

CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Oak Hill ♦ Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION
OPINION, PAGE 12 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 9 ♦ VALENTINES GIFTS FOR THE HOME, PAGE 8



From left, Benjamin Silvernail, Mya Wilson, Khloe Gozdieski, and Jason Lemus with Nike the therapy dog at Aldrin Elementary in Reston.

Therapy Dog: Calming Presence

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Mountain View Graduation:
Family, Love and Respect

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Surprising \$100K
In Herndon

PAGE 5

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NEWS

School to Extend Firearms Prohibition, Safety Education

Tuesday, Feb. 8, 2022, the Fairfax County School Board unanimously approved a proposal to develop a policy prohibiting firearms on property owned or leased by the school division. FCPS will also review curriculum, safety protocols, and professional development related to gun violence and suicide prevention to ensure it aligns with current best practices.

The proposal was sponsored by School Board members Laura Jane Cohen (Springfield District) and Karl Frisch (Providence District).

“We must ensure that, as a school system, we are doing all we can to protect our students and staff from the horrors of gun violence. We know that students are in homes containing firearms regularly, whether it is their own home or the homes they visit,” said Cohen. “It is critically important that we provide students with the tools they need in these situations and alert parents to their crucial role in keeping children safe.”

“Late last year, Fairfax County Public Schools finally joined dozens of other school divisions with its commitment to educate parents about their legal responsibility to securely store firearms — one of the best tools we have to protect children from gun violence,” said Frisch.

In 2021, the Virginia General Assembly passed a new law granting school boards the authority to prohibit individuals from possessing firearms on property owned or leased by the school system, excluding “certain individuals such as law-enforcement officers and qualified retired law-enforcement officers.”

Superintendent Scott Brabrand agreed to implement a proposal from Cohen and Frisch that requires the school division to notify parents and guardians annually about their legal obligations under Virginia's new secure firearm storage law, why secure storage is essential, and other ways to prevent gun violence or seek help for a child who could be a threat to themselves or others.

<https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/fairfax/Board.nsf/goto?open&id=C54FF23ED870>

Legal Notice

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC OF AN APPLICATION BY
 COLUMBIA GAS OF VIRGINIA, INC., FOR APPROVAL OF A
 PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH AN ECONOMIC
 DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM TO ACQUIRE UTILITY
 RIGHTS-OF-WAY FOR QUALIFIED ECONOMIC
 DEVELOPMENT SITES PURSUANT TO
 § 56 235.12 OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA
 CASE NO. PUR-2021-00301

On January 4, 2022, Columbia Gas of Virginia, Inc. (“CVA” or “Company”) filed with the State Corporation Commission (“Commission”) an Application, pursuant to § 56 235.12 of the Code of Virginia (“Code”), in which the Company proposes to establish an economic development program (“ROW Program”). Through the ROW Program, CVA would seek to acquire utility rights-of-way (“ROW”) for two economic development sites, the Shannon Hill Regional Business Park (“Shannon Hill”) and the Mid-Atlantic Advanced Manufacturing Center (“MAMaC”).

Shannon Hill is a 700-acre tract located off Shannon Hill Road at the Interstate 64 interchange in Louisa County, Virginia, approximately 25 miles from Charlottesville, Virginia and 40 miles from Richmond, Virginia. Louisa County has prepared a master plan for this site to accommodate industries such as logistics and distribution, data centers, advanced manufacturing, light manufacturing, and accessory offices. According to the Application, if Shannon Hill were successfully developed, Louisa County estimates a potential capital investment at this site of \$2.5 billion and the creation of 3,500 new jobs for the region.

MAMaC is a 1,600-acre site located in Greensville County, Virginia, centrally located with Interstate 95 frontage, access to a CSX main line, and a direct route to Virginia ports. MAMaC is located approximately 60 minutes south of Richmond, Virginia and 90 minutes west of Norfolk, Virginia. Greensville County, Mecklenburg County, and the City of Emporia all support MAMaC through a revenue-sharing agreement. According to the Application, if MAMaC were successfully developed, Greensville County estimates that MAMaC would bring in capital investment of \$1.25 to \$1.75 billion to the area and create upwards of 6,350 jobs.

Pursuant to Code § 56-235.12 C, a utility proposing an economic development program “shall include an analysis of how acquiring utility rights-of-way will enhance the Commonwealth’s infrastructure and promote the Commonwealth’s competitive business environment by improving the readiness of a qualified economic development site.” CVA represents that Shannon Hill and MAMaC are “qualified economic development site[s]” within the meaning of Code § 56-235.12 A and that acquiring the necessary ROW for these sites will improve their readiness for development, thereby fulfilling the requirements of Code § 56 235.12 C. Specifically, CVA asserts that the ROW Program would eliminate “a critical element that can delay delivering service to the sites in a 12- to 18-month period,” that of acquiring utility ROW. CVA notes that it may seek to amend the ROW Program in the future to add other qualified economic development sites as they materialize.

CVA estimates a capital investment of approximately \$1 million associated with Shannon Hill and approximately \$180,000 associated with MAMaC. The Company proposes to defer the costs incurred in implementing the ROW Program until new base rates and charges for CVA become effective that incorporate the ROW Program. These costs would include deferred costs, including depreciation, taxes, a return on CVA’s investment, and other land-related costs associated with costs incurred to acquire utility ROW, and associated carrying costs.

Interested persons are encouraged to review CVA’s Application and supporting documents in full for details about these and other proposals. TAKE NOTICE that the Commission may make findings and order action in a manner differing from that proposed in the Company’s Application.

The Commission entered an Order for Notice and Hearing that, among other things, scheduled public hearings on CVA’s Application. On March 29, 2022, at 10 a.m., a Hearing Examiner appointed by the Commission will hold a telephonic hearing for the purpose of receiving the testimony of public witnesses, with no public witness present in the Commission’s courtroom. On or before March 25, 2022, any person desiring to offer testimony as a public witness shall provide to the Commission (a) your name, and (b) the telephone number that you wish the Commission to call during the hearing to receive your testimony. This information may be provided to the Commission in three ways: (i) by filling out a form on the Commission’s website at scc.virginia.gov/pages/Webcasting; (ii) by completing and emailing the PDF version of this form to SCCInfo@scc.virginia.gov; or (iii) by calling (804) 371-9141. This public witness hearing will be webcast at scc.virginia.gov/pages/Webcasting.

On March 30, 2022, at 10 a.m., either in the Commission’s second floor courtroom located in the Tyler Building, 1300 East Main Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219, or by electronic means, a Hearing Examiner appointed by the Commission will convene a hearing to receive testimony and evidence offered by the Company, any respondents, and the Commission’s Staff on the Company’s Application. Further details on this hearing will be provided by subsequent Commission Order or Hearing Examiner’s Ruling.

