

CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Oak Hill ♦ Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

WELLBEING

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Snow Closes Schools For Third Day

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Snow measurements by the National Weather Service ranged from 4.5 inches to more than 8 inches in the area.

Celebrate MLK
Day with RCC

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CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 6

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Grocery Tax Change Proposed

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Since the dumping of chests of tea in Boston Harbor by American colonists in 1773, American citizens have shown a distaste for taxes on food. The topic of eliminating Virginia's grocery tax was raised again during this year's gubernatorial race by then candidate, now Governor-elect, Glen Youngkin. This is not the first time elimination or reduction of the grocery tax has been proposed, by both Democratic and Republican politicians.

Today the grocery tax remains a major source of funding for education, transportation, and localities, according to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, a total of \$341 million in revenue that could be lost if the tax were abolished.

Gov. Ralph Northam (D) has proposed elimination of the 1.5 percent state portion of the tax; however the one percent portion going to localities would remain under his budget proposal. The budget proposed by the outgoing governor is under a two year cycle that must be reviewed and agreed upon by

the General Assembly and enacted by the incoming governor.

Virginia now enjoys an unprecedented \$2.6 billion surplus following record economic growth and federal subsidy under the American Rescue plan. The Northam budget adds \$1.1 billion in the Revenue Stabilization fund, raising reserves to \$3.8 Billion.

With the new Youngkin administration's lofty goals to "restore excellence in education ... rebuilding schools, raising teacher pay, and investing in special education," Youngkin has not said what funds would be put toward those goals if the grocery tax source is eliminated.

Originally enacted in 1966, the University of Virginia attributes adoption of the two percent statewide retail sales and use tax and one percent local option sales tax, to a "public mood change to a desire for significant progress in public services and specifically to public education." The primary purpose of the tax was for upgrading public education. The first year's revenue of \$109.6 million had grown to \$349.8 million five years later in 1972. Interest in public education remains high

as evidenced in the recent Youngkin-McAuliffe race.

The grocery tax became a campaign issue in the 1973 campaign between incumbent Governor Mills E Godwin Jr., who had enacted the tax, and Democratic challenger Henry Howell, who was then the Lieutenant Governor. Godwin narrowly won election to his second term. Democratic Gov. Douglas Wilder (1990-1994) also ran on the populist message of "no new taxes" and sought to remove taxes on prescription drugs and groceries.

Such taxes are considered "regressive" meaning they have a greater impact on low income people than the wealthy. Because the tax is applied uniformly it has the effect of taking a greater percentage of income from low income earners than from high income earners; the average tax burden decreases with income.

Although 45 states have general sales taxes, only 13, including Virginia, still tax groceries; Virginia is one of ten that impose a lower rate on groceries than their general sales tax rate, according to the Center On Budget and Policy Priorities (April 2020).

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We Need Your Help Again

We are sincerely grateful and thankful to you for helping in 2021 to save one of America's oldest newspapers, the Alexandria Gazette Packet, publishing continuously since 1784



And affiliated newspapers



Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped to keep all your Connection Newspapers alive throughout Alexandria, Fairfax County Arlington County and Potomac, Md. along with affiliated websites and digital media. Now we need help again in 2022.

Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

Please, help save these historical papers.

All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk. The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Con-

nection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyper local news to residents. It feels like no small miracle to be looking forward into 2022.

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

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PHOTOS COURTESY RESTON COMMUNITY CENTER



Beverly Cosham, President, Board of Directors, Reston Community Center.



Leila Gordan, Executive Director, Reston Community Center.

Heather McGhee, featured at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday Reston Community lunch on Monday, Jan. 17, 2022.

Time of Reflection And Keeping the Promise

2022 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday observances at Reston Community Center.

By DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Developing the multi-day Reston Community Center's (RCC) activities to mark the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday, Leila Gordan, RCC Executive Director and Beverly Cosham, President RCC Board of Governors ask tough questions; "Are we fully committed to what Dr. King believed in and his teachings? Are we doing enough to be part of the change in eliminating injustice?"

Gordan noted the RCC's long standing commitment to going beyond entertainment for the Dr. King Jr events. "We want to be purposeful; to give space to programming and conversations about Black lives in American life" throughout the year.

For the 2022 Dr. King Jr. events, the Reston Community Center invited two nationally recognized headliners to share their powerful, galvanizing voices: speakers who will look not only to the past and present, but to the future.

