

CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station

Backstage the outfit is fit for Ibrahim at the Remix Show in Miami.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED OPINION, PAGE 6 ♦ HOMELIFESTYLE, PAGE 9 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 11 ♦ SCHOOL BOARD, PAGE 12



29 Diner Vows
Return from Fire

NEWS, PAGE 3

Mistletoe Growing
In the Park

KISSING, PAGE 4

Holiday Happenings

PHOTOS, PAGE 10

Burke Teen Models
Louis Vuitton

FASHION, PAGE 4

ATTENTION POSTMASTER:
TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL.
REQUESTED IN HOME 12-10-21

PRSRRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EASTON, MD
PERMIT #322

Cole Looking and Listening in First 80 Days

New Park Authority director takes the measure of her 420 parks.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

With about 80 days on the job as Fairfax County Park Authority's new executive director, Jai Cole, is working steadfastly on several goals, including two she set to accomplish in her first year: visit all 420 county parks in the system; and talk to the county employees 'on the ground' about park needs. Also in these months, Cole has maintained a frequent public presence at park events. To mention a few, she has been on-site and live streaming at Frying Pan Farm Park's 60th year anniversary celebration, and holding piglets; cutting the ribbon at Martin Luther King Jr Park's new

playground; viewing children's art at McLean Arts Central Park; and digging invasive plants at Laurel Hill Park on National Public Lands Day. She is embodying what she describes as "life's rule #1" taught by her parents — "show up."

With a packed event schedule and many other pulls on her time, how is Cole fairing toward her self-imposed starting job goals? She's visited 141 parks to date and plans to average about ten new parks per week. She uses a specially developed app on her phone to track the visits and make notes about what she sees. Her reason for the visits is not just to reach a number, but to get a better sense of the breath and size of the county's full park system, and assess the needs of each of its parts.

Two areas of concern loom for the park system: seasonal staffing shortfalls and gauging the prospects of upcoming projects. With help-wanted signs up for all types of businesses, the county must compete for scarce employee resources and attempt to do so within the limits of government hourly rate restrictions. For example, she said that the Park Authority's

swimming pool capacities may not be defined by pool size but by the number of lifeguards they are able to hire. Similarly, rising costs in construction are inflating building costs. Cole must consider whether the market will settle later and projects for upgrading park facilities should wait out the inflation period for lower costs, or if continuing higher costs will dictate a review of project plans that can go forward.

Cole is eager to listen to employees at each site so they have an opportunity to highlight their site's strengths and needs.

When she and her daughter viewed the new piglets at Frying Pan Farm Park, Cole noted they were able to "ooh and aah" because park employees had given thought to the many needs related to the pigs: food, the pen housing and capacity, and the budget for their on-going care. "Parks are like small cities," she said, with needs for plumbers, grass cutters, architects, landscapers, engineers, and planners. They are like businesses, where you go to smile, but getting to that enjoyment is a serious business and "the Park Authority is



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

New Executive Director Jai Cole on the job in her office at Fairfax County Park Authority headquarters in the Herrity Building.

dedicated to what we do."

Cole comes to the Park Authority from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Montgomery Parks (M-NCPPC, Montgomery Parks) where she served as Chief of the Park Plan-

ning and Stewardship Division from 2018.

Cole grew up in Fairfax County as a 25 year resident of Reston. She attended the University of North Carolina, where she earned a B.A. in biology.

Now Welcoming Residents

We invite you to explore our newest community in beautiful Fairfax, VA. Schedule a tour and meet our experienced team of caregivers. You'll get a sneak peek of our community's amenities, activities, and dining program. We look forward to sharing our personalized approach to assisted living and memory care. We can't wait to welcome you home.

- Highly trained, compassionate team of caregivers
- Activities and programming customized to resident interests
- Community cleaning protocols are consistently reinforced, with professional deep-cleans performed as necessary
- Located near medical support at Inova Fairfax Hospital and Fairfax Medical Center
- 30 minutes from Washington, DC and situated on Route 50 within easy reach of the shops, restaurants, historical attractions, and the natural beauty of the area



FAIRFAX

© 2021 Sunrise Senior Living
All our team members are following COVID-19 infection control protocols, including wearing a mask. Number of visitors allowed inside is limited, to maintain appropriate social distancing.



COMMUNITY NOW OPEN

Contact Us to Schedule
Your Personal Tour:

703-831-7083

SunriseFairfax.com/Connection

9207 Arlington Boulevard
Fairfax, VA 22031



John K. Wood asking for help outside Fairfax City's 29 Diner.



Owner John K. Wood inside the diner's destroyed kitchen. The fire started in the supply closet next to and behind him.

'I'm Fighting Every Day to Keep this Place Open'

Community rallies around Fairfax's 29 Diner after kitchen fire.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Since John K. Wood revamped and reopened the historic 29 Diner in Fairfax City in September 2014, he's taken care of others – at-risk youth, veterans, the homeless and families in need. And when the pandemic hit, he turned the restaurant into a community kitchen to provide free meals to health-care workers, firefighters, out-of-work teachers and children no longer receiving food at school.

Now, though, after a devastating fire there – just two days before Thanksgiving – he finds himself needing help. On Nov. 23, while catering in Manassas for an Air Force veteran, Wood got a call from Andy Vita, the City fire department's assistant chief of operations, asking him, "Do you know your diner's on fire?"

Rushing back to Fairfax, he was overcome with emotion. "I was feeling desperate," said Wood. "Everything my family and I worked for all these years was lost. I felt despair, depression and anxiety – and I relive it every day. I felt like I let the community down, and I kept thinking, 'How do I fix the diner and pay the employees?'"

The diner was closed at the time, so no one was injured. "We're closed on Tuesdays," said Wood. "But that day, we opened half the day to cook all the food we planned to deliver for Thanksgiving to 178 families in need, and for the catering event. All the employees left at 3 p.m., and the fire broke out at 6 p.m."

He said it began in the storage closet in the kitchen and quickly spread. "It started charring the shelves and caused the degreas-



Juxtaposition: A poster for 29 Diner's "Season of Giving" is surrounded by blackened plaster and burnt insulation.

ing and grill-stripping chemicals on them to fall," he explained. "And when they fell into the flames, they exploded and scorched, ripped the ceiling and burned the plaster. The fire melted all the electrical wires, lines, outlets and plugs. The temperature reached as high as 700 degrees."

"It wasn't a grease or electrical fire, or an equipment failure," continued Wood. "It was a chemical fire, but the cause is still under investigation. The heat melted everything in the dish area, and the burning chemicals

scorched the walls. The fire was so intense, it burned the microwave, grill and everything else in the kitchen – which is a total loss. And the dining area is all covered in soot, smoke and tar."

Although fire investigators' preliminary damage estimate is around \$45,000, he believes it will cost him more than \$500,000 to repair – and his insurance won't be enough to cover it all.

"We have limited insurance because it's a 75-year-old building, so it was difficult for us

to get blanket coverage," said Wood. "It only covers the building, equipment and personal property. It doesn't cover our rent, income loss or benefits for the employees. So we don't have any income coming in – but the bills still have to be paid, and the cost of repairs exceeds our insurance amount."

And that's where the community's generosity comes in. The night of the fire, a teacher immediately started a GoFundMe account for the restaurant, and it raised more than \$50,000, the first week. As of Dec. 7, nearly 1,000 contributions have yielded almost \$60,000 of the \$100,000 goal. To donate, go to <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-rebuild-the-29-diner-kitchen>.

Some typical comments people left on the donation site are as follows:

Klara Alex: "Thank you for everything you did during the most difficult time of the pandemic. The community appreciates and needs you."