The Commission has taken judicial notice of the ongoing public health issues related to the spread of the coronavirus, or COVID-19. In accordance therewith, all pleadings, briefs, or other documents required to be served in this matter should be submitted electronically to the extent authorized by 5 VAC 5-20-150, *Copies and format*, of the Commission’s Rules of Practice and Procedure (“Rules of Practice”). Confidential and Extraordinarily Sensitive Information shall not be submitted electronically and should comply with 5 VAC 5-20-170, *Confidential information*, of the Rules of Practice. Any person seeking to hand deliver and physically file or submit any pleading or other document shall contact the Clerk’s Office Document Control Center at (804) 371-9838 to arrange the delivery.

Pursuant to 5 VAC 5-20-140, *Filing and service*, of the Rules of Practice, the Commission has directed that service on parties and the Commission’s Staff in this matter shall be accomplished by electronic means. Please refer to the Commission’s Order for Notice and Hearing for further instructions concerning Confidential or Extraordinarily Sensitive Information.

An electronic copy of the public version of the Company’s Application may be obtained by submitting a written request to counsel for the Company, T. Borden Ellis, Assistant General Counsel, NiSource Corporate Services Company, 1809 Coyote Drive, Chester, Virginia 23836, tbellis@nsource.com.

On or before March 9, 2022, any interested person may submit comments on the Application by following the instructions on the Commission’s website: scc.virginia.gov/casecomments/Submit-Public-Comments. Those unable, as a practical matter, to submit comments electronically may file such comments by U.S. mail to the Clerk of the State Corporation Commission, c/o Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2118. All comments shall refer to Case No. PUR-2021-00301.

On or before March 4, 2022, any person or entity wishing to participate as a respondent in this proceeding may do so by filing a notice of participation at scc.virginia.gov/clk/efiling. Those unable, as a practical matter, to file a notice of participation electronically may file such notice by U.S. mail to the Clerk of the Commission at the address listed above. Such notice of participation shall include the email addresses of such parties or their counsel, if available. The respondent simultaneously shall serve a copy of the notice of participation on counsel to the Company. Pursuant to 5 VAC 5-20-80 B, *Participation as a respondent*, of the Rules of Practice, any notice of participation shall set forth: (i) a precise statement of the interest of the respondent; (ii) a statement of the specific action sought to the extent then known; and (iii) the factual and legal basis for the action. Any organization, corporation, or government body participating as a respondent must be represented by counsel as required by 5 VAC 5-20-30, *Counsel*, of the Rules of Practice. All filings shall refer to Case No. PUR-2021-00301.

On or before March 4, 2022, each respondent may file with the Clerk of the Commission, at scc.virginia.gov/clk/efiling, any testimony and exhibits by which the respondent expects to establish its case. Any respondent unable, as a practical matter, to file testimony and exhibits electronically may file such by U.S. mail to the Clerk of the Commission at the address listed above. Each witness’s testimony shall include a summary not to exceed one page. All testimony and exhibits shall be served on the Commission’s Staff, the Company, and all other respondents simultaneous with its filing. In all filings, respondents shall comply with the Rules of Practice, as modified herein, including, but not limited to: 5 VAC 5-20-140, *Filing and service*, and 5 VAC 5-20-240, *Prepared testimony and exhibits*. All filings shall refer to Case No. PUR 2021-00301.

Any documents filed in paper form with the Office of the Clerk of the Commission in this docket may use both sides of the paper. In all other respects, except as modified by the Commission’s Order for Notice and Hearing, all filings shall comply fully with the requirements of 5 VAC 5-20-150, *Copies and format*, of the Rules of Practice.

The public version of the Company’s Application and other documents filed in this case, the Commission’s Rules of Practice, and the Commission’s Order for Notice and Hearing may be viewed at: scc.virginia.gov/pages/Case-Information.

COLUMBIA GAS OF VIRGINIA, INC.



From left, Benjamin Silvernail, Mya Wilson, Khloe Gozdieski, and Jason Lemus.



Sadie Bisogno



From left, Jason Lemus, Antonis (Tony) Varouhakis, Mya Wilson, and (at the desk) Donald Freeman.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Work'n His Tail Off

Therapy dog supports students at local FCPS school.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Casey A. Salerno, a counselor with Fairfax County Public Schools, enjoys assisting her elementary students at Aldrin Elementary School in Reston to embrace their character strengths. Recognizing that some students benefit from additional support, she reached out to the Alliance of Therapy Dogs, a national registry of certified therapy dogs, for assistance in establishing a program at Aldrin.

Members of ATD who volunteer with their dogs in animal-assisted activities get testing, certification, registration, support, and insurance from ATD. Salerno located an ATD trainer in Reston.

"We had to go through the (county's) Risk Management Office and make sure we had everything in place so that it was safe for Nike to come," Salerno said. "And we got permission from the parents."

A couple of months after the school first welcomed Nike as its newest team member, the one-year-old Havanese-Poodle scurries into the classroom to pair up with students seated in small groups. Nike's trainer, Linda Grant, keeps the dog leashed. "Each school seems to take it on themselves as their own project," said Jennifer Sellers, FCPS's media relations specialist. It is on a school-by-school basis.

Nike has a toy-like appearance with floppy ears that fall to his cheeks, a small build, and short legs. The twenty-five-pound, tail-wagging, treat-loving pooch with the softest, curliest coat provides a calming presence for the students. Nike is on their side. "Nike is there to support them. If they are not feeling great, he boosts everybody's mood," Salerno said.

While Nike visited his fourth-grade class, one of the students, Tony, sat on the floor



From left, Mya Wilson, Khloe Gozdieski, and Jason Lemus.



Maggie Marsh



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Casey Salerno, school counselor at Aldrin Elementary, FCPS.



PHOTO BY JAMILEH ABU-GHANNAM

From left, students Amelia Withrow, Macadamia Cellini, Benjamin Silvernail, Ruzgar Kurucay, Graham Bleha, and Khloe Gozdieski with Nike, the therapy dog and trainer Linda Grant of Reston.

with his friends to complete his worksheet and reached for Nike. "He makes me feel good, and he's very kind. I like it when he licks me," Tony said.

"He's very calm and doesn't really get that crazy," Graham said.

"I'd like to have a dog when I grow up," Jason said softly as he stroked Nike's coat.

"A little bit bigger than Nike because he can be my buddy."

