot space with them. They will leverage the use of their new 38,600-square-foot facility and the minds of their 500-plus makers to support innovation and community service throughout the region.

"So, we knew that we were going to have to leave," said Bradley Matthews, president of Nova Labs. "We have been on the hunt for a new home and looked in Reston, looked in Herndon, Chantilly, and others, but ultimately landed in the City of Fairfax."

Their current space as part of Isaac Newton Square in Reston will be demolished and replaced with 2.8 million square feet of new construction on the 32-acre site.

Since 2011, Nova Labs has attracted a large following throughout the region to use its Reston space and equipment, its laser cutters, wood tools, 3D printers, and more. You name it, Nova Labs has it for its membership along with a shared community of knowledge.

By relocating centrally to Fairfax City, rather than remaining on the county's northern edge, the nonprofit organization could be within reach of more of Fairfax County, offering more opportunities in education, community service, and youth programs to more members.

"But more importantly, was the partner-



**Bradley Matthews, president of the Nova Labs board of directors**

ship with the city," said Matthews. In 2020, Nova Labs opened its Innovation Center that hosts small businesses and entrepreneurs. That is what excited him. If someone had an idea, Nova Labs could help them develop it, evolve it, test it, and eventually turn it into a product.

"That's one of our big advantages when we do move to the City of Fairfax is we can take your idea and concept from just an invention to a business. And that's what we're looking to expand as we move into the city. We see it as a significant focus of our move," said Matthews.

According to Matthews, the Reston facility has 14 incubator spaces where people run their businesses out of Nova Lab space, up from five only two years ago. There are only 14 spaces because the individuals who already have a business take every closet, conference room, and open space and make them into small offices. "We still have a waiting list of nearly 20 people who want to come in and use the space," Matthews noted it is more than just a co-working space. The community, the access to prototyping tools,



**Fairfax City Councilmember Jon R. Stehle Jr.**

and the collaborative know-how make the Nova Lab's space a rare resource.

When Nova Labs moves to Fairfax, Matthews says they plan to quickly expand the number of offices to 20 and expand the program to assist members thinking about starting a business. They could be selling products on Etsy or creating one-off items to sell. Nova Labs plans to build an interim space that functions more like a rent-a-bench type of facility. Individuals might come in, rent a space with their specialized tools and materials for a fraction of the price of an office. They could use it to progress from a hobbyist to a pro hobbyist, to someone selling goods or gaining space to move into an office. "And, eventually, expand into a full-fledged business outside of our current location," said Matthews.

That is where the City of Fairfax comes into play, to further their businesses by leveraging the city's economic power, special programs, capabilities, and ancillary services. "So that's really what the partnership

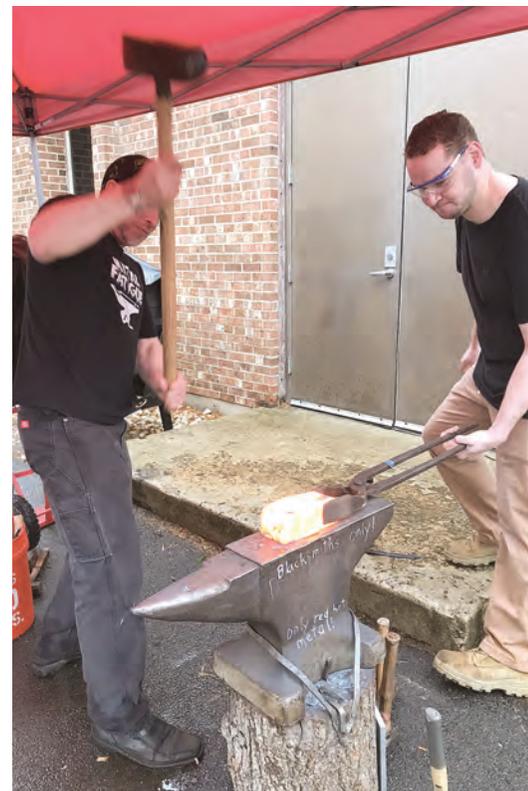


PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION  
**Blacksmithing at Nova Labs.**



**The soon-to-open Nova Labs Makerspace in Fairfax City is located off Route 50 within one mile of I-66. The site is opposite Katherine Johnson Middle School and features a concrete rooftop parking deck striped for 80 cars.**

SEE NOVA LABS, PAGE 11

# Holiday Tree Lighting & Sing-Along in Herndon

## Santa appears a no-show.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

After being canceled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Herndon's annual Holiday Tree Lighting and Sing-Along returned to the Town Square on Saturday, Dec. 4. Neighbors and friends from the community and those surrounding the Town gathered on the brick plaza in front of the Old Town Hall and the Herndon Depot Museum. People overflowed to the grassy areas that stretched beside the W&OD Trail and onto Lynn Street to celebrate the holidays, small-town fashion, and enjoy a visit from Santa.