Charles Cather: "I remember the diner well from many visits. Even though we're in AZ now, we will not abandon these good people."

Melissa Hoadley: "My dad LOVED 29 Diner; he hung out there with his buddies for years. We need to keep 29 Diner alive."

Will Mac: "I've been enjoying their fare for decades with the wife and kids, discussing dreams, our futures and the school day. John Wood, you've set the bar for humanity and changing the world, one meal at a time."

A second account was also begun last week for the diner's 10 employees. Its goal is to replace some of their lost wages. To help, go to <https://www.gofundme.com/f/29dinerlovethereemployeesfundraiser>.

Native Mistletoe Brings Romance to the Park

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

A long standing holiday tradition at parties, back when we had parties, was hanging mistletoe to instigate the warmth of some holiday kisses. This holiday season, for those eschewing the closeness of indoor parties as a health precaution, nature provides an opportunity to continue the holiday tradition in the relative safety of an outdoor setting. In Fairfax County's Lakeside Park in Burke, American mistletoe (*Phoradendron serotium*) is growing in trees not far from the park's parking lot off Pommeroy Drive.

Custom dictates that a man is permitted to kiss any woman standing under the mistletoe and bad luck comes to any woman who refuses the kiss. Mistletoe species in Europe have been recognized since the 1500s. Kissing under the mistletoe was popularized with servants in 18th century England. A variety of mistletoe customs have been on-going for centuries. In pagan cultures mistletoe was a symbol of fertility; Romans hung it in doorways to protect the household; and in Western culture it's long been a decoration associated with Christmas, enjoyed for its evergreen properties and white berries. In modern times, in some areas, including nearby Sussex County Delaware, some neighbors seasonally group into hunting parties to shoot mistletoe out of trees with rifles in unpopulated swamp areas to harvest the plant which grows high in trees, as reported by the "Coastal Point" newspaper.

Understanding a bit more about the plant leaves one wondering how it came to be a romantic symbol, starting with its name. "Mistel" is the Anglo-Saxon word for 'dung'; to form the name 'dung-twig'. Because the plant attracts birds eating its berries and nesting within its branches, the plant often was seen where there were bird droppings. Also, mistletoe is a parasite. The plant's sticky seeds reach a host tree, stick on and send out roots, penetrating the tree and pirating the tree's nutrients and minerals. Even though as an evergreen it is capable of photosynthesis itself, it chooses to free-load from its host, although it causes no harm to the tree. None of this seems the stuff of romance.



Evergreen balls of American Mistletoe growing at Lakeside Park in Burke.

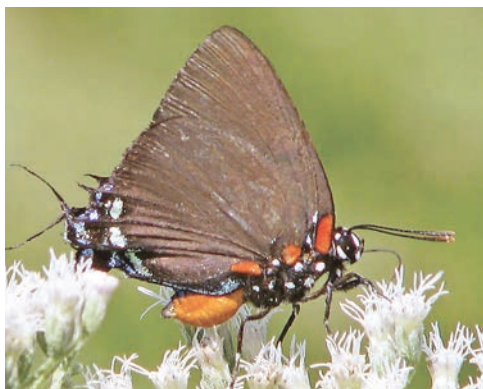


PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
Caterpillars of the Great Purple Hairstreak butterfly feed only on Mistletoe.

But mistletoe is a valued plant to many species. It provides pollen and nectar for honey bees, and its berries are enjoyed by small mammals such as squirrels and chipmunks, and birds such as doves, bluebirds, and robins. It is also the single host of the caterpillar of the Great Purple Hairstreak butterfly (*Atlides halesus*). Beyond providing nourishment, its growth, which can reach five feet wide and 50 pounds, provides nesting area for birds and small mammals. Although it is parasitic, it spreads slowly, only about two feet per year, and so is viewed as a natural component of a healthy forest ecosystem.



In the spirit of the season, Therese and Bob Parillo, of Burke, kiss under the mistletoe.

A native plant in our area and from New Jersey to Florida in the East, and west to Texas, the plant is sold commercially for decoration.

Music artists have helped to solidify its mystique with popular songs, such as "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus," Jimmy Boyd, 1952; "Mistletoe," Justin Bieber, 2011; and "Underneath the Mistletoe," Sia, 2017. If you head to Lakeside park, take your own romantic music to set the mood.

Burke Teen Models for Louis Vuitton in Miami

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Sometimes it takes a shy teenager breaking out of the mold to inspire other shy teenagers around the world to take that step. This is the case with Ibrahim Sesay, a Lake Braddock senior who recently jumped into the world as a Louis Vuitton model at the Remix Show in Miami.

Sesay was discovered in the hallways of Lake Braddock and now has a mes-

sage for other teens that may be quiet and reserved due to shyness.

"My goal is to make shy kids everywhere feel comfortable, inspire them," Sesay said.

He was one of them and now looks at himself as an "interesting, confident kid," he said.

The world is opening up for Sesay and it all started in Sierra Leone a few years ago when his family won the immigration lottery and moved to the United States.

In Sierra Leone, "we didn't used to have much," he said, noting that back in Africa



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED
Ibrahim Sesay goes over last minute notes in Miami with agent Greg Chan.

he had no inspirations, and there was no one to tell him what he could be.

"His dad won the lottery visa," said Greg Chan, his manager.

Before hitting the runway in Miami, Sesay looked up to Virgil Abloh, a major force in the Louis Vuitton who recently died of cancer at age 41. Abloh was a world-renowned fashion guru that looked at clothes as more than just a mass of fabric and designs, but an item to

SEE BURKE TEEN, PAGE 13

Tis the Season for Giving

Ways to give in Fairfax County.

Tis the season where many begin to look for ways to support their neighbors, so Fairfax County News Center rounded up a list of local giving opportunities. This list will be updated as the holiday season progresses.

Toy Donations

Santa's Ride- Donate new unwrapped toys, games, books, and gifts to be distributed to children at Fairfax Inova Hospital, Georgetown Lombardi Cancer Center, and to other children in the community who might not otherwise have a cheerful holiday season. New toy and gift donations can be brought to any Fairfax County police station by Saturday, Dec. 11.



MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Toys for Tots-The Fire and Rescue Department is participating in the Annual National Capital Region Fire and Emergency Medical Services Departments' 2021 Toys for Tots campaign. Donations of new, unwrapped toys can be dropped off at any Fairfax County fire station through Sunday, Dec. 12, and also at the McLean Community Center through Saturday, Dec. 11.

Gift Card Drives

Survivors of Domestic Violence-Our Domestic and Sexual Violence Services office appreciates gift card donations in \$25 increments to grocery stores, gas stations and big retail stores, as well as Visa, Mastercard

Donations of coats, clothing, and other winter essentials are greatly appreciated, as evidenced by the Reston Winter Coat Closet. Each year, the Hunter Mill District Office and Cornerstones partner to collect and distribute new or gently used and clean heavy winter coats, as well as new hats, scarves, and gloves, for neighbors in need. (File photo)

and American Express cards. Mail cards by Thursday, Dec. 9, to Vanessa Cullers at the Domestic Violence Action Center, 4000 Chain Bridge Road, Suite 2702, Fairfax, VA 22030, or Gulira Alieva at Domestic and Sexual Vi-



Toys for Tots-The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department participates in the Annual National Capital Region Fire and Emergency Medical Services Departments' 2021 Toys for Tots campaign.

olence Services, 12011 Government Center Parkway, Suite 738, Fairfax, VA, 22035.