According to classroom teacher Jennifer Turner, the students in her class have benefited greatly from having Nike visit every week. "Nike, and his handler, Linda, are a calming presence in the classroom, which is especially welcome during this year when

many students are still feeling anxious and experiencing frequent changes in routine due to COVID."

Turner said. "Nike and Linda offer a respite during the school day, and all the students feel very lucky to have a furry friend in their lives."

Fourth grade, as a level, is challenging this year, Salerno said. "We just thought that Nike would be a good fit in there to provide some support."

When asked what criteria she would use to determine if the therapy dog visitation program was a success, Salerno said she had not given the students an objective survey but always kept an eye on them.

"I can observe that the kids are excited to see him. I've gone into that classroom that he visits for lessons later in the day, and honestly, their behavior and mood are always great compared to what it could be some other days."

She also said at the end of the year, she intends to survey all students who have had contact with Nike. Questions could be: Did you think this was helpful? Did you like having Nike come? What could we change about the program in the future?

As Nike and Linda's hour-long visit neared its conclusion, they walked across the hall to another classroom. Maggie, a member of another class, had been waiting for Nike. She settled in, seated in a small chair, Nike on her lap and her chin resting on his soft fur as she petted him. Despite being masked, Maggie's smile could be seen creeping up her face, illuminating her eyes.

"Nike belongs to everyone," she said and went back to petting him.



PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEE POPE

Gov. Glenn Youngkin is working with Republican lawmakers to define “inherently divisive concept” as anything in violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Legislative Privilege

Lawmakers consider efforts to prohibit ‘inherently divisive concepts’ in the classroom.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

The phrase “critical race theory” is perhaps as divisive as it is elusive. It has an actual formal academic definition. But that was largely beside the point on the campaign trail. Now that a new administration is taking over, the governor’s pick for education secretary — Aimee Guidera — is giving members of the General Assembly a better picture of what the new governor wants to ban from the classroom.

“We’re talking about privilege walks, privilege Bingo, putting children into situations where they’re playing as the victim and a supremacist,” said Guidera to senators during a confirmation hearing. “Those are completely inappropriate ideas.”

Members of the General Assembly are getting a crash course in privilege, learning how unconscious bias often shapes human behavior. In a privilege walk, students stand in a row and go through rounds of moving forward or backward based on things like being right handed or speaking English as a first language. At the end of several rounds, students have a sense of their relative privilege based on their physical proximity.

“We should not be teaching our children to see everything through the lens of race,” said Gov. Glenn Youngkin in a speech to a joint session of the General Assembly. “We should not use inherently divisive concepts like critical race theory in Virginia.”

“We should not be teaching our children to see everything through the lens of race. We should not use inherently divisive concepts like critical race theory in Virginia.”

— Gov. Glenn Youngkin

But this agenda item on Youngkin’s “Day One Game Plan” is facing an uncertain future in a Senate controlled by Democrats. When the governor’s bill prohibiting “inherently divisive concepts” was considered in a subcommittee, Democrats laid the groundwork for rejecting the bill when it is considered in the Senate Education Committee. Sen. Jen Kiggans (R-7) struggled to define what -- exactly -- is an inherently divisive concept.

“I would say it’s just like it sounds,” said Kiggans, “anything that’s dividing and making one group think they’re superior to the other.”

The text of the bill defines an inherently divisive concept as any idea in violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Critics say that’s not really workable.

“The criteria are so open to interpretation that they could be interpreted to forbid teachers from accurately teaching history,” said Breanna Diaz, legislative counsel with the ACLU of Virginia. “This bill could prevent talking about racism or having open dialogue about American history.”

Groups that represent teachers are in opposition to the bill, warning that it would create an environment of fear that would be counterproductive to learning. Slavery, for example, would violate the Civil Rights Act of 1964. So how would teachers explain the reason for the Civil War? These are the kinds of issues the Senate Education Committee will discuss when they consider the governor’s bill, which was introduced on his behalf by Kiggans.

“I find it offensive that the Civil Rights Act is being used to support this,” said Sen. Ghazala Hashmi (D-10). “The purpose of an education is to make us uncomfortable, to challenge our ideas. If students are challenged on their own set of identities and values, that is a good thing.”

The governor’s bill is opposed by the Virginia Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the Virginia School Boards Association and the Virginia Superintendents Association.

Not Happening: Lake Anne Rising Beautification Project

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The proposed Lake Anne beautification project known as “Lake Anne Rising” is dead, catalysts and sponsors for the project, Shashi and Margaret Gupta, said Monday afternoon, Jan. 31.

Addressed, “Dear fellow LARCA owners,” the Guptas wrote in an email that the after two months of silence, the LARCA board delivered a markup of an early December agreement that their attorneys had negotiated. “Virtually every provision has been re-written, fundamentally changing the agreement, and imposing unrealistic and unworkable new requirements on the project — essentially killing it,” Shashi and Margaret Gupta wrote.

Later that day, when contacted about the project, Shashi Gupta said, “We are interested in doing what we can to preserve and enhance Bob Simon’s vision for Lake Anne.”

When contacted for a response, George Hadjikyriakou, president of the Lake Anne of Reston Condominium Association (LARCA), told the Connection that LARCA is scheduled to meet Tuesday evening, Feb. 1 and that no comment would be available until possibly Wednesday morning, Feb. 2, missing Connection’s last week press deadline.

“The Lake Anne of Reston Condominium Association

Board is committed to acting consistent with the authority given to it by its condominium instruments and is further committed to protecting the interests of its owners while maintaining the LARCA Condominium property,” said a statement from the condominium association. “The LARCA Board shares the community’s disappointment that the Gupta Family Foundation has, in light of LARCA’s commitments, felt it necessary to discontinue discussions over the proposed Plaza project.”

The Lake Anne Rising project was a planned community-funded beautification program supported by sponsoring organizations that never garnered the needed consensus. The Gupta Family Foundation agreed to fund a \$25,000 seed grant, believing that the condo board would support the project. Highlights of Phase 1 would have included sculpture restoration, converting an uprooted brick area to a softscape and saving three specimen trees at Pyramid Park, installing plantings in 15 LARCA planters and the east/west retaining walls along Lake Anne, plaza cleaning, entrance signage, restoration of the Fonseca Monolith, ongoing planter maintenance, fundraising campaign costs, and a contingency fund. The project was to be carried out by professional contractors, and the budget based on their proposals.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

TOWN OF HERNDON ACCEPTING ARTS GRANT PROPOSALS

The Town of Herndon is accepting grant proposals up to \$4,500 through the Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA) for qualifying projects to be implemented in FY 2023. For information on the Creative Communities Partnership Grant, review the FY2023 Guidelines for Funding which are available at http://www.arts.virginia.gov/grants_guidelines.html.

