

CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Oak Hill ♦ Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

Cuteness at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter

PAGE 6-7

Dannie McClammy, shelter caretaker, with Duff, an 8 month male Guinea pig, a playful dude, who was adopted soon after being photographed. But there are more small mammals to consider!

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter/>

Rolling in Herndon

PAGE 3

Widening Rt 28

PAGE 2

Celebrating HHS Band Director

PAGE 9

OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ CALENDAR, PAGE 11

PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

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Construction proceeds on Route 28 in Centreville, while traffic packs both sides of the road, during afternoon rush, heading north toward the Old Mill Road intersection.



Bumper-to-bumper, Route 28 drivers going from Centreville toward Manassas in late afternoon illustrate why more travel lanes are needed.

‘Lane Closures Will Happen During Off-Peak Hours and Nights’

Route 28 widening project in Centreville is rolling along.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

When ground was broken in September 2021 for the Route 28 widening project in Centreville, Phyllis Randall called this heavily traveled highway a “transportation corridor of regional significance.” The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority (NVTA) chair also said it’s one that transcends jurisdictional boundaries.

“Most people don’t know where the Prince William, Fairfax and Loudoun counties’ lines are,” she explained. “All they know is they want to get to work fast and get home fast. Currently, at 2:30 p.m., from Westfields to Manassas Park, traffic is backed up – so what we’re actually doing is improving people’s lives.”

The road will be increased from four to six lanes between the bridge over Bull Run (south of Compton Road), at the Prince William County line, and the Route 29 Interchange in Centreville. Besides widening Route 28, the fully funded, nearly \$80 million project will also yield additional lanes on the side streets to ease traffic flow.

It will improve intersection operations, as well, by upgrading five, existing traffic signals and improving bicycle and pedestrian crossings. Furthermore, new, 10-foot-wide, shared-use paths will be created on both sides of Route 28 and stormwater-management facilities will be installed.

The groundbreaking waved the checkered flag for the start of construction by Fairfax County’s Department of Transportation (FC-DOT). This county project is being done in cooperation with VDOT and the NVTA.

To get it accomplished as quickly as possible, it’s being performed via a design-build process. This method allows for more-rapid progress by combining and overlapping the design, right-of-way, utility and construction phases. As a result, many of the tasks are carried out concurrently, rather than one after another.

Money for this project came from a variety of sources. The NVTA invested \$26 million,



Drivers on the left head home to Centreville last week while cars on the right are backed up at a traffic signal.

and VDOT ponied up \$23.4 million via Virginia Smart Scale funds. Local government funds accounted for \$10.4 million; VDOT Revenue Sharing funds, \$10 million; and federal Demonstration funds, more than \$9.6 million.

The roadwork is being done as follows:

- ❖ In the southern portion of the project, between the bridge over Bull Run and the intersection of Route 28 and Old Mill Road/Green Trails Boulevard, construction will be completed along the outside (right) shoulder going southbound, and along the median (left) shoulder, heading north.

- ❖ In the northern portion of the project, between the intersection of Route 28 and Old Mill Road/Green Trails Boulevard and the interchange at Route 29, work will be completed on the outside (right) in both the southbound and northbound directions.

- ❖ On southbound Route 28, the center line will be shifted over 5 feet so a future lane could go in the middle. The curves north of Compton Road and south of New Braddock Road will be improved for better sight distance, and Bradenton Drive will remain unsignalized. Furthermore, the median crossovers at Darkwood Drive and south of Compton Road are both being removed.

Adding turn lanes, plus extra lanes on some side streets, comprise a key part of this project. Planned are:

- ❖ Dual left-turn lanes on northbound



The widening project goes right by Centreville Elementary.

Route 28 at New Braddock Road;

- ❖ Dual left-turn lanes on northbound Route 28 at Machen Road;

- ❖ Triple left turns from westbound New Braddock to southbound Route 28; and

- ❖ The addition of one lane on both westbound and eastbound Compton Road, eastbound Old Mill Road and westbound Old Centreville Road (at the north end of the project).

While Route 28 only has enough funding to be widened to six lanes now, it’s being designed for eight lanes in the future. Noise and environmental-impact analyses are both based on eight lanes existing in 2040 at the loudest hour of the day. And the land acquisition is being done for a road with all eight lanes, so it won’t have to be done again later.