"Welcome, everybody," said Joe Martin, president, and CEO of the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce. "We are so excited to start the spiritual season and kick it off right here in the Town of Herndon." The event's point person, Laura Poindexter, thanked the sponsors and participants, including the Town, the local Herndon High School Band, and its director Kathleen Jacoby.

Sheila Olem, mayor of the Town of Herndon, said she was sure the evening's special guest was looking forward to seeing all the children. Firefighters from nearby Fairfax County Fire Station No. 4 Herndon would bring Santa on their fire engine after the tree lighting and sing-along. She took a moment to point out the menorah lit beside her, put up by the Nachman brothers, Howard and Arthur, longtime Herndon residents.

Saying she was ready for the tree lighting, Olem looked over the crowd toward Elden Street, where the tree towered in darkness. "Can I get some help?" she asked.

The crowd chanted the countdown with her. "Five, four, three, two, one, light."

The band played, and children ran under the branches of the lit tree. The Town of Herndon had officially begun its 2021 Hometown Holiday Season. The sound of a siren from the fire engine bringing Santa could be heard in the distance, and then the siren grew fainter and fainter. The fire truck never arrived, called to more urgent concerns.

The band played longer and longer. Some families began leaving, drifting down the trail and nearby sidewalks. But, just as Santa makes no sound while leaving gifts in

people's homes around the world on Christmas Eve, the man in red walked unannounced and alone out of the darkness of Lynn Street toward the Town Square. The children on the W&OD Trail noticed him first, but they did not run. They didn't even call out.

Instead, one by one, they approached Santa. He opened his sack as the small group of children grew closer and huddled around him. The first child raised her eyes to Santa, who nodded. She reached into the bag and pulled out one small candy cane, gave a quick smile, and stepped aside.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION



Joe Martin, president and CEO of the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce.



Sheila Olem, mayor of the Town of Herndon, stands centered at the podium between the menorah and Herndon High School band members dressed in Santa hats.



As dusk fell on Dec. 4, the countdown started — five, four, three, two, one, light! And the 2021 Herndon Holiday Tree glows.



A little child, one of the first to see Santa quietly arrive on foot to the Holiday Tree Lighting and Sing Along in the Town of Herndon, hesitates before reaching into Santa's sack.



Two friends sip hot cocoa in front of the 2021 Town of Herndon Holiday Tree during the Dec. 4 Lighting and Sing Along.



Benjamin Hunter Davids, 1, of Reston, reaches up to touch a satiny ornament illuminated by the Town of Herndon Holiday Tree's twinkling lights during the annual Tree Lighting and Sing-Along held on December 4.



The Herndon High School Band plays holiday tunes.

# Jingle on the Lake Returns

## Santa arrives by pontoon boat.

MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Hundreds of people attended the 50th anniversary of Jingle on the Lake on Saturday, December 4, which was held on Washington Plaza at Lake Anne in Reston and featured a special appearance by Santa Claus. Crafts, vendors, and music were among the other activities available to families as they awaited the arrival of the man in red by pontoon boat at noon.

Santa and his elves had been looking forward to this one-day trip to Reston for quite some time, as they needed a break from the -34°F temperatures at the North Pole in Alaska, USA. Families spotted Santa and his elves making their way across Lake Anne from afar and began clapping and cheering. After disembarking, Santa walked through the throngs of children, giving fist bumps here and there and receiving unexpected quarter-back blocking hugs from children who slipped through the crowds.