Nonprofit arts organizations incorporated in the Town of Herndon must meet general policy guidelines as published by the VCA. The Commission’s 2022-2023 Guidelines for Funding and other resources are on the website at www.arts.virginia.gov. Applicants should provide full documentation of projected budget, program planning, and a

detailed description of the implementation of the project. Organizations who intend to apply for grant funding must submit their proposals by 4 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 14 to the Performing Arts Supervisor at the Town of Herndon Department of Parks and Recreation. Proposals can be hand delivered to the Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave, Herndon, VA, 20170, or sent electronically to holly.poppo@herndon-va.gov. Applicants are encouraged to confirm receipt by the department prior to the deadline. Visit herndon-va.gov/recreation or call 703-787-7300.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 16
Reston’s Early Dedication to Diversity and Accessibility. 7 p.m. Virtual

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



The Town of Herndon is considering outsourcing the collection of its Real Estate Tax Bill to Fairfax County.

Town Considers Resolutions Touching Three Centuries, 1900-2100

A go for carnival, improvements for multimodality, education funds of \$100K.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Following staff reports on proposed resolutions at its Feb. 1 work session, the Herndon Town Council votes on their fate during a public hearing on Feb. 8, at the Connection's presstime.

One of the proposed resolutions turns the carnival lights back on in the town. A second lays the framework for the town's move into the next century, with a multi-modal transportation system along the Silver Line.

A third resolution had its roots in the previous century when the town's Black and white high school students struggled to receive an education during the Great Depression. It ultimately led to slightly over \$100,000 being held by the last surviving Town of Herndon School Board member and it signed over to the town after she died at age 93. The town faced the question of what and how best to deal with the money as no "town" school board exists anymore.

Carnival is scheduled from June 2-5, 2022. "We are going to move forward with an event that weekend, which will not be called the Herndon Festival," said Cindy S. Roeder, director of the town's Parks and Recreation. "It's going to be significantly modified from what we typically do," she continued. <https://www.herndonfestival.net/>

The Herndon Festival, which drew a reported 80,000 people over all four days pre-COVID and was held downtown, used to include a carnival, extensive food, craft, and business booths, and live music on three stages. It was a fundraiser for the municipality that helped cover the operating costs of the town's Department of Parks and Rec-



Cindy S. Roeder,
Director of Parks and Recreation



Bill Ashton
Town Manager

SCREENSHOT PHOTOS

reation. According to Roeder, Frank Joseph and Sons, Inc., doing business as Jolly Shows and Herndon Festival's carnival provider for over two decades, submitted the only bid.

John Irish, deputy director of Public Works, presented the second resolution, which addressed Award Contract #B-22-07, Van Buren Street Multi-Modal Improvements Phase I and II. A & M Concrete Corporation was considered responsive and responsible. Staff suggested adding an \$800,000 contingency to the contract.

Phases I and II will be constructed concurrently. Phase I is 0.25 miles long from Herndon Parkway to Alabama Drive, while Phase II is 0.32 miles east from Alabama Drive to Spring Street. The downtown area, trails, and the future Herndon Silver Line Metro-rail Station will all be better connected due to the improvements. Crosswalks and curbs that comply with ADA standards, traffic signalization on Alabama Drive, street lighting, a closed drainage system and stormwater management facilities, and water utility relocation are all included.

"[The building timeline] will run approximately a year, give or take," said Town Manager Ashton. SEE TOWN CONSIDERS, PAGE 8



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Grad Eltaf Samim with (from left) his sister, Marwa Samim; dad, Sakhi Samim and mom, Fariha Samim.



From left, grad Dallas Barnes; boyfriend Nahum May; mom Bunche Barnes, holding Dallas's nephew, Ace; and sister Daja Jordan, holding Dallas's niece, Mila.



Eltaf Samim with his Citizenship Award and Principal Joe Thompson.

'Your Extraordinary Efforts Helped You Reach this Day'

Mountain View High holds winter graduation.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Mountain View High's graduation, last Wednesday, Feb. 2, at Centreville High was small, but meaningful. That's because its students have to overcome obstacles never dreamed of by those in larger, mainstream schools.

The majority have risked everything to come to the U.S. for a better life, and often arrive not speaking English. Some have young children to care for, and many work full time to survive. Yet they persevere so they can get an education – and Mountain View's administration and staff support them in every way possible.

As the ceremony began, Assistant Principal Catherine Stone noted it was the school's 51st commencement since 1996. And at each one, in the past 26 years, she said, "Mountain View grads have felt emotions including pride, excitement, relief and even sadness. But they all shared the common bond of being part of the Mountain View family – and having the characteristics of perseverance, grit, intelligence and drive."

She then told the graduating seniors, "You're strong and resilient. While at this school, you were supported by your families, guardians, teachers, counselors and friends. And your extraordinary efforts helped you reach this day."

Principal Joe Thompson welcomed everyone to the winter graduation, telling the students to never forget their worth and congratulating them on all their accomplishments. (See sidebar).

Eltaf Samim was the student speaker, and he shared his personal story. "I was born and raised in Afghanistan and dreamed of having a higher education and living in the United States of America," he said. "My parents are my heroes; they loved and guided my sister and I through difficult times and shared their experiences with us."

Calling his parents responsible and caring, he said his mother was always there for them and his father sacrificed and worked hard to make the family happy. "My parents supported our dreams and desires and inspired us to study," said Samim. "My father said, 'For a bright future, you need a good education.



Grad Diana McDonald celebrates with her dad, Mac McDonald.



Diana McDonald with her Personal Achievement Award and Principal Joe Thompson.

Knowledge is the power that no one can take away from you."

But eventually, they had to leave Afghanistan and start over in Germany. "There was a different culture and language, and I struggled making friends in class and speaking the language," said Samim. "But my teachers helped me understand that, the more you struggle, the stronger you become."

Then in March 2021, the family immigrated to the U.S. "We had to start a new life again – which wasn't easy," said Samim. But he enrolled in Mountain View, where he found a welcoming, caring and supportive environment and learned firsthand about the school's motto of "Family, love and respect."



Proud graduate Carlos Marroquin Jr., with dad Carlos Marroquin Sr. and mom Oneida Marroquin.



Mandip Chhetri with his Faculty Award and Principal Joe Thompson.

"Each counselor treated you as their own child," he said. "I worked hard and tried my best, and I am grateful to be one of the lucky students at Mountain View. I have many dreams and opportunities to pursue, and I hope to serve my community and country and make my teachers and family proud of me. I know that, if you pursue your dreams, you can make them come true."