Victim Services-The Police Department's Victim Services Division is collecting gift cards for child victims and witnesses of domestic and sexual violence and children who lost loved ones due to homicide. Gift cards to places like Giant, Safeway, Walmart, TJ Maxx, Target, Kohl's, local restaurants and clothing stores allow parents to purchase gifts for their children and practical, needed items. Drop off or send gift cards to Saly Fayeze, Victim Services Section, 12099 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA, 22035.

Coats, Clothing and Warm Supplies
Coats for Hutchison Kids- In lieu of the Park Authority's traditional holiday gift drive, Hutchison Elementary School officials are requesting a donation of coats, rather



MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Knitting Communities Together -The annual Fairfax County Senior Centers' Winter Warming Service Project is underway and collects new or handmade hats, gloves, mittens, scarves and socks for adults and children in Fairfax County as evidenced by the items left by knitters at the Herndon Senior Center: 873 Grace St., Herndon.

than toys, for families that have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Park Authority is coordinating a drive to make

SEE GIVING, PAGE 7

PRINT AND DIGITAL OPTIONS TO REACH YOUR TARGET MARKET

- Email Blasts
- Print
- Digital Billboards
- Sponsored Content
- Exclusive Front Page Shoutout
- Social Media



THE CONNECTION
Newspapers & Online

For Advertising:
Call 703.778.9431
or email
advertising@connectionnewspapers.com

Remodeling your kitchen?
Make sure it's Nicely Done!
Call (703) 764-3748, or stop by our showroom for a free design consultation!

- Family Owned
- Licensed & Insured
- Part of your community since 2003

NICELY DONE
Kitchens and Baths

8934 Burke Lake Rd.
Springfield, VA, 22151
Located in Kings Park Shopping Center

www.NicelyDoneKitchens.com

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 Flag Laws to Save Lives

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

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.

Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue.

Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name.

Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

Send letters

Online www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter/
By email: editors@connectionnewspapers.com

By mail to: Letters to the Editor The Connection
1606 King St., Alexandria VA 22314

You can comment on our Facebook page or find us on Twitter

www.facebook.com/connectionnewspapers
<https://twitter.com/alexgazette>
<https://twitter.com/mtvermongazette>
<https://twitter.com/followfairfax>

Never miss an issue, get a free digital subscription,
<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/subscribe/>





A smoke alarm alerted the resident to the fire.



The fire was caused by an unattended candle which ignited a lampshade and spread, fire and rescue said.

Fire Caused by Unattended Candle

On Saturday, Dec. 4, at approximately 10:13 a.m., units from the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department and the City of Fairfax Fire Department responded to a reported house fire in the 4000 block of Doveville Lane in the Wakefield area of Fairfax County.

Units arrived on the scene of a one-story, single-family home with smoke showing. Crews quickly located and extinguished the fire. One occupant was transported to hospital for treatment of non-life-threatening injuries. There were no firefighter injuries reported.

One occupant was home at the time of the fire. The occupant was altered to the fire due to the activation of the smoke alarm. Upon investigation, he observed his couch on fire. He then attempted to extinguish the fire. The occupant was unsuccessful, so he called 9-1-1 and self-evacuated with his dog.

Fire Investigators determined that the fire was accidental in nature and started in the living room. The fire was caused by an unattended candle that ignited the lampshade, and then spread to the nearby couch.

One occupant was displaced because of the fire. Red Cross assistance was offered and declined. Damages as a result of the fire were approximately \$37,500.

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department notes the dangers of fire while burning candles and



Damages as a result of this fire were approximately \$37,500, Fairfax County Fire reported.

offers safety tips:

- Use battery powered candles/lighting when power goes out

- Never leave burning candles unattended

- Keep all combustible materials away from open flames

- Do not burn candles near windows or doorways

- Place candles in glass or ceramic containers

- Place candles on a flat, sturdy non-combustible surface

- Never leave candles burning when children or pets are present

Hijackers Stopped in Fairfax County, Convicted

A federal jury convicted two New York City men last week on charges of carjacking, armed robbery and possession of a firearm in relation to a crime of violence.

According to court records and evidence presented at trial, on April 1, at 3:05 a.m., Stephen Pierre Paul, 30, Wayne Ricardo Taylor, 26, and co-conspirators traveled to a truck stop in Mount Jackson, Va. in a van with blacked out windows. Once at the truck stop, Pierre-Paul, Taylor, and the co-conspirators hijacked an 18-wheel commercial tractor-trailer with Alabama tags. The group abducted the truck driver at gunpoint and forced him into their van.

Both vehicles, the van and hijacked commercial truck, were stopped at a roadblock on eastbound

Interstate 66 at 5:15 a.m. in Fairfax County. The victim truck driver was rescued, and the defendants were arrested.

Co-defendants Cornelius Crossman, 37, and Odane Butler, 27, both of Brooklyn, New York, will be sentenced for their roles in the conspiracy on December 10 and January 21, 2022, respectively.

Pierre-Paul and Taylor each face a mandatory minimum sentence of 7 years and maximum of life in prison when sentenced on March 11, 2022. Actual sentences for federal crimes are typically less than the maximum penalties. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after taking into account the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other factors.

Tis the Season for Giving

FROM PAGE 5

sure these requested coats get to the school. Donate new coats in children's sizes, as well as adult small and medium sizes, by dropping them off at the Providence or Spring Hill RECenters.

year, the annual Fairfax County Senior Centers' Winter Warming Service Project collects new or handmade hats, gloves, mittens, scarves and socks for adults and children in Fairfax County. Donated items are given to local nonprofits Cornerstones, Homestretch and ShelterHouse, who distribute them to the people they

SEE GIVING, PAGE 15

BURKE / FAIRFAX / FAIRFAX STATION/CLIFTON/LORTON / SPRINGFIELD ❖ DECEMBER 9-15, 2021 ❖ 7

Protect the ones you love,
get your flu shot today.



@vaccinatevirginia



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.

To submit art, poetry, essays, creative writing, opinion pieces, short stories, photography, photos of sculpture or gardens or other creative efforts, please email kimm.mary@gmail.com.

Advertising Opportunity

Earp's Ordinary Pops Up in Time for Holidays

Fairfax City restaurant and live-music venue opens at Zandra's Taqueria site.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Earp's Ordinary – a new restaurant and live-music venue which will eventually open on Main Street in downtown Fairfax City – still isn't quite ready for prime time. But meanwhile, it will burst on the scene as a pop-up this weekend in Old Town Plaza in the Zandra's Taqueria site.

Its mini grand opening will be Friday, Dec. 10, from 5 p.m.-midnight, and will include live music that night and Saturday, Dec. 11, starting at 7:30 p.m. After that, December hours of operation will be:

Monday - Closed; Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday – full menu, 5- 10 p.m.; late menu, 10 p.m.-closing; Saturday – full menu, 11 a.m.-10 p.m.; late menu, 10 p.m.-closing; and Sunday – full menu, noon-6 p.m.

Zandra's, at 3950 University Drive, Suite 210, has been temporarily closed since COVID-19 restrictions were placed on restaurants and small businesses. At the same time, Earp's Ordinary partners, Michael DeMarco and Joshua Alexander, have



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHANNON DUFFY

From left, are Michael DeMarco, Miguel Pires and Joshua Alexander of Earp's Ordinary.

dedicated the last few years to the construction of their own restaurant space at 10420 Main St.

However, they encountered unforeseen delays outside of their control, so they contacted their restaurant friends about a possible, interim solution. Enter Miguel Pires, owner of Zandra's Taqueria. He already operates two successful restaurants in Manassas and Gainesville and understood the challenges facing Earp's.

As a result, the discussions among the

three business owners culminated in Earp's Ordinary temporarily using Zandra's spot in Old Town Plaza. DeMarco and Alexander will continue managing the build out of their Main Street site while Earp's is able to immediately begin providing customers with a new dining opportunity, craft-cocktail bar and live music.