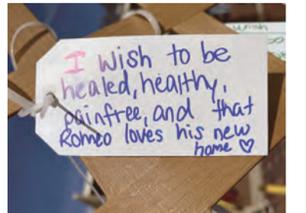
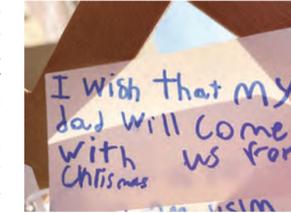
Santa eventually took a seat on the bench next to Bob Simon's bronze statue and under the Wish Fence, where children and adults had written their most cherished holiday desires. A line formed quickly and stretched to the parking lot, filled with children and adults eager to tell Santa their most heartfelt holiday wishes. No one appeared to mind the wait, and everyone seemed pleased that Santa could visit Lake Anne this year.



Santa's pontoon arrives at Lake Anne dock, and he disembarks to meet the children he knows so well.



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Hundreds of tags on the Wish Fence range from the traditional "I want snow for Christmas," to the serious to others that leave readers wondering.

The Long family from Fairfax, mom and daughter, attach their wishes to the Wish Fence, which overlooks Lake Anne, as dad and baby watch from a distance.



Santa arrives by pontoon boat accompanied by Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill), who represents Reston on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (far right) and a whole shift of elves skirting the waters of Lake Anne (and stand up paddle boards) and paddleboats. Elves do not like their curly-toed slippers getting wet.



Santa gives fist bumps and the children give unexpected tackle hugs.



MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

## East Retaining Wall



The east retaining wall would gain vine plants growing to the water's height, beautifying the hardscape.

Pyramid Park exhibits the degradation of sycamore trees uprooting the brick plaza and threatening the sculptures. (File photo)

The plan is to plant small creeping plants in the grooves between the concrete blocks to force out weedy growth.

# So Close to Lake Anne Plaza's Beautification

## LARCA must state its intentions as 2nd deadline looms.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

The newly seated five-member board of the Lake Anne of Reston Condominium Association (LARCA), headed by George Hadjikyriakou, the appointed president, could not meet the initial Dec. 1 funding confirmation deadline for their share of the proposed "Lake Anne Rising-Phase 1" project. Total community funding is \$250,000.

The project is a planned beautification of the Lake Anne Plaza by three sponsoring organizations: Gupta Family Foundation [GFF], housed in Herndon, with a pledged \$25,000 seed grant; Reston Museum; and Public Art Reston. They announced the plan on November 18, 2021. According to Margaret Gupta, president of Gupta Family Foundation, during an interview on Dec. 2, they advanced the deadline for LARCA to Dec. 6 after the initial deadline of Dec. 1. But LARCA must be part of the project, or it is dead, according to Gupta.

As for the proposed project itself, Gupta said that at Pyramid Park on Lake Anne Plaza, where famed Uruguayan artist Gonzalo Fonseca's site-specific sculptural collection of molded concrete elements is located directly in front of Lake Anne's trademark fountain, the large sycamore trees would be retained. But to mitigate future trunk expansion and the trees' ever-expanding roots pushing up against the brick plaza, the trees' roots will be professionally trimmed, and a softscape installed there. The sculpture, Fountain, is to be restored.

Project 2 adds native plants to 15 LARCA planters, the east retaining wall, and the grooves in the west slanting wall. Project 3 is plaza cleaning every two years and projects 4, 5, and 6 are entrance signage, Fonseca monolith restoration, and planter maintenance every year.

Hadjikyriakou said in an email late in the afternoon of the Dec. 1 deadline, "The board is in agreement that this proposed project is a good thing, but we also agree that there are issues we need to discuss and come to an agreement on with the Guptas before we can move forward."

Hadjikyriakou added, "I am dealing with a lot of issues right now." At the time of the correspondence, some units in the Chimney House condo lacked heat; LARCA was waiting on a new boiler, and flooding had occurred in some units.

The \$37 million in infrastructure repairs needed across LARCA properties loomed, cited in the "Draft Report, cursory Condition Assessment" prepared for Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services 2021 and presented to the public on Sept. 13, 2021.

Lacking reserve funds and the 131 members of the LARCA HOA unable to raise such funds, the repairs remained unaddressed.

On Dec. 2, Margaret Gupta said that, while initially, LARCA was to contribute \$45,000 to the Lake Anne Rising-Phase 1 project, Eve Thompson, former Reston Association At-Large director and former president of the Lake Anne Merchants Association, had raised \$33,000 in the last few days from LARCA owners that was not going through the LARCA budget to put toward the HOA's share.