Heather McGhee is a nationally recognized expert and author of economic and social policy. She is the former president of Demos, a think tank "that powers the movement for a just, inclusive, multiracial democracy."

She now chairs the Board of "Color of Change," online racial justice organization. McGhee will be featured at the Reston Community Lunch on Monday, Jan. 17, 2022.

McGhee is the author of the New York

Where and When:

Reston Community Center presents 2022 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday weekend at CenterStage, Hunters Woods Village Center, 2310 Colts Neck Rd, Reston, VA 20191.

❖ Baratunde Thurston: Writer, Comedian, Activist at CenterStage, Sunday, Jan. 16, 2020 at 2 p.m. Tickets: \$15 Reston/\$20 Non-Reston.

❖ Heather McGhee featured presenter at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Community Lunch at Reston Community Center, Monday, Jan. 17 at 11 a.m. Tickets: \$5 Reston/\$10 Non-Reston.

Note: It is recommended that children under 16 be accompanied by an adult. Note: for health and safety masks are required to be worn. Details at www.restoncommunitycenter.com

Times best-seller "The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together." She writes of "The Solidarity Dividend" a term for benefits gained when people come together across race to accomplish what cannot be accomplished alone. In the book she asks "What If racism is actually driving inequality for everyone?"

Baratunde Thurston is a writer, comedian and commentator. Growing up in Washington, DC and then suburban Maryland became an initial touch-point for his observations about life in America and his presentations about race, culture, and politics.

Thurston's TED Talk "How to Deconstruct Racism, One Headline at a Time," has over 5 million views. His New York Times bestseller "How To Be Black," is an autobiography about the challenges he faced while growing up. His podcast "How to Citizen with Baratunde" has a mission to reimagine the word "citizen" into a verb showing its collective power to change politics in working toward outcomes that benefit the many, not just the few.

Reston Community Center's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday weekend events aim to be rich conversations and deep reflection to make a real difference on the journey to full social justice.

2022 Reston Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday

Celebration Calendar of Events
Sunday, Jan. 16

Baratunde Thurston, Writer, Comedian, Activist
2 p.m.

RCC Hunters Woods – the CenterStage
\$15 Reston/\$20 Non-Reston (tickets sold through the CenterStage Box Office)

Baratunde Thurston holds space for hard and complex conversations with his blend of humor, wisdom and compassion. He is an Emmy-nominated TV host who has worked for The Onion, produced for The Daily Show, advised the Obama White House and written The New York Times bestseller How To Be Black.

Monday, Jan. 17

11 a.m. Keynote Address by Heather McGhee followed by Community Lunch

RCC Hunters Woods: the CenterStage and Community Room

\$5 Reston/\$10 Non-Reston (tickets sold through the CenterStage Box Office)

Especially for Youth

10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

RCC Hunters Woods

6 – 12 Years Old. Free. Registration Required. Reg. #704750-2A

You may register your school-age child (first to sixth grade) to participate in activities at RCC. Children must be registered in advance and no onsite registration will be available on the day of the event. Children will rotate through a series of activities, including an age-appropriate video and arts and crafts. All activities will be based on the history of Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement. A self-contained lunch will be provided.

Reston Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration Exhibit

January 2022 • RCC Hunters Woods

Art from Reston's elementary schools celebrating Dr. King and his life's work.

Making Decision During COVID

Even small decisions can cause anxiety, stress.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

"Should I allow my 12-year-old daughter to go to the movies with a group of friends, two of whom haven't been vaccinated?" "Should I let my son play in games with the basketball team when players on both teams haven't been vaccinated?"

These are the types of questions that Potomac parents Elaine and Brett Madden ask themselves almost daily. In the age of the coronavirus pandemic and omicron variant, the Maddens, like many others, face making decisions that have the potential to cause a major chain of events. This cycle often leads to stress that impacts one's overall health and wellbeing.

"It's like living with a low grade anxiety that is subtle, but builds up if we're not in tune with our body," said Elaine Madden, a licensed therapist who specializes in stress management. "Almost 99% of the clients I'm seeing are dealing with anxiety around making decisions that are related to COVID. If they make the wrong decision, will they catch the disease or spread it to others? Will their job be affected by COVID? Should they begin looking for a new job? With the spike in new cases, there's been a new wave of uncertainty."

Madden points to a recent study by the American Psychological Association, which showed that daily tasks and decision-making have become more difficult during the pandemic, particularly for parents.