Then, mentioning his counselor and teachers by name, he praised each one and explained how each had specifically helped and inspired him. "Mountain View is full of wonderful, amazing and awesome teachers," said Samim. "Thank you for every opportunity you've given to me."

Stone told the audience, "His story ex-

plains why the Mountain View staff comes to work each day with such enthusiasm and dedication."

Next, three students received special awards chosen by the teachers.

* The Citizenship Award is given to a student who's helped build a positive school community. Presenting it to Samim, ESOL teacher Lora Bates said, "Eltaf has been a model student and the epitome of 'family, love and respect.'"

* The Personal Achievement Award goes to a student who succeeded academically and personally, despite having adult responsibilities, such as a job or a child. As art teacher Theresa Dijoseph gave it to Diana McDonald, she said, "Diana defines resilience."

* The Faculty Award is given to the student achieving the greatest academic and personal success, despite significant obstacles. Social studies teacher Mike Hardy presented it to Mandip Chhetri.

"Mandip came from Nepal and then moved to Brunei in Southeast Asia," said Hardy. "Then at age 17, he came to the U.S." Hardy then read several comments Chhetri's teachers wrote about him when nominating him for this award.

"In journalism class, Mandip wrote of the difficult decision to leave his friends and loved ones behind for a better future," said Hardy. "We know life can be hard, but we also know that's when the growth occurs. He said yes to the opportunity and put his whole self into it."

Another teacher told how Chhetri researched climate change, advocated for the poor in Southeast Asia during the pandemic, and connected with the teachings of Nelson Mandela and his fight for social justice – all while earning no grade below an A.

Still another noted that Chhetri oversaw his brother's virtual academic learning and hopes to someday become an engineer. "Mandip has a great attitude and is an excellent student," wrote a teacher. "He tries his best at everything and won't settle for less. He leads his classmates by example."

Then, handing Chhetri the award, Hardy said, "Mandip, it's with great pride and appreciation that we honor you today and wish you great success in every endeavor."

Afterward, the scholarship winners and donors were recognized and applauded, Thompson presented the diplomas, and the winter Class of 2022 officially graduated.

'You Were Able to Bounce Back from Adversity to Succeed'

Mountain View principal addresses the graduates.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Mountain View Principal Joe Thompson began his commencement address to the graduating seniors by acknowledging the more than \$10,000 in scholarships given this semester by the school's nonprofit foundation.

"We're enormously grateful, as the scholarship money directly impacts the ability of our graduates to access their post-secondary education," he said. He read a letter from a former Mountain View graduate and scholarship recipient.

"One thousand dollars might not seem like a lot to some, but it changed the trajectory of my family," read Thompson. "Because someone believed enough in me to award scholarship money, I have the wife, children and career of my dreams. My grandkids will be talking about that thousand dollars, a long time into our future."

Thompson thanked everyone who contributes to the Mountain View Foundation for their "unwavering support" of the school, plus other entities that provide scholarships to the students. He said they, plus the faculty, staff and students' families "represent the community of support that makes our school such a special place."

He also recognized the graduates' positive contributions to Mountain View and their commitment to obtaining an education. "We believe you can succeed, and you deserve the best Fairfax County Public Schools has to offer," said Thompson. "And we've made it our mission to provide a rigorous, educational experience in a warm and caring environment."

"By earning your diploma today, you helped us fulfill our mission – and for that, we're both proud and grateful to be part of this celebration. It's our hope that, after spending time with us, you understand the values of family, love and respect – and know the unconditional support we've provided you in your growth and development never goes away. You'll always be part of our family."

He also told them not to take their accomplishments for granted. "In life, getting and keeping anything you value – including relationships – requires hard work, engagement and the strength and resilience to continue pursuing it," explained Thompson. "Mountain View challenged you to work for your diploma, and you've earned it, so celebrate yourself and those who helped you along the way."

He also praised their "absolute drive and grit" in working through multiple, virtual and in-person classes to complete their studies during the pandemic. "The creativity, poise and sense of community demonstrated will carry you in all aspects of your life," said Thompson. "There were a ton of new demands on teachers and students, and we all learned daily how to make it work."

He said everyone's confidence that they could succeed, despite the challenges, "is rooted in the value of love. Love gives confidence that you won't be judged by your failures – because we all fail. Love erases that fear and gives you a sense of belonging and confidence, no matter the setting. Love not only permits, but requires, resilience; and we've worked hard to instill resilience in you, so you realize the word 'fail' merely stands for 'first attempt in learning.' However, you were able to set goals and

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS



Julissa Constante Ortega receives her diploma from Principal Joe Thompson.



Jorge Nolasco-Cabrera receives his diploma from Principal Joe Thompson.

bounce back from adversity to succeed."

Thompson said graduation is the beginning of the rest of their lives, and the lessons they've learned at Mountain View will only become more relevant as they grow. "The relationships you've developed here will be a tool that'll help you with so many upcoming, life challenges," he said. "Find people you trust, and then work together with them to overcome your obstacles."

He also encouraged the grads to show respect to the people they encounter in the future, just as they have at school. "At Mountain View, students come from 14 different schools – not to mention the many different countries, languages and customs you've shared in this building," said Thompson. "I pray you're lucky enough to encounter people from all walks of life throughout your adulthood. Having a diversity of cultures, religions, thoughts and ideas is a positive."

"The current division we see in our country along racial lines – and the diminishing of our neighbors based on color, religion or culture – should not be your future. At Mountain View, you've demonstrated an amazing ability to respect each other as individuals. Our communities will grow and improve because of your skills in respecting others. You will ultimately decide how we, as a country, interact in the future. Please take the lessons learned here and teach those around you that respect for others makes your life, and theirs, better."

Lastly, said Thompson, "Remember, we're only a phone call, Google Meet or Zoom meeting away. Never forget you're important and valued, and you deserve success. We'll always be here for you, and we want you to stay in contact; that's what families do. My sincerest congratulations to the graduating Class of 2022 on your success today and on all those successes to come."

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Throw pillow like these from designer Melissa Sanabria can be a practical gift offering for the home.



Use beeswax tapers for a romantic dinner at home.

PHOTOS BY LINDSAY KIDWELL

Valentine's Day Gift Ideas for the Home

Presents that can be used on Cupid's Day and beyond.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

There are many ways to express love and appreciation this Valentine's Day. While roses and chocolates can be symbols of romance and affection, practical gifts can demonstrate thoughtfulness. Items that make one's home enjoyable and relaxing can leave a recipient feeling appreciated. Local designers and lifestyle enthusiasts offer five suggestions that can serve as inspiration for surprising your Valentine.