Gupta said, "So, LARCA really only needs to commit to providing \$12,000 in their



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

### Margaret Gupta and Dr. Shashikant "Shashi" Gupta

2022 budget." In the interview, Margaret Gupta's husband, Dr. Shashikant "Shashi" Gupta, said that Hadjikyriakou kept talking about how the LARCA board had not finalized its 2022 budget.

"The thing is, we're not asking them to finalize the budget. All we're saying is, make a commitment that you will add or include \$12,000 for this project in your 2022 budget," said Shashi Gupta. "They can just have a quick vote of the board members... Say that we will try our best to put in \$12,000 for this project," he said.

Margaret Gupta added that LARCA needed to make a good-faith commitment that they will maintain the plan "at a tune of \$20,000 a year and in future years so that this investment continues to thrive. "Otherwise, this investment won't make much sense. Again, this is a good-faith effort," she said. The plan is to have everything completed by the time the Reston Farmers Market

2022 starts.

The slide presentation on Nov. 18 detailed that Reston Museum would be a fiscal agent or contracting entity with project funds channeled through them and a fundraising webpage established. Public Art Reston would act as the expert in oversight of art restoration, with the Gupta Family Foundation as project catalyst and sponsor.

There would be opportunities for five sponsorship levels, from \$50,000 to less than \$1,000. As for proposed funding for the program, there are five funding sources: Gupta Family Foundation, \$25,000 confirmed; LARCA, \$45,000 subject to 2022 Budget, of which all but \$12,000 has been raised by Eve Thompson, former LARCA board member; Reston Community Association, \$25,000, subject to 2022 Budget; and community fundraising of \$105,000, tax-deductible since Reston Historic Trust is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization.

It is noted that all dollar amounts are "aspirational," except for the \$25,000 grant from the Gupta Foundation.

Mike Leone, public information officer at Reston Association, said, "There really isn't much more I can say at this time because no proposal has been presented to the RA Board of Directors and RA has no commitment to this project at this time."

"People in Reston are so excited about this project," said Margaret Gupta. "But LARCA has to be part of this project because it is their property."

### BULLETIN BOARD

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

#### NOW THRU DEC. 11

Toys for Tots Drop-Off Sites. At Mathnasium of Reston, 1424 N. Point Village Center, Reston. Also at Mathnasium of Centreville, 5959 Centreville Crest Lane, Centreville. The Mathnasiums will be participating in the Quantico, VA's Toys for Tots campaign. They will be collecting new, unwrapped toys in our center lobby during listed business hours. Curbside drop off available upon request (571) 401-1056. Hours are Monday - Friday: 12-7 p.m.; Saturday: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Visit the website: [www.mathnasium.com/reston](http://www.mathnasium.com/reston)

#### FREE NATIVE SAPLING GIVEAWAY

Thanks to its relationship with Plant Nova Trees and Fairfax ReLeaf Inc, Meadows Farms has obtained hundreds of saplings of native plants that they are able to give a way to its customers. The sapling trees will only be available for free at the following locations: Leesburg, Dulles/South Riding, Route 7, Great Falls, Seven Corners, and Annandale.

#### RCC EARNS ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD

Reston Community Center is pleased to announce it is a 2021 Fairfax County Environmental Excellence Awardee. RCC was one of six awardees, a mix of individuals and organizations, "who have demonstrated extraordinary dedication to the improvement of our natural environment, raising awareness of key environmental issues in our area and inspiring others to take action," according to the Fairfax County Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination. The awardees are chosen annually by the Fairfax County Environmental Quality Advisory Council.



PHOTO BY GREG POWERS

Interior designer Tracy Morris uses a gray tweed wallcovering in the dining room of her McLean home to create a sophisticated atmosphere.



IMAGE BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG

AND ANNIE ELLIOTT

Designer Annie Elliott covers the floor of her office with an Oriental rug, which offers a variety of options for pairing with colors in other parts of the room.

## Inside the Home of an Interior Designer

Local tastemakers offer a glimpse of their personal style.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

Interior designers spend their days helping clients create beautiful aesthetics without compromising functionality. Whether deciding to paint a living room azure or cerulean or top a counter with Soapstone or quartzite, the job of a tastemaker requires creativity and ingenuity. Now, a few local designers allow cameras into their own home for a glimpse of their personal style.