"I've been telling my patients to take a step back, breathe and really think through the ramifications of each decision and write them down," she said. "This can work for decisions that range from small things like what to pack in your kids' lunches, to larger ones like whether to plan a vacation."

For larger decisions, like a career or job change, Madden suggests enlisting the help of a few trusted advisors who can offer objective guidance.

"You need someone who has experience dealing with your issues, but won't be impacted by them," she said. "For example, a college student who is deciding whether or not to study abroad might get the opinion of an older adult who has actually spent a semester abroad rather than, or in addition to, a parent who would be paying for that semester. If you're decid-

SEE EVEN SMALL. PAGE 4



A rendering of the Historic Downtown Herndon Revitalization, the project is “Under Construction.”

Sheila Olem, mayor of the Town of Herndon, holds up her home-made sign, “The Dig is On in Herndon,” on Dec. 7, 2021.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Status: ‘Under Construction’ Herndon Downtown Redevelopment Project

‘Breathing new life into the heart of Herndon.’

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Part of an ongoing series.

The Herndon Downtown Redevelopment Project is “Under Construction,” according to the Interactive Land Use & Development Map on the town’s website and the town’s mayor.

“The dig is on in Herndon,” said Sheila

Olem, mayor of the Town of Herndon.

The amended Comprehensive Agreement between the Town of Herndon and Comstock Herndon Venture, LC, effective on Dec. 3, 2020, set a deadline for Comstock to start construction on the project on Dec. 31, 2021. According to the amended Agreement, Comstock had the option to postpone the Outside Satisfaction Date for up to twenty-four months by giving Herndon written notice before Dec. 31, 2021.

“In this new year, the town is thrilled to

be moving forward with Comstock to bring this vibrant redevelopment project to reality in our downtown,” said a spokesman for the Town of Herndon. “We greatly appreciate Fairfax County’s recognition of the value of the project, most recently in the form of the new grant allocation, approved by the Herndon Town Council in December,” she added.

Renamed the Historic Downtown Herndon Revitalization on Comstock’s website, “breathing new life into the heart of Herndon,” the mixed-use, bicycle-friendly development includes luxury residential units, retail/restaurant spaces, an art center and public arts plaza, and structured parking.

It is being developed through a Public-Private Partnership agreement between Comstock and Herndon. The three- to four-story buildings’ architecture is in keeping with the town’s Heritage Preservation District. Off-street private and public garage parking, streetscape improvements, and outdoor public spaces are all part of the project.

According to its website, “Comstock is at the forefront of the urban transformation of Washington, DC’s Dulles Corridor, where its managed portfolio includes two of the largest transit-oriented, mixed-use developments in the Washington, D.C. area, Reston Station and Loudoun Station.”

Home & Remodeling Show Returns

Returning after a 2-year hiatus, the Home & Remodeling Show returns to Northern Virginia Jan. 21-23 to give all those who have been staring at their old kitchens, baths and make-shift home offices a reason to get out and start those home improvement projects. Buggy

Drake, from Bravo’s “Below Deck Mediterranean” will appear at the event Saturday and Sunday for stage presentations and to design a featured tablescape.

More than 150 companies will be on hand at the Dulles Expo Center event offering the latest products and services in home

remodeling, renovation, home décor and redesign.

An ongoing schedule of home remodeling and renovation experts conducting seminars will be conducted throughout the three-day event.

Show and ticket information: www.HomeAndRemodeling.com

Show.com

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Dulles Expo Center – 4320
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Chantilly, VA

Friday, Jan. 21, 2022, 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.; Saturday, Jan. 22, 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.; Sunday, Jan. 23,

10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Tickets (single tickets valid for one day of show): Adults (at the door) \$12; Adults (online only) \$9; Senior Citizens 65+ (at the door) \$9; Children 6-12 \$3; Children Ages 5 & Under FREE

Check online for discounted admission offers for Friday.

Even Small Decisions Can Cause Anxiety, Stress

FROM PAGE 3

ing to change jobs, someone with a financial stake in your decision should not be the only person offering an opinion. But just know that these opinions are just advice. The final decision should be made jointly with those closest to you.”

Some decisions are minor, but can feel monumental. “Many of us are on decision

overload, so we start shutting down, and things like deciding what to wear or what to eat can feel paralyzing,” said Great Falls psychologist Rachel Cohen. “Try planning ahead during a time when you’re feeling relaxed. For example, my husband and I gather our kids on Saturday and we decide on a menu for the week for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks.

We create a chart and pre-make as much of those meals as we can. The same goes for our clothes for the week.”