"A cozy throw is perfect for snuggling with your sweetheart if you have dinner at home on Valentine's Day," said Bethesda designer Julie Powers. "You can then use it to refresh a room by draping it over the back of a sofa in your family room or a chair in your bedroom."

Those who appreciate a relaxing spa day might enjoy a bed and bath tray, suggests designer Elizabeth Winnick of Arlington. "A special person in your life can sit back and pamper themselves," she said. "Look for a tray that has a wine glass holder and a place that will hold a tablet so you can read



Voluspa created a rose-scented candle that comes in a 3-D, geometric glass holder that can be used long after the candle is gone.

or watch a movie while you soak."

Gifts a candle isn't often associated with originality or creativity, but designer Ann O'Shields of The Nest Egg recommends a line of candles that come in a glass vessel that can be repurposed. Voluspa created a rose-scented candle that comes in a 3-D, geometric glass holder. Reminiscent of the romance that it is associated with Valentine's Day, the jar can be used to hold jewelry or flowers long after the candle is gone.

A romantic dinner at home on Valentine's Day calls for candlelight. For those who are environmentally conscious, beeswax tapers might be just the ticket. Designer Melissa Sanabria recom-



A cozy throw is perfect for snuggling with your sweetheart, says designer Elizabeth Winnick.



Those who appreciate a relaxing spa day might enjoy a bed and bath tray with space for a glass of wine and a tablet for reading.

mends home interior items like throw pillows and home fragrance accessories that are made by small business and women, particularly those that are naturally sourced, eco-friendly and cruelty-free.

COURTESY OF THE NEST EGG IN FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA

PHOTO BY CONTRIBUTED

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PHOTO COURTESY OF THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Herndon High School, March 1937.

Town Considers Resolutions Touching Three Centuries, 1900-2100

FROM PAGE 5

Manager William "Bill" Ashton. "We're seeing some supply chain issues."

Resolution 22-G-15 is another item on the agenda. It allows the town to move \$101,761.37 from the Darrell Trust Fund, first set up in 1935 when the town had its own education system because it didn't fall under the Fairfax County Public Schools division.

According to Robert Tang, the town's director of finance, the town's school board administered the funds set up by a private person in the Town of Herndon to help the town's children with educational assistance.

During a council discussion, Ashton emphasized that when the final person in charge of the Darrell Trust Fund died, long-time town resident Elma Mankin (1924-2018), the trust was signed over to the town.

"The one program that Elma established was really informal. People were on their honor to pay (it) back," Ashton said. According to Tang, the trust gave out low-interest loans to students.

Ashton said that after Mankin died, he obtained all of the program's records and audited them. He went on to say that because the monies were in a joint town account, they were held "until we found a way to live up to what the trust was attempting to do, which is [serve] Herndon-based children in higher education. Ashton said, "We were able to discover this company ready to stand up and do this for us," Ashton added.

Educate Fairfax is a 501(c)(3) charity that takes monetary donations from the community on behalf of the Fairfax County Public School System. Educate Fairfax has pledged to use this money for educational support

and to benefit children residing in the Town of Herndon and enrolled in Fairfax County Public Schools in the town, according to Tang.

Tang said that the next step is for the municipality to draft a memorandum of agreement with Educate Fairfax outlining how the money would be distributed. The second step, according to Ashton, is to collaborate with the high school principal "so she knows this is out there for her students as well."

A final resolution addresses a memorandum of understanding between the town and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, under which citizens would get a single bill for their real estate taxes. It would allow the county's Department of Taxation Administration to collect and deliver better customer service. According to Tang, the MOU would allow the County of Fairfax "to bill and collect for current and delinquent real estate property taxes owing to the municipality." Tang stated that if the proposal is accepted, "it will begin on June 1 this year, and citizens will begin getting their consolidated bill." Any money collected but not invoiced for the town would be kept by the county at a rate of 0.25 percent. The fee would be less than the town's current billing and collection costs, and it would save staff time.

A meeting of the Herndon Town Council will be held on Tuesday evening, Feb. 8, with staff proposing that all resolutions be approved by the council. A public hearing is set for that evening, during which individuals can submit feedback before the vote.

The print version of Connection Newspapers will have already gone to press on Tuesday afternoon.

CALENDAR



Moch Pryderi, which performs traditional Celtic music, will perform at the Old Brogue Irish Pub in Great Falls on Feb. 13.

NOW THRU FEB. 13

"Every Brilliant Thing." At NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Guided by an unnamed narrator, the audience is drawn into the story of a young boy who tries to cure his mother's depression by creating a list of all the most wonderful things in the world. Visit www.NextStopTheatre.org.

NOW THRU FEB. 19

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

NOW THRU FEB. 27

"Winter Winds" Art Show. 12-5 p.m. At Reston Art Gallery and Studios, 11400 Washington Plaza W. at Lake Anne, Reston. See the season's sentiments depicted in oil, acrylic, and watercolor paintings, mixed media collage, metal mobiles, and more, created by the eight artists of RAGS. Open weekends, 12-5 pm, through February 27, located at the "ART" sign on Lake Anne Plaza. Visit the website: www.restonartgallery.com.

NOW THRU MARCH 13

"The Phlebotomist." Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road in Tysons. Tickets can be purchased online at www.1ststage.org or by calling the 1st Stage box office at 703-854-1856.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 9

Ibram X. Kendi: Author of How to Be an Antiracist. 8 p.m. At Reston Community Theater's CenterStage. Ibram X. Kendi is one of America's foremost historians and leading antiracist voices. Cost is \$15 Reston/\$20 Non-Reston. Visit www.restoncommunitycenter.com.

FRIDAY/FEB. 11

Family Fun Bingo (In-Person). 7-9:30 p.m. At the Old Firehouse, McLean. For all ages. Join us for an evening of fun and prizes! Enjoy free popcorn and winners will take their pick of prizes. Cost is \$15/\$10 MCC district residents. Preregistration is recommended. Visit www.mcleancenter.org.

SATURDAY/FEB. 12

Spiritual Winter Walk. 1-3 p.m. At Turkey Run Park, Turkey Run Loop Road, McLean. Bundle up and join us as we explore the resilience and hope that nature displays during its most challenging months. Led by Beth Norcross. Cost is \$22.50. Visit the website: <https://www.centerforspiritualityinnature.org/calendar>

SUNDAY/FEB. 13

Traditional Celtic Music. 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. At The Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Two consecutive concerts with Moch Pryderi in a pub atmosphere by the fireside. A full menu and drinks list are available. All patrons must present a vaccination certificate that includes boosters for a minimum of 2 weeks, or a negative covid test within 48 hours. Tickets must be purchased in advance at www.oldbrogue.com - \$21 general admission. A season ticket for all 6 concerts is available for \$110.