"This is all about the community," said Alexander. "We're opening in a pop-up space so developed plans can be finalized, such as our chef-developed menu, and people can

DECEMBER ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE

Dec. 10, Cathy DiToro;
Dec. 11, Cat Janice;
Dec. 16, Shane Gamble;
Dec. 17, Brian Chafin of Grass Fed and an ugly-sweater party;
Dec. 18, Ashleigh Chevalier and a brandy alexander party;
Dec. 19, James Bandini and a piano brunch, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.;
Dec. 21, Winter Solstice celebration and cool-yule drinks;
Dec. 23, Holiday Variety Show: comedian Winston Hodges, 7-7:30 p.m.; singer Laura Farrell, 8-10:30 p.m.;
Dec. 30, Brian Sauerwald;
Dec. 31, New Year's Eve bash: prix fixe menu, 5-8 p.m. and 8 p.m.-closing; singer Justin Suede, 8:30-11:30 p.m.
* Live acts are 7:30-10 p.m.
* Dinner reservations are highly recommended, using Open Table

meet Chef Sullivan. But this will be a family affair, so customers will see us in various roles as we receive our friends and neighbors enjoying live music, an old fashioned or dinner. It's also just in time for the holidays, and we're pretty happy about that."

Earp's will stay there at least six months, or however long it takes to get their own location finished and ready for business. As for Pires, he's busy expanding his Manassas restaurant and doesn't know when he'll return to Fairfax.

"Earp's Ordinary strives to bring its community together in a lively space that caters to all," said DeMarco. "If you're looking for a space to relax and enjoy local and national acts while eating delicious food, you can experience exactly that at Earp's Ordinary."

Community Rallies Around Fairfax's 29 Diner After Fire

FROM PAGE 3

Despite the fire, Wood hasn't missed a beat, taking catering jobs in exchange for donations to the rebuilding fund, as well as feeding families in need for free. "I lease additional cooking space from another kitchen, and my food trucks are still operational," he said. "And we're also cooking in the Salvation Army food truck in our parking lot."

He even came through at Thanksgiving, delivering cooked turkey, spiral-cut hams, barbecue and all the traditional side dishes to people who otherwise would have gone hungry. And in stark contrast to the black, destroyed kitchen inside the diner, cheery Christmas music plays outside the building and a toy drive is in full swing there.

"We're still doing our Season of Giving [providing a Christmas celebration to 100 families living in eight shelters], free food pantry and free toys to the youth of the community," said Wood. "We're still delivering food and gifts to Fairfax County domestic-violence shelters, wounded warriors and their families, and health-care workers and their families."

Meanwhile, he estimates it'll be six to eight months before the diner, itself, can reopen. "We'll probably partition off the kitchen from the dining room and start the fire



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

The intense flames melted this plastic dish rack.

mitigation and restoration soon," he said. "The roof and floor are intact, so the building is still usable. I have to gut and rebuild the kitchen – and all according to EPA and local, fire and food-service standards before we can serve meals in here again."

Wood has owned 29 Diner for eight years and renovated it with \$100,000 of his own money. "I'm the sole proprietor – it all falls on my shoulders," he said. "I'm here fighting every day to keep this place open, and the only beacon of hope and light is the community helping us."

He said Fairfax County teachers set up the

GoFundMe accounts "because we've cared for the community, and they love what we do to help youth and first responders. The Fairfax Harley Owners Group wants to do a fundraising ride, and [county] Sheriff Stacey Kincaid has offered to help, as have the police, firefighters, veterans and all the people we've helped."

Indeed, as Wood was saying those words last Friday outside his diner, a total stranger drove up and handed him \$60. The man wanted to remain anonymous but told The Connection he contributed because, "These guys have done an amazing job taking care

of others. These are really good people, and we want them to be able to continue to help the community and make more good meals."

Wood said he'd received similar donations that day from area residents and, by afternoon, they already totaled \$1,000 – which he planned to divide among his employees. There's also a locked box outside the diner where people may contribute.

The 29 Diner is also known for Wood's signature, "Feed a Vet, Save a Vet" program whereby his customers leave donations in jars inside the restaurant. He then uses this money to give veterans free meals while they listen to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention talk about preventing military suicides.

"In the past two years, we've served 120,000 free meals to veterans through this program," he said. "But the tables turned, the night of the fire, and now they and others are rallying around us in our most dire time of need."

Because of people's generosity, said Wood, "It's obvious how much they love and support us. It's a testament to how we touched their hearts and souls – and that they're family to us – and I'm speechless in my appreciation of them. Now, we're on their wings and they're lifting us up – and we won't let them down."



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

Life is short.
Don't make it shorter.

Choose life. Make sure your kids get their HPV vaccine and protect them against cancer.

@vaccinatevirginia

Protect the ones you love,
get vaccinated now.

VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



Sign up for
FREE DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION
to any or all of our 15 papers
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM/SUBSCRIBE

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

Songs, Crafts, Petting Zoo and Holiday Joy

Fairfax City's Festival of Lights and Carols was Saturday, Dec. 4.



The Daniels Run Elementary Singers perform "Silent Night."



The Fairfax Jubilaires singing, "We Wish You a Merry Christmas."



Children having fun petting some ducks.



Girl Scouts, Brownies and Daisies singing cheerful, holiday tunes.



Deejaying during Ace Hardware's 10th-anniversary celebration are owner Craig Smith with Santa (Scott Silverthorne).



Viva Sol Bakeshop's Kelly Hartranft, left, and Samantha Brohoski offer holiday doughnuts.



From left, vendors Julie Wittich and Terri Carley, of Front Porch Art, sell children's art kits.



Hyeran Park, of Studio Ralla, displays her snowman and reindeer candles.



With their elf-hat and reindeer balloons are the Brixius sisters, Ryleigh, 7, and Charleigh, 4.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

CALENDAR

NOW THRU DEC. 11

Moe's Pop Up. 4-8 p.m. At Springfield Town Center, 6500 Springfield Mall, Springfield. Moe's Tavern Pop Up is a ticketed, family-friendly fan experience running for a limited time on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from Nov. 19 - Dec. 11. Adult tickets start at \$37; kids tickets are \$20. <https://moespop-up.com/>

BEGINNING DEC. 6

2021 Virtual Needlework Show. At Woodlawn Pope Leighy House, Alexandria. Did you miss this year's annual needlework show? Maybe you came and want to see all the incredible pieces again? If so, they are hosting the second annual virtual showing of the on-site needlework show. Visit the Website: [\[house.squarespace.com/2021-virtual-nw-show\]\(http://house.squarespace.com/2021-virtual-nw-show\)](http://woodlawnpopeleighey-</p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

DEC. 10-JAN. 23

"The Mystery of Edwin Drood." At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, W3 Theater, Lorton. Based on Charles Dickens' final unfinished novel, this hilarious whodunit invites the audience to solve its mystery by choosing the identity of the murderer. The tale is presented as a show-within-a-show, as the Music Hall Royale - a delightfully loony Victorian theatre company - presents Dickens' brooding mystery. Tickets: \$20-\$30. Visit www.workhousearts.org.

SATURDAY/DEC. 11

Christmas Around the World. 4-8 p.m. At Parkwood Baptist Church, 8726 Braddock Road, Annandale.