“Know your limits and boundaries and have a backup plan,” said Alexandria-based therapist Lee Tripp, MSW. “If going into the office is mandatory for you, but your child has to quarantine and miss school unexpectedly, what is your childcare plan? At what

point will you decide to have your child tested for COVID? When you hear snuffles? When they have a persistent cough? Having these guidelines in place can cut down on the number of last minute decisions.”

“Try not to get stuck on over-analyzing,” added Cohen. “At the end of the day, we just need to make a decision, take a chance and stop procrastinating.”

First Snow of the 2022 Season

Schools close for the third day on Wednesday.

By **MERCIA HOBSON**
THE CONNECTION

Herndon and Reston saw between 4.5 and 5.9 inches of snow by the end of the storm, according to the National Weather Service. Chantilly and Centreville had between 6.6 and 8.1 inches of measured snow by the end of the storm.

According to the Town of Herndon website, the Herndon Department of Public Works does not remove snow from residential or business sidewalks except to facilitate pedestrian travel on select major routes and schools. “Be a good neighbor and clear sidewalks adjacent to your business or home,” states the town website. “Please do not shovel snow into the streets or block storm drains or fire hydrants. Consider offering assistance to elderly or infirm neighbors.”

Wednesday, Jan. 5 marked the third day that Fairfax County Public Schools would be closed.



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/ CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS



Duty calls and the first snow of 2022 on Monday, Jan. 3, doesn't stop the Town of Herndon's Department of Public Works and the United States Postal Service.



The first snow of 2022 covers three Town Herndon historic structures located on Elden Street, the red well house at the 810 Elden Street residence (1916), the residence at 814 Elden Street (1870), and the bell tower and roof of the Gothic-style church built in the 1880s on the corner of Elden and Grace streets which used to be known as St. Timothy's Episcopal and is now used as Masonic Lodge.



The unofficial Connection Newspaper ruler shows a depth of 5-inches of snow fell in the Town of Herndon.

Proposed Lake Anne Plaza Beautification Plan

It's not coming up roses.

By **MERCIA HOBSON**
THE CONNECTION

The aspirational proposal by Reston Historic Trust and Gupta Family Foundation for the beautification of Lake Anne Plaza could be delayed or curtailed. Margaret Gupta, president of the Gupta Family Foundation, wrote in an email that while the attorney for the Lake Anne of Reston Condominium Association [LARCA] and their attorney had agreed upon project terms for the proposed “Lake Anne Rising-Phase-1” beautification, given the project's short implementation timeline, they had expected the LARCA board to move quickly. But that does not appear to be the case.

“The LARCA board is greatly appreciative of the aspirational proposal,” said George Hadjikyriakou, the newly elected president of the LARCA board, in an email. LARCA's role as a board is to provide proper governance by ensuring the association's bylaws are followed and the property is maintained and in good repair, he said.

According to Hadjikyriakou, the Reston Historic Trust and Gupta Family Foundation presented their beautification proposal at a meeting of their supporters in November. However, LARCA and the property owners have yet to receive a detailed plan.

Gupta said they were “hearing rumblings” that LARCA wanted to add new conditions to the agreement that was already finalized

by their lawyer, which she said would “essentially render the project impractical.”

Under the proposed plan, Lake Anne Plaza, a property of LARCA, would be revitalized with a \$250,000 investment. The Gupta Foundation pledged \$25,000 in seed money and set aspirational goals for four Reston groups: LARCA — \$45,000; Reston Community Center — \$50,000; Reston Association — \$25,000; and community fundraising — \$105,000.

When LARCA could not commit funds to its noted aspirational goal of \$45,000 by either the project's first or the extended deadline, Dec. 1 and Dec. 6, respectively, some Lake Anne property owners banded together and pledged the funds themselves.

The proposed beautifications include, among other things, installing a sign at the plaza's entrance and restoring the Pyramid Park sculpture and the Fonseca Monolith, as well as installing new plants in the plaza's 15 planters and cleaning the concrete and bricks.

According to Hadjikyriakou, Shashi Gupta, Margaret Gupta's husband, submitted a contract on behalf of the Reston Historic Trust. It was then sent to LARCA's general counsel to ensure it complied with LARCA's bylaws. The LARCA board asked its lawyer to suggest changes to the contract so its terms would align with their bylaws.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Reston Pride, one of many events on Lake Anne Plaza that attract public crowds.

“At no time was an agreement reached by either party,” Hadjikyriakou said.