SUNDAY/FEB. 13

Silver-Garburg Piano Duo. 4 p.m. At Saint Luke Catholic Church, 7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean. After a long absence, the Silver-Garburg Piano Duo makes a triumphant return with four rarely-heard works. Bach's concertos for two keyboards BWV 1061 and 1062—accompanied by a quartet of Amadeus musicians—are some of the earliest-known piano concertos written. Also on the program: Schubert's Divertissement on French themes and a bouquet of Brahms's multicolored Waltzes, Op. 39. Tickets \$40; Active Military and 17 & under free. Buy tickets online or at the door. Visit www.amadeusconcerts.com.

SUNDAY/FEB. 13

Beau Soir Ensemble. 2 p.m. At The Alden at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The Beau Soir Ensemble is a flute, viola and harp trio dedicated to the performance of standard and contemporary repertoire spanning a variety of genres. Cost is \$10/\$5 MCC district residents. Visit www.mcleancenter.org.

THURSDAY/FEB. 17

Mardi Gras Celebration. 12-2 p.m. At the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street SE, Vienna. Cajun cuisine lunch, Mardi Gras mask making, trivia and entertainment. Dressing up is part of the celebration so be sure to wear purple, green and gold. To register, call 703-281-0538.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11



Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

Jurisdiction	Fed. Struc. Id.	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
LEE	10832	626	DELVALE RD	N F POWELL RIVER	1/31/2022
LEE	10876	648	ROUTE 648	TOWN BRANCH	1/31/2022
LEE	10897	662	ROUTE 662	SIMS CREEK	1/31/2022
GRAYSON	8912	734	CHESTNUT GROVE RD	FOX CREEK	1/31/2022
WASHINGTON	25100	616	LITTLE WOLF RUN	ABRAMS CREEK	1/20/2022
BUCHANAN	23115	755	STILTNEERS BOTTOM RD	LEVISA RIVER	1/19/2022
BUCHANAN	23116	1025	MEETING HOUSE RD	LEVISA RIVER	1/19/2022
WYTHE	19666	610	PEPPERS FERRY RD	COVE CREEK	1/18/2022
RICHMOND (M)	21358	0	COLUMBIA STREET	GOODES CREEK	1/13/2022
FRANKLIN	7902	688	POTEET RD/ROUTE 688	GILLS CREEK	1/11/2022
CARROLL	4780	881	CROSS CREEK RD/ROUTE 881	LITTLE REED ISLAND CR #2	1/11/2022
AMELIA	1235	602	BEVILS BRIDGE RD	APPOMATTOX RIVER	1/6/2022
FRANKLIN	7907	695	ISOLANE RD/ROUTE 695	HATCHET CREEK	1/5/2022
MONTGOMERY	12292	663	WALTON RD/ROUTE 663	CRAB CREEK	1/4/2022

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth, but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit <https://www.virginiadot.org> and navigate to Info Center/Trucking Resources. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact, haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730.

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Legals

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Notice is hereby given that Citizens Bank, National Association, One Citizens Plaza, Providence, RI 02903, has filed an application with the Comptroller of the Currency on February 9, 2022, as specified in 12 CFR 5 for permission to establish a branch at 11670 Plaza America Drive, Reston, VA 20190. Any person wishing to comment on this application may file comments in writing with the Director for Large Bank Licensing, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, 400 7th Street SW, Mail Stop 10E-2, Washington, DC 20219 within 30 days after the date of this publication.

CALENDAR

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19	20	21	22	23
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29	30	31		

Let us know about an upcoming event

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NEWS



Herndon House Fire Caused by Electrical Event

On Saturday, Feb. 5, at approximately 11:44 a.m., units from Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department and Loudoun County Fire and Rescue Service, were dispatched for a reported house fire in the 12100 block of Eddyspark Drive in the Herndon area of Fairfax County.

Units arrived on the scene of a two-story, single-family home with fire visible on one side of the house. The fire was extending into the attic. Crews worked quickly to extinguish the fire. There were no reported civilian or firefighter injuries.

Two occupants were home at the time of the fire. Both occupants were in the family room when they heard a loud explosion

outside. One occupant then noticed smoke visible in the backyard. Upon further investigation, he noticed fire coming from the AC disconnect outside the home. He then called 9-1-1. Both occupants self-evacuated prior to fire department arrival. Smoke alarms were present but did not sound due to the location of the fire.

Fire Investigators determined that the fire was accidental in nature and started on the exterior of the home. The fire was caused by an electrical event involving the AC disconnect box.

Two occupants were displaced because of the fire. Red Cross assistance was offered and declined. Damages as a result of the fire were approximately \$100,000. A small amount of property damage includes damage to a neighboring house.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 9

FRIDAY/FEB. 18

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo. 7 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Couldn't you use a good laugh? "The Trocks" recreate the glories of the Royal Imperial ballet in the biggest pointe shoes you'll ever see. Cost is \$40/\$30 MCC district residents.

SUNDAY/FEB. 20

Traditional Celtic Music. 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. At the Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Featuring Abbie Palmer: Scintillating Celtic harper and singer. Tickets must be purchased in advance through the link at www.ldbrogue.com: \$21 general admission. Season ticket: \$110.

SUNDAY/FEB. 20

Maple Syrup Boil Down. Noon, 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. At Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Bundle up, watch, and learn as sap is boiled down into sweet syrup over an outdoor, open fire. Sample the delicious combination of maple syrup served over cornbread made from Colvin Run Mill cornmeal. Cost is \$10 per person. Call 703-759-2771.



Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo will perform on Friday, Feb. 18, 2022, at the McLean Community Center in McLean.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

event. Reston's innovative planning revolutionized how suburban planners thought about community building. At a time when much of Virginia was resisting desegregation, Reston was founded as an open community

to all and as a place that would strive to allow easy access to work, nature, housing and amenities. The presentation will utilize artifacts from the museum's collection to explore these aspects of Reston's founding. Visit: <https://www.facebook.com/events/620228032530098/>

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Apparently, the Time Wasn't Now



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I thought those quarterly scans that I discussed last week came around a little too quick. However, sometimes (heck, oftentimes) life gets to be a bit of a jumble and cooler heads don't always prevail. I was both right and wrong in last week's column. I was right to be surprised by the need timing-wise, to get scanned again so soon. And I was wrong thinking the scans were my usual and customary quarterly. They were not. Before the scheduled appointments, I called Member Services to get some clarity. Sure enough, these scans were not the typical, recurring quarterly CT and Bone scans that I wrote about last week coming around so quickly. They were different. They were two MRI scans, one of the brain and the other for the lower abdomen. Scans that I have annually but have no sense when that annual cycle occurs. Of course, the appointments were set by my oncologist - with me, after our last post-scan meeting, but I had totally forgot. Fortunately, I remembered in time, and so far, the results indicate no activity/complication. I am not free and clear by any means, it just means, to quote "Forest, Forest Gump:" "One less thing." News for which I am exceedingly grateful and amazed - and never take for granted.