Those who enter the Bethesda home of designer John Wagner of Designs by Wagner, learn quickly that nothing about it will be subtle. An oversized pink ottoman sits in the center of the room. A plush sofa in a soft beige is positioned in front of a wall that is dotted with more than a dozen family photos, each hung with soft-pink velvet ribbons.

"I'm a maximalist through and through," Wagner said. "I help my clients create spaces that reflect their taste. You should feel comfortable in your home. It should be a haven from the outside and it should make you proud. For me that means vibrant colors and plush fabrics."

A variety of colors, textures and patterns can be found throughout the home of designer Annie Elliott of Annie Elliott Design. "A house filled with shades of gray just doesn't make me happy," she said. "I also like mixing antiques with modern pieces. In my dining room, for example, we have a 19th-century English sideboard and Oriental rug paired with leather chairs...and a glass chandelier from the '80s. The mix takes the edge off of whatever formality people might associate with classic pieces."

A powder room is a space where Elliott suggests that one might experiment. "I believe that every powder room should be wallpapered," she said. "I have Cole & Son's Cabaret in mine, and I encourage my clients to be as daring as possible in their own powder rooms."

An Oriental rug aficionado, Elliott often recommends this accessory to her clients. "They can be



IMAGE BY JENN VERRIER AND ANNIE ELLIOTT

When designing her dining room, Annie Elliott paired a 19th-century English sideboard with an Oriental rug with leather chairs and a circa 1980s glass chandelier.



IMAGE BY ANGIE SECKINGER AND ANNIE ELLIOTT

Annie Elliott says that Oriental rugs can be paired with traditional or contemporary furniture.

paired with traditional or contemporary furniture, they give you lots of colors to play with, and they're brilliant for hiding dirt, red wine spills, and dog fur," she said.

Tracy Morris of Tracy Morris Design describes the style of her McLean home as "timeless with an edge." She creates the look using textured wallpaper in her dining room. "It creates a great base for the rest of the room," she said. "We used...a gray tweed with gold accents. This allowed the room to be enveloped in sophistication.

**"I'm a maximalist through and through."**  
— John Wagner of Designs by Wagner

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THE CONNECTION Alexandria Gazette Packet Mount Vernon Gazette Potomac ALMANAC

### Children's & Teens' Connection 2021



During the last weeks of each year, this newspaper devotes its pages to the creativity of local students and children. The results are always remarkable. It is a keepsake edition for many families. Even readers without children of that age spend time admiring and chuckling over the issue. The annual Children's Connection (including Children's Gazette and Children's Almanac) is a long-time tradition.

With high visibility, this is a great advertising opportunity for every industry, so give us a call about rates and ad sizes at 703-778-9431 or email sales@connectionnewspapers.com.

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FROM PAGE 2

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**SATURDAY/DEC. 11**  
**"The Snowman in Concert.** 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. At James Madison High School, Vienna. The JMHS Choral and Orchestra Departments will again host this magical family holiday event. Watch the film based on Raymond Briggs' "The Snowman" book - but with live choral and orchestra music accompaniment. After the film, walk through the winter wonderland and enjoy crafts, visiting with the Snowman and Santa, and a delicious treat on the way out!

**SATURDAY/DEC. 11**  
**"A Klezmer Hanukkah."** 7 p.m. At The Alden at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Hanukkah comes early this year, but Seth Kibel and the Klezmet keep the party going with festive klezmer tunes with a little jazz thrown in. Features traditional klezmer music as well as jazz favorites. Tickets are \$20/\$15. Visit: [www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org).

**SATURDAY/DEC. 11**  
**Virtual Auction Extravaganza.** 5-7 p.m. Via Zoom. At 6462 Gristmill Square Lane, Centreville. The Fairfax County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will hold a Live Virtual Auction. The Auction will be held via Zoom and winning bidders must pay online. Auction items will include goods from local bakeries; professional services, such as car detailing, personal training, and

leadership coaching; beach rental, and holiday gift baskets containing everything from artwork, and expertly crafted wares. Visit [www.fcacdst.org](http://www.fcacdst.org).

**SATURDAY/DEC. 11**  
**Storytime with Santa.** 9 - 10 a.m. At Tysons Corner Center, Fashion Court, Level 1, McLean. Who else is better to read all our favorite Holiday stories? Join us for an intimate story session with Santa for an experience your child will never forget while he reads many of our prized classics. Reservations are not required.