Celebration of Jesus Christ's birth. Holiday customs of several nations, reenactors in costumes, music, Biblical storytimes. Tickets online www.parkwood.org/registrations. Visit the website: <https://www.parkwood.org/registrations>

DEC. 11-12; 18-19

Holiday Dance Show. 12 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. At the Richard J. Ernst Theatre, 833 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Encore Theatrical Arts Projects presents Christmas is Just Around the Corner, a Rockette/musical theater-style holiday Show. The people of tiny Centretown know how to celebrate the holidays and welcoming a new neighbor is an added bonus. Or is it? Cost: \$22-\$30. Visit the website: www.encore-tap.org.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 15

Bill of Rights. 1-1:30 p.m. Virtual. On national Bill of Rights Day, December 15, they'll share our top 10 things to know about George Mason and his involvement with the Bill of Rights. At the end, we'll check in on the comments for questions from you. Email: histric@gunstonhall.org or visit the website: <https://gunstonhall.org/events/save-the-date-bill-of-rights-day/>

SUNDAY/DEC. 19

Create a Holiday Ornament. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Create a holiday ornament or package decoration of your very own. Supply fees are included with admission. One ornament or decoration per person

while supplies last. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$3; ages 13 and older, \$5, special events, \$6; seniors and military (active and retired) \$4. Visit www.fairfax-station.org.

SUNDAY/DEC. 19

Holiday Celtic Concert. 4-5 p.m. At St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 6509 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Join in a delightful Celtic concert of sacred and seasonal music for the Christmas season with Karen Ashbrook and Paul Oorts on hammered dulcimer, harp guitar, accordion and pennywhistle, along with Irish-American singer Eileen Estes. Donations collected during the concert will go to FACETS and ECHO. Masks are required. Visit the website: www.standrews.net

HOLIDAY CALENDAR

HOLIDAYS IN THE MOSAIC DISTRICT

At 2910 District Ave., Fairfax. Santa at Mosaic -- Now Thru Dec. 23; Holiday Toy Drive -- Now Thru Dec. 13; Santa's Motorcade -- Dec. 17 at 5 p.m.

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 JAN. 2

Ice & Lights: The Winter Village at Cameron Run, 4001 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria. Open nightly 5 to 10 p.m.; January 8 to February 27, 2022 (ice skating only), open Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Featuring an ice rink, multiple new holiday light displays perfect for Instagramming, a retail area, food, music and more. Admission: \$9 for general admission to Village; \$22 for village admission and skating; beginning January 8, \$14 for ice skating; free ages 2 and under. Visit novaparks.com/events/ice-lights

THROUGH DEC. 12

Fairfax City Holiday Market. In Old Town Square, 10415 North Street, City of Fairfax. Friday, 5-8 p.m.; Saturday, Noon-6 p.m.; Sunday, Noon-5 p.m. Join the Annual City of Fairfax Holiday Market in Old Town Square. Come and shop at the market of craft vendors as you enjoy Old Town Square in the heart of Historic Downtown Fairfax covered in holiday lights. The festival will include live holiday music, hot drinks, and gourmet treats and more.

DEC. 9-12

Winter Wonderland Holiday Experience. At Tysons Corner Center, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, Tysons. T-Mobile will bring to life its

"Winter Wonderland Holiday Experience" at Tysons Corner Center. Located in front of the food court, the 20x20 display is intended to inspire visitors to stay connected, share moments, carry on traditions, or create new ones during this holiday season. Visitors will have the opportunity to take a fun holiday photo, and then receive free printouts, a T-Mobile keychain, and either a snow globe or tumbler.

DEC. 10-11

Colonial Holiday Nights at Carlyle House. 5 to 8 p.m. At Carlyle House, 121 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria. Experience the holiday season with Carlyle House focusing on how the Carlyles and their enslaved workers observed the holidays during the 18th century. Stay tuned for updates about live music. Tours offered of the first floor with timed entry on the hour and half hour. Space is limited and reservations are required. All participants including those under the age of 5 must be registered. Visit novaparks.com

DEC. 10, 11, 19

Mount Vernon by Candlelight. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Take a candlelit guided tour and learn about holiday traditions in 18th-century Virginia. Visit with Mrs. Washington and other 18th-century residents of Mount Vernon in a 45-minute candlelit tour of the Mount Vernon estate, followed by a reception. Hear stories of Christmases past from costumed character actors portraying Washington's family, friends, and enslaved or hired staff. Admission: \$36 for adults (ages 12 and up); \$28 for youth (ages 6-11); for members, \$26 for adults; \$18 for youth. Visit the website: mountvernon.org/candlelight

DEC. 3-19

"A Child's Christmas in Wales." Presented by the Vienna Department of Parks and Recreation and Vienna Theatre Company. From a story by Dylan Thomas and adapted to the stage by Jeremy Brooks and Adrian Mitchell. Dates: Fridays and Saturdays, Dec. 3, 4, 17, 18 at 7 p.m.; Sundays, Dec. 5 and 19 at 2 p.m.; and Saturday, Dec. 18 at 10 a.m. Visit the website: www.viennatheatrecompany.org.

SATURDAYS, DEC. 11, 18

Holiday Market and Winter Village at The Parc in Tysons. At 8508 Leesburg Pike, Tysons. Save the date to purchase your holiday gifts from local artisans and small businesses.

SATURDAY/DEC. 11

Civil War Christmas in Camp. 12 to 4 p.m. At Fort Ward Museum & Historic Site, 4301 W. Braddock Rd., Alexandria. Get in the holiday spirit with a patriotic Union Santa Claus, reenactors in winter camps celebrating the season, period decorations, soldier-led fort tours

and kids' crafting activities. Visit the website: alexandriava.gov/fortward

SATURDAY/DEC. 11

"Klezmer Hanukkah" with Seth Kibel and the Klezmet. 7 p.m. McLean Community Center Hanukkah comes early this year, but Seth Kibel and the Klezmet keep the party going with festive Klezmer tunes and a little jazz thrown in. Chag Sameach!

SATURDAY/DEC. 11

Herndon Winter Market. 12 to 7 p.m. At 777 Lynn Street, front of Herndon Municipal Center, Herndon. A traditional German-style Christmas Market with a family focus supporting the Town of Herndon and surrounding communities. This is open and free to the public. Visit the website: www.herndonwintermarkt.com

DEC. 11, 12, 18, 19

Tall Ship Providence Christmas Story Time. At 12 p.m., 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. At Tall ship Providence, 1 Cameron St., Alexandria. Come

SEE HOLIDAY CALENDAR, PAGE 15

**Same Company, Same Employees,
Same Great Value - Now Celebrating 20 Years!**

TWO POOR TEACHERS Kitchen and Bathroom Remodeling



- Electrical (ELE)
- Gas Fitting (GFC)
- Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVA)
- Plumbing (PLB)
- Residential Building (RBC)

Fully Insured & Class A Licensed
Since 1999



10% down
nothing until the job
is complete for the
past 17 years

Free Estimates 703-999-2928

Check if your contractor is licensed at the state level
<http://www.DPOR.virginia.gov>

Visit our website: www.twopoorteachers.com



Megan A. McLaughlin (Braddock)



Tamara Derenak Kaufax (Lee)



Laura Jane Cohen (Springfield)



Karl Frisch (Providence)

Challenged Books, Ballooning Waitlists for Mental Health, ADA Playgrounds

What you might have missed at the Dec. 2 School Board meeting.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

School Board Member Tamara Derenak Kaufax (Lee) thanked the members of the Challenged Book Committee at the Fairfax County School Board regular meeting held on Thursday, Dec. 2, for their recent review and decision to reinstate the books in question, “Gender Queer: A Memoir” by Maia Kobabe and “Lawn Boy” by Johnathan Evison. The books were temporarily removed from FCPS high school libraries following a challenge in September.

Kaufax said teachers, parents, administrators and students comprised the committee, and she, too, read both books in question.