The MRI scans will take about 35 to 40 minutes each, so long as I remain still during the study. Still, it means lying down and locked in a face cage and then loaded into a claustrophobic tube to endure bangs and knocks and all sort of other auditory interference while the resonance is imaging. The first time I had an MRI 13 years ago, I was loaded into the tube and immediately pressed the panic button to unload. When I slid back outside the tube, the technician advised me to keep my eyes closed. And for 13 years, annually, I have followed her advice. So long as I don't open my eyes and see how close my face is to the machine (inches) and think about how much of my body has been inserted into this tube (almost entirely), I can endure the scan. I've never been given any medication to keep me calm, not an uncommon occurrence for patients (like my father) who couldn't be so confined for so long in such a small place.

But none of that really bothers me. What bothered me was how unprepared I was for the scan appointment. Usually, I know what's going on in my care. The fact - which became a concern, that this time, I was unaware of the procedure and the timing. And after I spoke with Member Services, I realized I had cause for that concern. My most recent quarterly scans were during the last week of December, a mere five weeks prior to this most recent scan appointment. Yet I had no sense of the time/recurrence but instead thought quite mistakenly that it was time for the quarterly scans and got a bit agitated that it seemed to come around so quickly. Boy was I wrong - and right.

But I'll try to take it in stride. After all, being in treatment has its struggles. Invariably, there are complications and confusions. As I was advised to do so years ago: "Blame the cancer."

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

Black History Month at the State Capitol

BY DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM



For nearly 250 years of Virginia's history Black people in the state were enslaved. Following emancipation there was a denial of the rights of Black people in the state, and Jim Crow laws curtailed their freedom. The Lost Cause movement after the Civil War sought to obscure the treatment of Black people as slaves and downplay any contributions they made to society. Only in recent years with the Civil Rights and Black Lives Matter movements have Black people started to receive the recognition they deserve in society and in the state legislature.

Each day in the Virginia General Assembly history is being made as a record number of 18 Black members serve in the 100-member House of Delegates and three Black members are in the 40-member Senate. For most of my career as a delegate the number of Black legislators in the General Assembly could be counted on the fingers on one hand. For the first time ever,

Black women are in leadership roles with the Lieutenant Governor of the Commonwealth, the President pro tempore of the Senate, and the House Minority Caucus Chair. A small but significant example of the changes being made are the daily speeches in the General Assembly during February about notable Black Virginians who have not received the attention they deserve.

President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976 to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history." Events leading up to the designation of a Black History Month extend back as far as 1926 when the Association for the Study of African American Life and History founded by historian Carter G. Woodson and Minister Jesse E. Moorland started a Negro History Week. The second week of February was chosen as the date to correspond with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass.

Hopefully the writing and teaching of more complete histories will reduce the need for separate historic celebrations, but there is so much to do in filling in the blanks of histories in the past that left out so much information or distorted it in so many ways. There is a continuing effort on the part of many who see one-sided historical accounts as benefiting the false narrative they continue to present.

There are real concerns that I and others have about what is happening currently in Virginia. As I discussed in a recent column, the Governor's Executive Order Number One "ending the use of inherently divisive concepts, including critical race theory" has fueled this concern. Adding to the Order, the Governor's setting up a snitch line for parents and others to report on teachers teaching "divisive concepts" raises further concerns.

It's impossible to teach accurate history without some seeing it as divisive. Hopefully the celebration of Black History Month in the General Assembly will demonstrate that celebrating each other's successes will not be viewed as divisive but rather as strengthening our common histories and aspirations.

Don't Hamper Dulles Future Growth; Adopt 2019 Noise Contours

Letter from Julie Coons, President & CEO, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce, to Fairfax Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay.

Dear Chairman McKay: The Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce remains committed to the economic growth and recovery of our region. A central tenet of economic growth is the support of economic drivers like our region's airports. Both Dulles International Airport and Reagan National Airport have been facing economic headwinds since 2020 as a result of the steep decline in passenger service during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, but both are continuing to recover. I am writing today to ask you to support the adoption of the 2019 noise contours for Dulles, which will aid in its economic recovery and provide a solid foundation for future growth.

As you know very well from your time on the Board of Supervisors, being responsive to constituent concerns often puts local leaders in the position of opposing growth and development that negatively impacts existing residential areas. In many cases, this an unavoidable consequence of otherwise positive growth especially in a region like Northern Virginia which does not

have an excess of undeveloped land. However, in many cases it is the actions or inactions of past leaders that create these situations for future residents.

In the case of the growth of Dulles, your board has the opportunity now to take action to limit the noise impacts on future Fairfax County residents by adopting the 2019 contour maps. These maps are forward looking and show the potential paths that future air service will follow. This allows for future development to avoid the areas that would create the most nuisance for those living beneath the paths. It also allows for your Board and future Boards to be able to support the growth of Dulles' passenger and freight service without unduly burdening residents with aircraft noise.

Dulles is poised to grow in the coming years. Phase II of the Silver Line is set to open in 2022, bringing rail service from the airport to DC for the first time. It is also the only airport on the east coast with room to grow. Opposition to growth from nearby residents hampers countless airports' ability to continue to expand employment opportunities by adding jobs and growing its passenger and freight service. Adopting the updated 2019 contour maps and

mitigating the placement of new residential development within those contours by providing notice to homeowners, requiring interior insulation and an aviation easement within the contours area described in the County's staff report

would help avoid future conflict and provide a good foundation for the continued growth of Dulles.

Julie Coons
President & CEO, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce

Submissions for Pet Connection

Our next Pet Connection will publish the last week of February, Feb. 23, 2022. Photo submissions are due by Sunday, Feb. 20, 2022. Sooner is better. Please complete a submission form and send us your photo(s). <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/pets/> or email editors@connectionnewspapers.com

We welcome short stories about how you got your pet, a noteworthy talent or anecdote about your pet, tales of the bonds between your family and your pet, plus drawings, paintings or other artwork of your pet by children or adults. Please tell us a little bit about your creature, identify everyone in the photo, give a brief description of what is happening in the photo, and include address and phone number (we will not publish your address or phone number, just your town name).

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.

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