He added that, as they understand it, there are aspects of the proposal that would require a membership vote due to the proposed cost of modifications and improvements of over \$25,000. Also, it was noteworthy that the county's Architectural Review Board must approve any modification to the common property. “Their approval of any such modifications will need to include a guarantee that our ability to qualify for future grants or tax credits for needed rehabilitation work to our property will not be negatively impacted,”

said Hadjikyriakou.

LARCA owns the private plaza, frequently used for public events. Reston Historic Trust and Museum, a business on the plaza, produces its annual Cardboard Boat Regatta, a fund-raiser there.

Reston Community Center [RCC] uses the plaza for its Reston Multicultural Festival and Reston Pride.

Free public events like these and those by others draw thousands of visitors at a time to the privately-owned plaza, resulting in wear and tear that is currently the responsibility of LARCA. Maintenance delays due to tight budgets have hampered LARCA's upkeep and improvements for many years.

“We are working hard to prioritize the many issues before our board, such as responding to our

owner's requests for heat, repairs to their units, waterproofing, balcony repairs, and the voids under the Quayside building from the months of water leakage, while developing a budget to include funding for these needed repairs,” said Hadjikyriakou.

According to Gupta, the proposed next step for the project is to await a response from LARCA.

“However, due to LARCA's requirement that the project is completed by April-end before the farmer's market starts, we will have to assess the feasibility if and when LARCA decides to move forward,” she said.

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Employment

IT: Can Softtech, Inc, has mult openings in Herndon, VA, Software Developer: Conduct, anlyz, devel, dsgn & build business & data layer components. Sr. Software Developer: Work, dsgn, devel & migrate multi-tier architecture apps. All pos req trav/relo to var unanticipated client locs t/o the U.S w/ the expenses paid by the employer. Mail resume & position to Director, Can Softtech INC, 13221 Woodland Park RD, Suite # 110, Herndon, VA, 20171.

Employment

Optum Services, Inc. Technical Support Analyst. Herndon, VA. Act as a bridge between the customer and the Product Engineering teams and provide configurable or technical solutions to customer and internal issues. Mail resume: UHG GMI Recruitment at 9900 Bren Road East, MN008 R120, Minnetonka, MN 55343 and indicate applying for 21-VA-4314.

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-Werner Heisenberg

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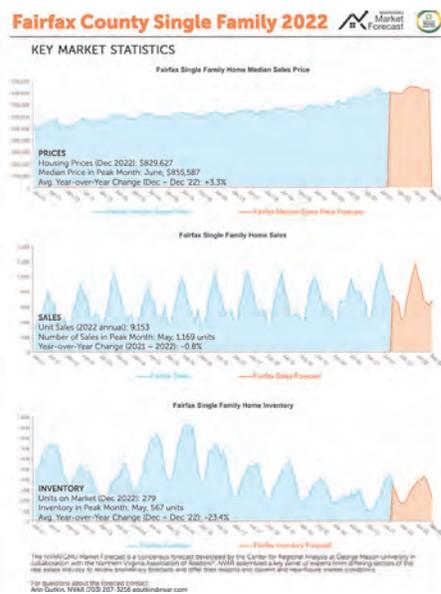
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REAL ESTATE

2022 Real Estate Forecast

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION



The Northern Virginia Association of Realtors recently spotlighted predictions for Fairfax County, Arlington County and City of Alexandria. The association collaborated on the consensus housing forecast with the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University's Schar School of Policy and Government to answer one question: Where is the market headed?

"In 2022, we expect the market to be a little slower but still fast-paced in terms of sales. Homes are going to move quickly. We're still going to see a lot of opportunities to buy, but you have to be ready for it," said NVAR CEO Ryan McLaughlin. He also predicted that inventory would be scarce and that home prices would rise, but more slowly.

Derrick Swaak, 2021 president of NVAR and partner/managing broker at TTR Sotheby's International Realty McLean, said they convened a panel of key experts from different industry sectors.

McLaughlin predicted that moderation would be the theme for the 2022 market. "[It] will be a bit cooler, but it will still be a very good year for residential real estate. We do expect a slower pace in home sales as mortgage rates increase and housing options remain scarce. Although home prices will continue to rise, they will still be at a more moderate pace than in the past year."