“These books were not obscene, and there is absolutely no pedophilia in either of these books. As an educational system, it is our duty to provide materials for children to better understand their identities, as well as those of their classmates,” Kaufax said. She added that having access to books reflective of their own lives helps mitigate the real risks of bullying, social isolation, and suicide that LGBTQIA+ students are known to face.

Laura Jane Cohen (Springfield District) said if someone believed that certain books were not appropriate for their child, that was probably a conversation for the person to have with their child. Cohen said she would not dream of parenting someone else’s child and could only share how she parents her own children. According to Cohen, in her home, they believe that our schools are responsible for making sure all children know they are okay. “That they are normal. That they are, as Psalm 139 says, “wonderfully made.”

Then Cohen read a passage by journalist and LGBTQIA+ activist George M. Johnson from his 2020 book, “All Boys Aren’t Blue: A Memoir-Manifesto.”

“So as heavy as these subjects may be, it is necessary that not only are they told, but also read by teens who have to navigate many of these same experiences in their own lives. ... I released the deepest and darkest things about my past in the hopes that some-



Fairfax County School Board meets on Dec. 2, 2021.

one might see a reflection of themselves in the words and know that they are not alone. And that they, too, can grow and thrive.”

Cohen said she was glad for all children to get an opportunity to see themselves in the work that the Fairfax County librarians do and in the over 3 million books the county has in its libraries.

Karl Frisch (Providence) said he was grateful to the students who came to the school board meetings hoping that adults would hear them and that their courage was inspiring. Frisch said that he never dreamed of speaking up for LGBTQ inclusion at school as a teenager. “I couldn’t even tell my friends I was gay,” Frisch said. “I was worried, if I acknowledged my truth, I would lose the love of my friends and my family.” He told how when the conversation about LGBTQIA+ first started, he told the board he would never back down.

Fritsch said he got over 1,000 emails, voicemails, letters, and social media comments in the days after, labeling him a pervert and worse. He told of threats of violence against him and his partner and how there were days he didn’t want to touch his phone or look at his inbox.

When non-LGBTQ young people become aware of the diverse and complicated lives of LGBTQ people as a result of the history they study or the novels they read, they do not become LGBTQ. “LGBTQ is not conta-

rious, but being more acceptable to different people certainly can be,” said Fritsch. “That scares some people, which is precisely why this work must continue. It is for everyone.”

More Resources for Mental Health

Megan O. McLaughlin (Braddock) provided an update as the board representative to the Fairfax County Successful Children and Youth Policy Team (SCYPT) during School Board member committee reports. SCYPT serves as the policy team for a broader, community-wide approach to ensure the success and well-being of children and youth in Fairfax County.

According to McLaughlin, one of the topics covered was a request for financial assistance for mental health upgrades and training additional therapists in Fairfax County to shorten the waitlist for families needing help. McLaughlin said that the committee recommended acceptance, but the Board of Supervisors must eventually approve it.

The second section of the mental health discussion dealt with hospitalizations. “We’ve got some really heartbreaking data about it even here in Fairfax County, the number of students who are requiring hospitalization for mental health needs,” McLaughlin said.

Explaining because there were not enough beds at any given time, McLaughlin said, “We had 17 students and their families wait-

ing with an average of seven days in order to get a bed.”

She added that SCYPT was trying to get additional funding for multidisciplinary services. That would be an alternative to having students in the hospital emergency rooms.

15 Contracts

At the Fairfax County School Board regular meeting held on Thursday, Dec. 2, the board awarded 15 contracts. Four contracts will provide hands-on installations every student at four elementary schools will enjoy for years to come. The Major Maintenance Fund will provide ADA-compliant playground installations at four elementary schools: Fairfax Villa-\$339,396; Floris-\$365,370; Oak Hill-\$362,105; and Vienna-\$314,897. While not as much fun but surely appreciated, major maintenance will also fund a chiller repair at Centre Ridge Elementary School for \$577,954.

The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II Fund under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 provides funding for automated temperature controls at two elementary schools, Bush-\$587,600 and Spring Hill-\$821,530; and for a rooftop unit replacement at Forte Support Center in Springfield-\$791,000.

Two elementary schools received roof replacement projects, Westbriar-\$159,324 and Fairfax Villa-\$304,972 through the Infrastructure Replacement Fund.

The board approved synthetic turf field replacement projects at two high schools. One is at Langley for \$871,055, funded by Fairfax County Public Schools, and the other is at South Lakes for \$960,000 funded by Fairfax County Public Schools and Fairfax County Park Authority.

Finally, the board awarded the contract for Kahua Software and professional services with a projected initial software cost of \$165,000 annually for a three-year term and a \$40,000 approximate startup cost for professional consulting services to implement the software and train staff on Kahua Software License and Professional Services. Kahua will assist the Office of Design and Construction to govern and streamline document management.

Burke Teen Models for Louis Vuitton on the Runway in Miami

FROM PAGE 4

convey a message.

“He was my inspiration, I got so emotional when I heard the news, I wanted to learn from him,” Sesay said. “He changed people’s lives due to fashion,” he added.

With Abloh’s death, the message will still live on, said Sesay. Coming out of the “shy kid” bubble is a first step.

When Sesay heard about his Louis Vuitton modeling opportunity, a light went on. “I was running up and down the hallway, like a mad man,” he said.

It’s just the first step in the modeling world though. In January, there’s a modeling show in Paris followed by fashion week in New York. Sesay is working on his passport status to be in other shows.

There’s still school to consider and since the show in Miami, his grades have picked up along with his goal setting inspirations. He’s taking normal classes though and isn’t getting involved with the fashion curriculum that is part of the Fairfax County schools. FCPS has a “fashion careers” section.

Sesay is promoting himself through Instagram and follows other models and influencers on this social media channel. “Right now my focus is to get a lot of followers,” he said.

☰ VOGUE SUBSCRIBE



Photo: Courtesy of Louis Vuitton

Ibrahim Sesay in Vogue.



After the rehearsal, Sesay and Chan go to his first NBA game in Miami.



Ibrahim with Migos rapper Offset at the afterparty.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Backstage the outfit is fit for Ibrahim at the Remix Show in Miami.



A backstage selfie in the Louis Vuitton room.

Chap Petersen Named Legislator Of the Year by Virginia Chamber

Last Friday, Dec. 3, Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34th) was named Legislator of the Year for 2021 by the Virginia Chamber of Commerce. In his acceptance speech in Richmond, he made the following, three promises:

1. Extraordinary restrictions based on COVID-19 must eventually end, especially restrictions on children. For almost two years, we have treated them as second-class citizens. In 2022, that will end.

2. The current budget surplus in Virginia is not based on good stewardship. It's based on our bipartisan decision to not conform our state tax laws to the 2018 Federal tax cuts. So we collected more on the same incomes. In 2022, we must lessen the tax burden on working families.

3. Executive power must be subject to constitutional limits. Unchecked authority is not democratic and rarely leads to positive outcomes. It doesn't matter who is Governor. We need to restore checks and balances."

Petersen said he was delight-



Chap Petersen, left, receives the award from Virginia Chamber of Commerce President Barry Duval.

ed to receive the award. Saying "It's always nice to be noticed," he stressed that he's "proud of

my two-year fight to protect small business in Virginia."