Since this project contains federal money, a proposal for noise mitigation was required for neighborhoods where the projected noise levels will exceed established criteria. And thanks to community input, noise-barrier walls will be erected at four points along the project corridor:

- ❖ On the east side of Route 28, just south of New Braddock Road, adjacent to St. Timothy’s Lane;

- ❖ On the west side of Route 28, between New Braddock Road and Old Mill Road, adjacent to Harvest Mill Court and Grainery Court;

- ❖ On the west side of Route 28, north of Compton Road, adjacent to Cottingham Lane, Skipton Court and Castleford Court; and

- ❖ On the east side of Route 28, north of Compton Road, adjacent to Pittman Court.

During a recent online meeting, Tripper Henson with Shirley Contracting Co., the project’s design/build contractor, updated the public on the progress of the road widening. “We got the contract in spring 2020 and have been doing design work, getting permits and doing preliminary engineering,” he said. Henson also noted that the required right-of-way acquisitions were already underway but stressed that there’ll be “no demolition or removal of residential or commercial buildings.”

He said the advanced, temporary, shoulder work has been completed. And, he added, “Road widening on the southern end has started and will go into 2023. This project has a tight footprint; so during construction, lane closures are necessary on the southern end – but they’ll happen primarily during off-peak hours and nights. Weekend work is anticipated; however, we’re doing the best we can to minimize nightwork and noise-creating activities.”

Then Jim Beall, section chief of FC-DOT’s Transportation Design Division, went through the project’s timeline. He said the actual road widening began last summer and is expected to reach “substantial completion of construction” in fall 2023. Noise-walls will be built from this summer through the end of this year. Final construction of the road project is anticipated to be finished by late 2023/early 2024.

NEWS

Putting Wheels Under the DMV Skating Community

Sacred Roller Skate Supply Opens in Herndon.

MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Katie McDonald chose to go in “two feet first” and open a brick and mortar roller skate company, Sacred Roller Skate Supply, returning to the town where she grew up and fulfilling a business passion.

“It has been a dream of mine to open a small business in a town that values community involvement and development, where I can have a tangible, positive impact on the community, and I truly feel like Herndon is the perfect location for this,” said McDonald before the business’s ribbon-cutting day.

McDonald reports that there are only two specialized stores within a three-hour drive of the DMV that give the opportunity to touch, try on, and discuss skating in person. McDonald hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for Sacred Roller Skate Supply on Saturday at 681 Monroe Street, at the historic, vernacular Victorian house, circa 1890–1915, that she is leasing for her shop in the commercial district.

The property line of Sacred Roller Skate Supply conveniently runs adjacent to the 45-mile asphalt-paved, two-lane W&OD Trail, where skaters are welcome. The business is three doors down from the intersection of Elden and Monroe streets, in the heart of the historic downtown district.

McDonald estimated between 150 and 200 mask-clad roller skaters, elected officials, friends, and family members of her and her husband, Jeff Miller, converged at Sacred Roller Skate Supply. They were there to celebrate the company’s milestone moment and demonstrate confidence in its future.

McDonald stood at the shop’s front door holding the giant ceremonial scissors with Town of Herndon Mayor Sheila Olem. VA House Delegate Irene Shin (D-86) had one ribbon end, and Herndon Town Councilmember Signe Friedrichs held the other. With a three, two, one countdown and a snip, McDonald and Olem cut the ribbon. The ends shot skyward, carried up in the stiff breeze, accompanied by cheers and congratulations by the crowd.

In an earlier interview, McDonald said that the idea for her brick and mortar skate shop had been rolling around in her head for some time. “But I hadn’t verbalized it to anyone,” she said. According to McDonald, she had recently grown dissatisfied with her employment as a biomedical patent examiner with the United States Patent and Trademark Office. She had been thinking about quitting when she didn’t get what she thought were adequate accommodations after an injury.

That was the moment McDonald recalled



From left, Del. Irene Shin (D-86), Katie McDonald, owner of Sacred Roller Skate Supply, Herndon Mayor Sheila Olem, and Herndon Town Councilmember Signe Friedrichs officially open the new business at 681 Monroe Street in Herndon.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



An enthusiastic crowd from across the DMV celebrate the ribbon cutting and opening of Sacred Roller Skate Supply.



Katie McDonald’s father, Wes, presents her with a bouquet.



Jeff Mill (Katie’s husband), Mayor Sheila Olem, Katie McDonald, Andrea McDonald, and Wes McDonald.



An estimated 150 to 200 guests celebrate the opening of Sacred Roller Skate Supply in Herndon.

that she told herself there was a gap in the roller skating market. However, while she knew she could operate a business, the conditions were inappropriate. McDonald was well aware that she would face several obstacles, each of which would have to be surmounted to establish a successful business plan. The first was support from family and friends.