According to McLaughlin, since the spring of 2020, Realtors witnessed a residential real estate market that defied expectations amid a pandemic that brought the economy to a near standstill. The housing market, McLaughlin said, did more than just survive; it thrived. He attributed this to the region's built-in competitive economic advantages, including a strong technology sector and employment boosted by federal government jobs. "The influx of new jobs provided and still to come by Amazon has created a ripple effect that benefits the region," McLaughlin said.

Terry L. Clower, professor of Public Policy at George Mason University and director of GMU's Center for Regional Analysis, said median prices would rise about 5.7 percent at the national level, but they expect a drop by about 1.7 percent in the number of home sales. "What we're expecting in this region is a little bit slower price increase, and that's somewhat because our prices are already pretty high," Clower said. "We are at the top of our market," he said, particularly for entry-level purchases."

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"There's going to be heavy competition for most houses ... If you want to buy a home, you're going to have to compete for it. If you want to sell a home, you'll get everything you're asking for, particularly for a single-family."

— Terry L. Clower, Ph.D.,
GMU's Center for Regional Analysis

Drop in Inventory

Clower predicted a 23 percent drop in inventory in Fairfax County. What that means, Clower said, is that in "an average month through 2022, we're expecting there to be fewer than 500 homes on the market."

"That's a significant new number. ... We're not going to see that big of a drop in sales, about 0.8 percent, and we expect to see a rise in price ... in Fairfax County, 3.2 percent," Clower said. He said he expects to see an increase in the inventory of townhomes. "Now, when we say they're increasing, though that's [only] ... about 300."

Clower said many believe inventory in Northern Virginia cannot fall any further, but it does. There might be some variation in the submarkets, but there would not be a lot of choices overall.

"There's going to be heavy competition for most houses ... If you want to buy a home, you're going to have to compete for it. If you want to sell a home, you'll get everything you're asking for, particularly for a single-family," said Clower.

View the 2022 NVAR Region Forecast Briefing at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMqiwQ5tvD8&t=3s>



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No Car and No Computer



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Due to circumstances beyond my control, for two days after the deer accident, I had no car and as it happened, no computer either. The no-car situation you regular readers know about from the previous edition's column: "Oh Deer." The no-computer element just occurred as machines, technology, almost anything I guess, eventually succumbs to old age/extended use. As a result of this dual inconvenience, I can't get anywhere, literally, and figuratively. Moreover, with these two losses, temporary though they may be, I've sort of lost my way. To invoke author Robert A. Heinlein: I'm a "stranger in a strange land."

Though I now have a courtesy rental car, I don't yet have a computer. It's being delivered later in the week by Amazon. It won't be an expense as it is being paid for my part-time employer. When the computer arrives, my brother's IT guy will come over and set it up. That means I won't have that problem to solve. As for the car, in five days or so, I was told, I'll learn whether my car can be repaired or if it will be declared a total loss. Soon thereafter I imagine, if the car is "totaled," I'll be receiving a settlement check from the insurance company. Then the fun will begin.

If in fact, I receive a settlement check, since the car I was driving was a model year 2000 Honda Accord, unfortunately the amount will be nowhere near what I'll need to purchase a new car. The net effect will be an increase in my monthly car payment from zero dollars to likely multiple hundreds. Money, I don't really have and are not eager to spend. However, the new computer can't arrive quickly enough. And given the evolution in technology since I last bought a computer, 10 years ago at least, I can well imagine the improvement/benefit in my life it will provide. As for the improvement/benefits in my life a new car will provide? Not really important to me if it costs money, which it will. I am not looking to add another car with bells and whistles since I already have a new-ish car with all the bells and whistles already. I was not looking to whistle any more bells however. What I/we need is only one car payment. Which, for the past 13 years, since my mother passed away in 2008, and I inherited her car, I've had. And I've enjoyed every minute of it. Now, I'm afraid, the party is over.

Now this is where not having a working computer at home becomes a problem. I can't research a potential solution. Consequently, I'm stuck in a kind of limbo between the car I used to own and the car I'm about to own. Right now, I'm driving a rental car, a temporary solution. What I need is a permanent solution. Sure, I receive a daily newspaper and I do have a car to drive, but I'm not going to drive randomly around and/or trust the classified ads to direct me to a proper solution. What I need is a version of Indeed.

The conclusion: I need a computer before I need the car. In fact, it's very likely that if I'm told the Honda is totaled, having a new computer will provide me with the tools and information necessary to perhaps make an intelligent and acceptable decision. Acceptable meaning a moderate impact to our finances. For me, it's not so much about creature comforts as it is about this creature's comfort.

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

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