- BONNIE HOBBS

LeafFilter GUTTER PROTECTION BACKED BY A YEAR-ROUND CLOG-FREE GUARANTEE

CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE ESTIMATE 1-877-614-6667

15% OFF + **10% OFF** + **5% OFF**
YOUR ENTIRE PURCHASE* SENIOR & MILITARY DISCOUNTS TO THE FIRST 50 CALLERS!**

Mon-Thurs: 8am-11pm, Fri-Sat: 8am-5pm, Sun: 2pm-8pm EST | Promo Number: 285

*For those who qualify. One coupon per household. No obligation estimate valid for 1 year. **Offer valid at time of estimate only. 2The leading consumer reporting agency conducted a 16 month outdoor test of gutter guards in 2010 and recognized LeafFilter as the "#1 rated professionally installed gutter guard system in America." Manufactured in Plainwell, Michigan and processed at LMT Mercer Group in Ohio. See Representative for full warranty details. CSLB# 1035795. DOPL #10783658-5501 License# 7656 License# 50145 License# 41354 License# 99338 License# 128344 License# 218294 WA UBI# 603 233 977 License# 2102212986 License# 2106212946 License# 2705132153A License# LEAFFNW822JZ License# WV056912 License# WC-29998-H17 Nassau HIC License# H01067000 Registration# 176447 Registration# HIC-0049205 Registration# C127225 Registration# C127230 Registration# 366920918 Registration# PCS475 Registration# IR731804 Registration# 13VH09953900 Registration# PAD69383 Suffolk HIC License# 52229-H License# 2705169445 License# 26200022 License# 262000403 License# 0086990 Registration# H-19114

Life is short. Don't make it shorter.

Choose life. Make sure your kids get their HPV vaccine and protect them against cancer.

@vaccinatevirginia

Protect the ones you love, get vaccinated now.

VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



Prepare for power outages with a Generac home standby generator

REQUEST A FREE QUOTE!
844-947-1479

FREE

7-Year Extended Warranty*
A \$695 Value!

Limited Time Offer - Call for Details

Special Financing Available

Subject to Credit Approval

*To qualify, consumers must request a quote, purchase, install and activate the generator with a participating dealer. Call for a full list of terms and conditions.

GENERAC



Protect the ones you love, get your flu shot today.



@vaccinatevirginia

Protect the ones you love, get vaccinated now.

VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Find us on Facebook and become a fan!

www.Facebook.com/connectionnewspapers

THE CONNECTION
Newspapers & Online
The Connection to Your Community
www.connectionnewspapers.com

Be a part of our:

Wellbeing pages, the first week of every month.

Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

Senior Living, fourth week of every month.

Questions?

E-mail sales@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9431

THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

HOLIDAY CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 11

aboard the tall ship Providence for a special Christmas story time. This year's tale will be "The Christmas Ship," the true story of the schooner Rouse Simmons, the ship that for years supplied Christmas trees to the people of Chicago by making a dangerous winter crossing of Lake Michigan. This story is sure to delight young sailors ages 5 to 12. Check in at the Gazebo on the G-H Pier next to Founder's Park. Visit the website: tallshipprovidence.org



Christmas Illuminations at Mount Vernon will be held Dec. 17-18 in Mount Vernon.

DEC. 17-18

Christmas Illuminations at Mount Vernon. 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Kick off the holiday season with fireworks overlooking the Potomac River. Tour the Mansion to learn about holiday celebrations during Washington's time with live 18th-century music. See the lantern-lit historic area, the Mansion aglow in beautiful amber light, and the Upper Garden and Greenhouse dazzling in blue and lavender with moving wintry light patterns. Admission: \$60 adult/\$38 youth with mansion tour; \$58 adult/\$36 youth without mansion tour; for members, \$50 adult/\$28 youth with mansion tour; \$48 adult/\$26 youth without mansion tour. Visit mountvernon.org/illuminations



Visit the website: alexsym.org

DEC. 17-18

Civil War Christmas at Carlyle House. 5 to 8 p.m. At Carlyle House, 121 N. Fairfax St., Alexandria. Discover how Christmas was celebrated when the Green family lived at Carlyle House and the Mansion House Hotel was being used as a Civil War hospital. Stay tuned for updates about live music. Tours offered of the first floor with timed entry on the hour and half hour. Space is limited and reservations are required. Visit the website: novaparks.com

FRIDAY/DEC. 17

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra Presents: Home for the Holidays. 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. At The Rachel M. Schlesinger Center for Performing Arts NOVA Alexandria Campus, 4915 East Campus Drive, Alexandria. This December, the ASO brings back the joy of live holiday music that audiences yearned for in 2020. ASO will accompany dancers from BalletNOVA with selections from Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker. Alexandria Choral Society joins the ASO for choruses from Händel's Messiah and will lead the audience in popular holiday carols.

SATURDAY/DEC. 18

Caroling on Horseback. Town of Clifton. 1:15 p.m. Caroling and Procession. The route through Clifton will follow Main Street to Chapel Road, then Water Street to School Street and back to Main Street. Costumed judging and sharing refreshments will occur after the procession in the floodplain. Visit www.cliftonhorsesociety.org.

SATURDAY, DEC. 18

Herndon Holiday Model Train Show and Caboose Open House, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At ArtSpace Herndon - 750 Center Street, Herndon. W&OD Caboose Open House, 11 a.m.

to 2 p.m., Lynn Street, Herndon. Herndon's historic 1949 caboose will be open also on Dec. 18 for limited hours, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The caboose is located on Lynn Street, next to the Herndon Municipal Center. N-Scale Operating Layout by the Northern Virginia NTRAK. Hosted by the Herndon Historical Society and Arts Herndon. Contact: herndon-historicalsociety@gmail.com

SUNDAY/DEC. 19

Alexandria Symphony Orchestra Presents: Home for the Holidays. 3-5 p.m. At George Washington Masonic Memorial, 101 Callahan Dr., Alexandria. This December, the ASO brings back the joy of live holiday music that audiences yearned for in 2020. ASO will accompany dancers from BalletNOVA with selections from Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker. Alexandria Choral Society joins the ASO for choruses from Händel's Messiah and will lead the audience in popular holiday carols. Visit the website: alexsym.org

FRIDAY/DEC. 24

Waterskiing Santa. 1 p.m. At Waterfront Park (1 King St. and 1A Prince St.), Alexandria City Marina (0 Cameron St.), Founders Park (351 N. Union St.) and Point Lumley Park (1 Duke St.) Gather along historic Alexandria's Potomac River waterfront for a spectacular show by Waterskiing Santa and his merry crew. Come early to see the pre-show (on jet skis). Visit waterskiingsanta.com

FRIDAY/DEC. 31

Olde Year's Day at Torpedo Factory Art Center. 1 to 5 p.m. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union St., Alexandria. The whole family can celebrate the close of 2021 at Torpedo Factory Art Center. Find hands-on activities, meet artists working in their studios, and get inspired for 2022. Visit the website: torpedofactory.org

FRIDAY/DEC. 31

First Night Alexandria. 12 p.m. to midnight. At various locations throughout Old Town Alexandria. Experience the region's signature New Year's Eve festival of music and more. Enjoy live performances throughout the day and into the evening for kids, teens, adults and seniors. New events include a kick-off at Market Square and a "Battle of the Buskers," leading up to the midnight countdown and fireworks finale over the Potomac River. Visit the event website for a full schedule of events. Visit the website: firstnightalexandria.org

Tis the Season for Giving

FROM PAGE 7

serve, including adults and families experiencing homelessness. Donations of new or handmade items and yarn can be made now through Jan. 5 at any of the locations below (look for the donation box in the entry/lobby):

Herndon Senior Center: 873 Grace St, Herndon

Kingstowne Center for Active Adults: 6488 Landsdowne Center, Alexandria

Lewinsville/Pimmit Hills Senior Center: 1613 Great Falls Street, McLean

Little River Glen Senior Center: 4001 Barker Court, Fairfax

Mott Community Center: 12111 Brad-dock Road, Fairfax

Operation Warm-The Sully District Office is partnering with Operation Warm to purchase 500 new winter coats for children in the area. Donate online now through Dec. 10.