Before she quit her position, McDonald’s father called her. She recalled him saying, “You are probably going to hate this idea, but why don’t you open a skate shop?”

“It blew my mind. It amazed me that my dad could not only see just how much skating changed my outlook on life,” McDonald said. “This was something he could see me putting everything into and succeeding. That paved the way.”

McDonald tackled the business plan starting with market research, financial projections, and location. McDonald was aware that there were only two roller skate-specific stores within a three-hour drive of Herndon, one in Dale City and one in Norfolk.

McDonald said, “I literally leaped out of my seat” when she learned the Herndon shop was available for lease. McDonald said that she did not need bank financing for a build-out. “Startup costs have been reasonable, and I think a lot of that has to do with the landlord who’s absolutely incredible and amazing,” she said.

The opportunity to purchase the skate inventory and Derby Star Pro Shop displays in Frederick, Maryland, rounded out the company package. “They announced they were going out of business,” said McDonald.

A few weeks after securing the lease, the red ribbon flew, opening the doors to the town’s newest woman and LGBTQIA+-owned business.

“In addition to providing the high quality, industry standards of roller skate gear and customized, individualized attention to the

SEE SACRED ROLLER SKATE, PAGE 11

Budgeting When Resources Are Available

BY DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM



The House of Delegates Appropriations Committee on which I serve met this past weekend to complete its recommendations on state spending for the remainder of this year (HB29) and for the next biennium beginning July 1 (HB 30). The Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee chaired by Senator Janet Howell also completed its recommendations. These reports must be approved by their respective houses before a conference resolves differences that are inevitable between the two houses in time to go to the Governor for his signature before adjournment of the General Assembly on March 12, 2022.

I have not seen the Senate Committee recommendations yet, but from having just attended the House Committee where our recommendations were adopted, I can say that the budget for the next two years is an exceptionally good one. The reason is simple: the Commonwealth has more resources with which to meet the needs than ever before. The proposed biennial budget has a net general fund spending

increase of nearly \$10.3 billion over the previous two-year period. In contrast, there was only \$2.7 billion in new spending in the last budget.

There has been an unparalleled rise in revenue with economic growth and substantial federal revenue increases during the pandemic. I have cautioned against calling the increased revenue a surplus because of the number of unmet needs in the state. I think the House Appropriations Committee does a good job of balancing taxpayer relief with funding short-term projects without recurring costs and with funding unmet needs. For example, the budget proposes to eliminate all sales taxes on food and hygiene needs with no loss in revenue to local governments. There is also a doubling of the standard deduction on the income tax that will return more money to taxpayers.

Substantial reserves are set aside in the budget to meet future obligations when revenues are not so strong. By FY2024 there will be an historic \$4.4 billion in all reserves, that is more than 400% higher than the reserve level in FY2020 and is the equivalent to 16.8% of assumed revenues in FY 2024.

The budget includes a 15 percent increase in elementary and secondary funding and is the largest K-12 budget in Virginia's history. There is funding for a five percent increase in teacher salaries and funding for additional school support personnel that in the past were funded entirely by local governments. A school construction fund is proposed to assist localities with school construction since half the schools in the state are over 50 years old. Additional funding is provided for programs in remediation and dropout prevention.

An additional \$1.5 billion is provided in health and human services to address unmet needs. An additional 1,200 DD waiver slots are proposed bringing the total waiver slots to 18,139 for individuals with developmental disabilities. More than \$101.0 million to increase funding for nursing homes is proposed with close supervision over quality of care.

In higher education there is an increase in support of \$425.5 million to increase access and affordability. Major increases in agricultural best management practices and wastewater projects will help the state meet its objectives of Chesapeake Bay clean-up.

For more details on the proposed House budget go to <http://hac.virginia.gov> and for additional analysis go to <https://thecommonwealthinstitute.org/budget-revenue/>

Helping Virginians Get Health Coverage

BY SEN. GEORGE BARKER (D-39)

I am happy to say that in our 2022 legislative session in Richmond, we are continuing to make a difference in the health and lives of Virginians. We have accomplished much during my time in the Senate of Virginia and are continuing to improve things on a bipartisan basis.

During my first term as a Virginia Senator from 2008-2011, many Virginians, about 15 to 16 percent of our population, had no health insurance. Many, if not most, of them had no medical home or personal doctor. They did not get preventive care. When pain got bad, they might go to a hospital emergency department, but even then they often did not get necessary follow-up care. Thousands got their care from annual three day events with volunteers in fields and barns in Southwest Virginia.