**DEC. 11-31**  
**Holiday Sparkle.** 12-5 p.m. At Reston Art Gallery and Studios, 11400 Washington Plaza W at Lake Anne, Reston. Enjoy the gallery experience at a show of giftable art - authentic, local works of paintings, mixed media, jewelry, mobiles, fine craft objects, cards, and more created by the 8 artists of RAGS. Open weekends and by appointment. Visit the website: [www.restonart-gallery.com](http://www.restonart-gallery.com)

**SUNDAY/DEC. 12**  
**Sensory Santa.** 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. At Tysons Corner Center, Level 1, Fashion Court, McLean. Tysons Corner Center is partnering with Cherry Hill photography and Autism Speaks to welcome children with special needs for a low impact, time with Santa. The mall will open its doors early, exclusively for families, and give them private time with the Big Man in

Red. Reservations are not required.

**SUNDAY/DEC. 12**  
**Master Singers of Virginia.** 4 p.m. At Epiphany Episcopal Church, 3301 Hidden Meadow Drive, Herndon. The Master Singers of Virginia (MSVA), Northern Virginia's premier mixed a cappella ensemble under the direction of Dr. Erik Reid Jones returns to the stage the first time in 21 months with Serenity and Renewal holiday concert. Tickets are \$25 for Adults, \$20 for Seniors (65+) and \$15 for Students. The Take 4 package provides 4 tickets for \$60 or \$15 each. Visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/master-singers-of-virginia-8547780534>

**SUNDAY/DEC. 12**  
**Traditional Celtic Concert.** 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. At the Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Featuring Jody Marshall's Holiday Celebration. 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.

**DEC. 13, 20**  
**Take Photos of Your Pets with Santa.** At Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Monday, Dec. 6, 6 - 8 p.m.; Monday, Dec. 13, 6 - 8 p.m.; Monday,

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.  
**-Werner Heisenberg**



Nova Labs looks for ways to give back. During the early days of the pandemic, they manufactured high-quality, life-saving equipment for area hospitals and first responders.



Nova Labs is a community hub for STEM youth education. It has hosted nine award-winning FIRST Robotics teams and created a K-12 MakerSchool with hands-on curriculum, after-school programs, and summer camps.

## Nova Labs: Reston's Loss, Fairfax City's Gain

FROM PAGE 5

provides. The city has the power to bring in more of that focus on economic development to give that graduation path... to really have strong growth and new opportunities that wouldn't be available if they were anywhere but the City of Fairfax," said Matthews.

Fairfax City Councilmember Jon R. Stehle Jr. said he was looking forward to working with the Economic Development Authority to tee this up. "It goes back to the location they chose, which is across the street from Katherine Johnson Middle School," said Stehle. The opportunity to allow middle

students to see the magic that happens and the companionship they can have as they figure out their vocations would transform lives. That is what had me so excited, why I worked multiple years with them to get them to the city. That location is special. It will unlock opportunities for future generations," Stehle said.

Stehle predicted that access to Nova Labs would be a game-changer because not every student goes directly to college or to work in an office. Stehle said they have to celebrate the trades and innovation as they celebrate Division 1 full-ride scholarships to athletes. "We have the opportunity to do that with

this partnership," said Stehle. Nova Labs, he added, is more than access to a machine press or a blacksmith hammer. "It is the people who are sharing that. Such is in line with the City of Fairfax's mantra of "Live Life Connected." I can't think of a better example of the connection than what is going to happen at NOVA labs on Germantown Road," Stehle said.

The move is a significant undertaking for the Nova Lab community. To lend a hand moving or donate to build-out expenses through a contribution to the 3.0 Capital Campaign visit Fairfax | NOVALabs <https://www.nova-labs.org/fairfax>

### CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

Dec. 20, 6 – 8 p.m. Fashion Court, Level 1. Bring your favorite pet in their holiday best for photos with Santa. This much-loved event has become a signature and well-attended theme night for Tysons Holiday.

#### MONDAY/DEC. 13

**A Bluegrass Christmas With Sweet Yonder.** 7:30 p.m. At Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave. E, Vienna. Join local bluegrass favorite Sweet Yonder and special guests for joyful night of bluegrass and Christmas music favorites narrated by Santa himself.