Reston Winter Coat Closet-The Hunter Mill District Office and Cornerstones partner every year on a Winter Coat Closet to collect and distribute new or gently used and clean heavy winter coats, as well as new hats, scarves and gloves for neighbors in need. Drop off your donations at the North County Governmental Center, 1801 Cameron Glen Drive, Reston, between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 11, and Saturday, Jan. 8. <https://www.cornerstonesva.org/donations/drives/winter-coat-closet/>

Gifts for Families

Reston Elf Store-The Cathy Hudgins Community Center at Southgate and the Reston Teen Center are collecting donations their Elf Store event. Through donations of new or gently used items, staff create a store-like environment where young residents can select a free gift for special adults in their lives. Suggested donations include jewelry, scarves, picture frames, candles, tea towels, robes, nail polish, home goods, DVDs, ties, gloves, sports items, wallets, flashlights, tools, shaving kits and gift cards, as well as wrapping paper, gift bags and tissue paper. Donations can be dropped off through Dec. 10 at the Cathy Hudgins Community Center at Southgate, 12125 Pinecrest Road, Reston.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

CALL 703-549-0004
FOR ADVERTISING INFORMATION

ELECTRICAL ELECTRICAL

K & D ELECTRIC

COMMERCIAL / RESIDENTIAL SERVICE
Family Owned & Operated

Recessed Lighting
Ceiling Fans
Phone/CATV
Computer Network Cabling
Service Upgrades
Hot Tubs, etc...

Licensed/Bonded/Insured
Office 703-335-0654
Mobile 703-499-0522
lektrkman28@gmail.com

LANDSCAPING LANDSCAPING

Quality Tree Service & Landscaping

Reasonable prices. Licensed & insured.

Expert Tree Work
Tree removal, topping & pruning, shrubbery trimming, mulching, leaf removal, planting, hauling, gutter cleaning, retaining walls, drainage problems, etc.

25 years of experience - Free estimates
703-868-5358

24 Hour Emergency Tree Service

Landscape Drainage Landscape Drainage

Drainage, Erosion, Landscaping, Hardscaping, Patios, Retaining Walls & More
Your Neighborhood Company since 1987!
703-772-0500 www.ProDrainage.com
VA. Licensed Class A Contractor

Sign up for
FREE DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION
to any or all of our 15 papers
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM/SUBSCRIBE

YEAR-END SAVINGS EVENT

Jack Taylor's

ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA

WE NEED TRADES!
 GET OVER KELLEY BLUE BOOK VALUE FOR YOUR TRADE THIS WEEK!



NEW 2022 TOYOTA COROLLA LE SDN
 LEASES STARTING FROM...

\$189 /MO



MODEL# 1852. MSRP \$21,520. LEASE OFFER FOR QUALIFIED LESSEES. BASED ON 39 MONTHS, 10K MILES/YR & \$2999 DUE AT SIGNING. SECURITY DEPOSIT WAIVED. PLUS TAX, TAGS, FREIGHT AND \$789 PROCESSING FEE. FACTORY PROGRAMS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

NEW 2022 TOYOTA CAMRY LE SDN
 LEASES STARTING FROM...

\$259 /MO



MODEL# 2532. MSRP \$26,320. LEASE OFFER FOR QUALIFIED LESSEES. BASED ON 39 MONTHS, 10K MILES/YR & \$2999 DUE AT SIGNING. SECURITY DEPOSIT WAIVED. PLUS TAX, TAGS, FREIGHT AND \$789 PROCESSING FEE. FACTORY PROGRAMS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

NEW 2022 TOYOTA PRIUS
 LEASES STARTING FROM...

\$269 /MO



MODEL# 1223. MSRP \$26,730. LEASE OFFER FOR QUALIFIED LESSEES. BASED ON 39 MONTHS, 10K MILES/YR & \$2999 DUE AT SIGNING. SECURITY DEPOSIT WAIVED. PLUS TAX, TAGS, FREIGHT AND \$789 PROCESSING FEE. FACTORY PROGRAMS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

NEW 2022 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER
 LEASES STARTING FROM...

\$339 /MO



MODEL# 6948. MSRP \$40,220. LEASE OFFER FOR QUALIFIED LESSEES. BASED ON 39 MONTHS, 10K MILES/YR & \$2999 DUE AT SIGNING. SECURITY DEPOSIT WAIVED. PLUS TAX, TAGS, FREIGHT AND \$789 PROCESSING FEE. FACTORY PROGRAMS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

SERVICE & PARTS HOURS: MON-FRI 6A-7P & SAT 7A-5P

<p>BATTERY SPECIAL FREE BATTERY CHECK-UP INCLUDES: CHECK COLD CRANKING AMPS AND VISUAL INSPECTION OF BATTERY CONDITION. INCLUDES BATTERY CONDITION PRINT OUT. <small>TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. OFFER ENDS 12/31/21.</small></p>	<p>LUBE, OIL & FILTER SPECIAL \$39.95 \$44.95 FOR SYNTHETIC OIL CHANGE INCLUDES: CHANGE OIL (UP TO 5 QTS.), INSTALL GENUINE TOYOTA OIL FILTER, INSPECT & ADJUST ALL FLUID LEVELS AND COMPLIMENTARY MULTI-POINT INSPECTION WITH PRINT OUT. <small>NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER ENDS 12/31/21.</small></p>	<p>ALIGNMENT SPECIAL \$89.95 4-WHEEL ALIGNMENT INCLUDES: 4-WHEEL ALIGNMENT, INSPECT SUSPENSION, BALL JOINTS, STRUTS & SHOCKS, TIRE CONDITION AND SET TIRE PRESSURE. <small>TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. OFFER ENDS 12/31/21.</small></p>	<p>BRAKE PAD SPECIAL \$99.95 BRAKE PAD REPLACEMENT INCLUDES: INSTALL GENUINE TOYOTA FRONT BRAKE PADS, INSPECT FRONT & REAR ROTORS AND/OR DRUMS, CHECK TIRE CONDITION AND INSPECT ALL HARDWARE. TCMC PADS ONLY. MACHINE ROTORS AN ADDITIONAL \$199.95. <small>NOT VALID WITH ANY OTHER OFFER OR COUPON. TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. OFFER ENDS 12/31/21.</small></p>	<p>TOYOTACARE PLUS \$329.00 SPECIAL MAINTAIN PEACE OF MIND BY EXTENDING YOUR TOYOTACARE COMPLEMENTARY MAINTENANCE PLAN TO 4 YEARS/45,000 MILES! <small>TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. OFFER ENDS 12/31/21.</small></p>	<p>SERVICE VARIABLE DISCOUNT THE MORE YOU SPEND, THE MORE YOU SAVE! \$10 OFF... WHEN YOU SPEND \$50-\$99 \$15 OFF... WHEN YOU SPEND \$100-\$199 \$20 OFF... WHEN YOU SPEND \$200-\$499 \$50 OFF... WHEN YOU SPEND \$500+ <small>TOYOTA VEHICLES ONLY. COUPON MUST BE PRESENTED AT TIME OF WRITE-UP. TAX AND SHOP SUPPLIES ADDITIONAL. VALID ONLY AT ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA. OFFER ENDS 12/31/21.</small></p>
--	--	--	--	--	--

CALL TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT TODAY: 703-684-0710



Toyota's President's Award 34 years in a row!

Se habla español

Jack Taylor's
ALEXANDRIA TOYOTA

3750 Richmond Hwy • Alexandria
703-684-0700
 AlexandriaToyota.com