My education and professional background is in health care. In the legislature, I have used my knowledge and commitment to help make large strides in getting health care coverage and health care services for those who used to lack both insurance and a place to get regular care. We have been largely successful. The percent of

our population who now are uninsured is less than half of what it was just over a decade ago.

Since 2014, many families have gotten private health insurance through the Affordable Care Act. Several hundred thousand modest income adults who did not have health insurance from their jobs have gotten Medicaid Expansion coverage from the 2018 budget. Two years later, we added dental care coverage for over half a million adults, many of whom had not seen a dentist in decades.

I am working hard on expanding private health insurance. For the third year in a row, I am patron of a bill to authorize creation of a health care coverage plan for real estate agents. Although most real estate agents have good incomes, data show that 20 percent do not have health insurance. Most real estate agents are not eligible to receive coverage through their real estate companies because they are 1099 contractors rather than employees.

My bill will permit the state Realtors association to develop a plan for their members. It will be a quality plan, covering all essential health benefits and pre-existing conditions and having the same protections as Affordable Care Act health insurance plans. It cannot

discriminate and will have the same rates for the whole state.

I consistently got near unanimous support in the Senate for my bills to let Realtors have a health plan the past two years but ran into problems after the legislation left the Senate. This year, I got unanimous approval in the Senate and have worked with a Republican colleague in the House of Delegates who handily got the same bill passed there. This will become law and will help many Realtors get health care coverage.

I also have a bill to address an issue regarding a reinsurance plan

that we authorized last year and that will substantially lower monthly premiums to individuals and families who buy their health insurance on the state exchange. My bill and a companion bill in the House have both passed unanimously.

We are helping Virginians get health care coverage and needed health care services. I enjoy my job and am happy to be a leader on this. I will keep working to help Virginians get needed care.

Please contact me at district39@senate.virginia.gov if you have questions or need help with an issue.

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PET CONNECTION

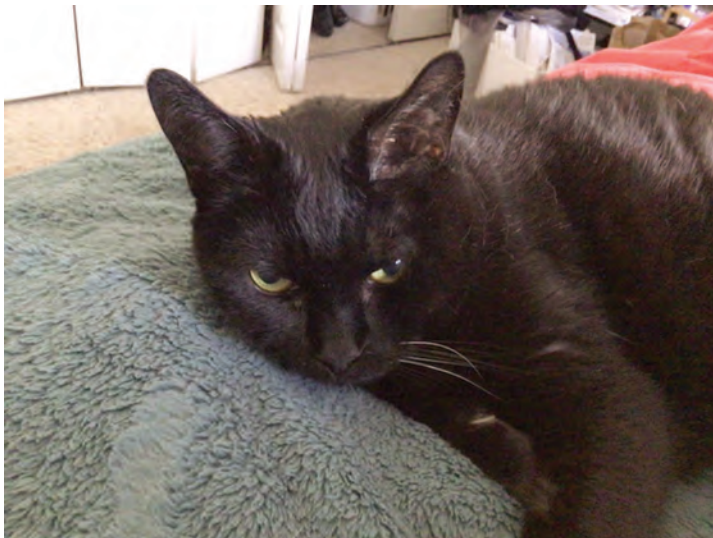


PHOTO COURTESY OF ALCORN FAMILY

Hunter Mill District Supervisor Walter Alcorn gets some work done, while family cat Princess Carolyn opts for a nap. She was a 13-year-old rescue when she was adopted by his family.



Herndon Councilmember Signe Friedrichs says: "The little Dilute Calico, who went to meet her ancestors this Spring, was called Miss April. I did not give her that name, but it did fit. She was so beautiful, she could have been on a calendar."



Herndon Councilmember Signe Friedrichs says: "The little black kitty is called Wee One. She is actually not small, more like a beautiful furry beach ball, but her face is so little and I love her so much that she seems like a wee thing to me. She has a rusty purr and the slightest love and attention makes her very flirtatious, so she throws herself to the ground for caresses."

Pedestrian Dies After Reston Crash

An 86-year-old woman has died following a crash that occurred around 10:45 a.m. on Feb. 3 on Baron Cameron Avenue at North Village Road in Reston. Detectives determined Huanmin Xuan was crossing Baron Cameron Avenue from north to south prior to the intersection with North Village Road, outside of the crosswalk. The driver of a 2003 Toyota Prius was traveling east on Baron Cameron Avenue approaching the intersection with North Village Road and struck Xuan in the roadway.

Xuan was taken to a hospital where she succumbed to her injuries on Feb. 16. The driver of the Toyota remained at the scene. Speed and alcohol are not factors in the crash.