Fun for the whole family, dinner and drink menu available. Tickets \$20/\$22. Tickets: <https://www.jamminjava.com/shows/bluegrass-christmas-with-sweet-yonder-special-guests/>

#### THURSDAY/DEC. 16

**Jennifer Nettles: Broadway Under the Mistletoe.** 7:30 p.m. At Capital One Hall, 7740 Capital One Tower Road, Tysons. Jennifer Nettles stops by for a night of holiday favorites and Broadway hits. Leading with her powerhouse vocals and vivacious energy, this dynamic entertainer recently released *Always Like New*, a collection of Broadway tunes reimagined as only she can do. Visit [CapitalOneHall.com](http://CapitalOneHall.com).

#### DEC. 18-19

**Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker.** 4 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. The Fairfax Symphony Orchestra joins The Fairfax Ballet in their sixth collaboration to present the timeless class holiday favorite, *The Nutcracker*. This production is unique in the Washington metropolitan region as one of few presented with live musical accompaniment. The Fairfax Ballet Company dances to Tchaikovsky's score performed live by the Fairfax Symphony. Enjoy a winter wonderland of dancing snowflakes, sugar plum fairies and epic battles between heroic toy soldiers and mischievous mice.



Firefighters getting control of the Centreville townhouse fire.

## Resident Injured in Centreville Townhouse Fire

A fire at a Centreville townhouse displaced two people and injured one of them. The incident occurred Sunday, Nov. 21, around 10:41 p.m., in the 5100 block of Woodfield Drive. Units from both Fairfax and Loudoun counties' Fire and Rescue Departments responded.

First-arriving units discovered smoke showing from the rear of a two-story, middle-unit townhouse. Crews located a fire on the second floor and quickly extinguished it. One occupant was transported to the hospital with minor injuries.

Two people were home at the time of the fire. One awoke to smoke and flames in the bedroom. He immediately alerted the other occupant, who was in the basement. Both then evacuated and called 9-1-1; their smoke alarms activated as they were leaving.

Fire investigators determined that the blaze was accidental in nature and started in a second-floor bedroom. They say it was caused by an electrical malfunction within a surge protector. Damage was estimated at approximately \$30,000.

— BONNIE HOBBS

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF TERESA CASTRACANE PHOTOGRAPHY



Jade Jones and Evan Ruggiero portray Beauty and the Beast.



Jade Jones as an unconventional Beauty.

# Westfield Grad Jade Jones Getting National Acclaim

**She stars in unusual production of 'Beauty and the Beast.'**

By BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**M**any high-school theater students aspire to become professional actors, but few actually make it. Jade Jones, a 2008 Westfield High grad, is an exception – and her latest triumph is portraying Belle in a stereotype-smashing production of “Beauty and the Beast” that’s receiving national attention.

In Olney Theatre Center’s show, the Beast has a prosthetic leg and Belle is a curvy Black woman with dreadlocks, instead of the usual fair-skinned, petite girl. And Jones is delighted with director Marcia Milgrom Dodge’s vision for it.

“She had the idea to cast Evan Ruggiero – who lost his leg to cancer – and myself because she didn’t want to do a traditional ‘Beauty and the Beast,’” said Jones, 31. “We’re trying to show that beauty is not one thing – it’s something different to every person. It’s important to find beauty through your own eyes and to know that beauty comes in all different forms.”

After winning a Cappie award for Featured Actress in a Musical in Westfield’s production of “The Wiz,” in her senior year, Jones attended Ferrum College, graduating in 2013 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts with concentration in acting. Since then, she’s done a slew of roles for a wide variety of theater companies and acted in an episode of TV’s “Chicago PD.,” this summer.

In 2011, she received a WATCH (Washington Area Theatre Community Honors) award for Outstanding Featured Actress in A Musical as Nell Carter in “Ain’t Misbehavin’.” Then in February 2020, she was nominat-



COURTESY OF DJ COREY PHOTOGRAPHY  
**Westfield grad, actress and rapper, Jade Jones**

ed for two Helen Hayes awards – one for playing Little Red Riding Hood in “Into the Woods” at Ford’s Theatre, and the other for portraying Nana in Round House Theatre’s “School Girls; or The African Mean Girls Play.”

Her favorite role was Mrs. Lovett in “Sweeney Todd” with Rep Stage in Maryland because, said Jones, “I love Stephen Sondheim, rest in peace. I’ve gotten the opportunity to work in four Sondheim pieces; he was a brilliant songwriter and amazing composer.”

Her second-favorite part was Little Red Riding Hood. “I loved singing the music, and I was really touched by the whole character,” she said. “I connected with the sense of loss she felt for her grandmother because I just lost mine, a couple years ago. And this role also allowed me to do some grieving of my own.”

Now, Jones is continuing to wow audiences as a totally different Belle, as is Ruggiero as the Beast. “Evan lost his leg to cancer, nine years ago, but didn’t let it stop him from performing,” said Jones. “He’s a Drama Desk-nominated actor who made a career out of dancing on his prosthetic leg.”

“Normally, under all the makeup, the Beast is supposed to be a perfect specimen of a man,” she continued. “We haven’t seen that character cast before as someone like Evan. And he’s so talented; I can’t imagine anyone else playing that role.”

Furthermore, said Jones, “I think it’s important that our entire cast is reflective of our [diverse] community. One of our objectives is that a person in the audience can look up and see someone onstage who looks like them. We want to encourage attendees to think, ‘Wow, I can play this role, too.’”

Frankly, she said, it took her a long time to even question why things were the way they are, and why it was always assumed and accepted that persons of color wouldn’t even be considered to play certain parts. “It’s not because we don’t exist,” said Jones. Instead, she said it’s because that’s been the narrative pushed by society and taken as the norm.

“The hypothesis of our piece is: If we cast someone who’s not the stereotypical type for Belle, will the audience still be able to see beauty?” said Jones. “Of course, it can, because Belle’s beauty comes from the inside and shines through because she’s beautiful, inside and out.”

Indeed, Jones was the first person cast in this show. “When I auditioned and got the role, I thought, ‘Well, that’s interesting,’” she said. “I never identified with Belle, or any Disney princess, as a child. But once I got the role, I knew I could do it. It would be challenging because I’m used to playing a featured or comedic role, not the ingenue who falls in love.”

Turns out, said Jones, “I’m having the time of my life. I feel that this character I was so distant from, as far as personality, I’ve fallen in love with. I’ve gotten to know Belle and can relate to her, and I’ll carry a piece of her wherever I go. And the audience has been great; people ages 3-53 come to the theater dressed as Belle. They love ‘Beauty and the Beast,’ seeing themselves onstage and rooting hard for their favorite characters. Sometimes, it’s like a rock concert there.”

Ironically, her understudy, Selena Clyne-Galindo, also graduated from Westfield. “I never knew her before, but she’s doing a fabulous job,” said Jones. “I did ‘Fiddler on the Roof’ at Westfield with her older sister. I remember doing really good shows in high school; they were special, highly competitive in the Cappies program and had lots of support from the community.”

Although Jones still has some acting jobs in the Washington, D.C. area, she moved to Chicago last year. “We’d go there on theater trips from Westfield, and I fell in love with the city,” she said. “It’s a vibrant place for arts and culture, and it has so many avenues for creativity – TV, film, improv and music.”

Besides acting, she’s also a rapper named Litty Official. “I do a lot of rapping gigs and recorded my first mixtape over the pandemic,” said Jones. “I released my second album this year, and Litty Official – who’s nonbinary and uses they/their pronouns – has their own following, separate from me. I have complete ownership over this creative outlet; and in my next show for Olney, ‘A.D. 16,’ I’ll be rapping. So I’ve been able to merge my career with my true love – rapping.”

Meanwhile, Jones, Ruggiero and Olney’s production of “Beauty and the Beast” have garnered national notice, with both People.com and the Washington Post doing stories on them. So, said Jones, “We’ll see where it takes me. I trust in the universe and what good karma will bring me.”

Does she have a dream role? “No, because I’ve played roles I never thought I would,” replied Jones. “So I think the sky’s the limit for me. And I’d advise other, aspiring actors to absolutely go for it. It’s a job and we’re playing pretend. Everything doesn’t have to be so serious; if things don’t go your way, dust yourself off, shake it off and just be yourself.”

*“Beauty and the Beast” opened in early November and runs until Jan. 2, 2022. For ticket, date and time information, see [www.olneytheatre.org](http://www.olneytheatre.org).*