Anyone with information about this crash is asked to contact our Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone -1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477). This is the 3rd pedestrian fatality in the County to date in 2022.

County's Fire & Rescue Program Educates on Fireplace Ash Removal

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Given certain conditions, embers in fireplace ash can ignite up to four days after disposal, according to a Fair-

fax County Fire & Rescue (FRD) public service program. The "Ashes to Ashes; Houses All Burn Down" program educates people about the inherent dangers of improperly disposing of fireplace ashes. The program's simple message is "Can

Your Ashes." https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire-ems/sites/fire-ems/files/assets/documents/pdf/fireplace_and_ashes_safety_tips.pdf

After cleaning a fireplace, Fire SEE COUNTY'S FIRE, PAGE 10

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Currier Named New Director of Animal Sheltering

Currier brings long record on animal welfare.

By SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

It is common practice in large corporations and government for newly appointed department heads to select their preferred immediate staff. If you are the newly appointed head of Fairfax County's Department of Animal Sheltering, your staff selection just might be of the four-legged, furry variety. Meet new director Reasa Currier, J.D., and her newly appointed assistant, Gandalf, a rabbit. Currier, and Gandalf, who took their positions on Jan. 31, head Fairfax County's only municipal animal shelter, located at 4500 West Ox Road in Fairfax.

Currier learned about animal care as a young girl, developing a passion for their welfare with early exposure at the side of her grandfather, a hog farmer and large animal veterinarian. Her family often made a home for animals abandoned by others; the three legged and the one-eyed, leading Currier to know animals "would have a huge role in my life." Working in animal welfare for most of her career, her first job was advocating for Arizona's Humane Treatment of Farm Animals Act in 2006. Under Proposition 204, Arizona became only the second state to ban the use of gestation crates for hogs; passing with a wide majority of 61 percent of the vote; assuring that pregnant pigs be confined only in ways that allow the animals to lie down, stand up, fully extend their limbs and turn around freely for the majority of the day. Ten states now ban the use of hog gestation

crates and many food companies have voluntarily given up the practice under the pressure of public opinion.

Currier comes to the county from the Humane Rescue Alliance, established in 1870 by Congress to care for animals in the D.C. area. Previously, Currier worked for the national animal advocacy organization, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). There she worked on areas of systemic cruelty: factory farming, puppy mills, the wildlife trade, and animal fighting. She also was a founding director of Humane Dominion, a non-partisan political action group formed in 2012, which analyzed animal welfare voting records for Virginia legislators, promoting the campaigns of those strong on animal welfare support.

As Currier takes the county shelter reins, or perhaps more aptly, the shelter leash, she will find a modern, relatively new shelter building, complete with a surgical unit; outside exercise runs and play areas; and separate dog, cat, small mammal, in-take and quarantine sections; with robust volunteer and foster programs; and which offers low cost rabies vaccine clinics. The shelter has boasted a consistent live release rate of over 90 percent since they started tracking this metric in 2013.

Looking ahead, Currier wants the shelter to "be a resource for all things related to animals; not just for caring for homeless animals and helping them find homes, but also to provide resources to keep pets and their people together." Resources may include infor-

Gandalf, a Chinchilla rabbit, available for adoption hopes to use his experience in a home office setting, or just a home.



Reasa Currier, Director, Fairfax County Department of Animal Sheltering, with office assistant rabbit, Gandalf.

mation on pet friendly housing, affordable veterinary care, and behavioral and training support. Under the "One Fairfax" lens, she says, such support will deepen the shelter's relationship with neighborhoods where there are "pet resource deserts." And since transportation to the shelter may not be available to all, she expects future events to target neighborhoods on site with additional grooming, pet food, and basic medical care. Her goal? "Help to keep animals with their people. The shelter should not be a place of last resort."

The shelter's success depends on animal fosters and shelter volunteers to supplement an able, knowledgeable staff, Currier says. She expects to ramp up the volunteer program again this summer, following their Covid pause. The shelter especially needs additional fosters during the summer kitting season. Also after recently accepting dogs from the Korean dog meat trade, they need volunteers to spend time with fearful dogs

who need a chance to acclimate before adoption.

Next year, the department will add a second shelter, now under construction on Lorton Road in Lorton, to better serve south county areas; which also increases their need for volunteers.

Office assistant rabbit Gandalf remained quiet through our interview, moving calmly around his designated portion of the office. A Chinchilla rabbit, he is a member of one of the largest rabbit breeds, known for their mild manners and gentle dispositions. Although sharing an office now with Currier, his plans include hope for retirement to the ease of an adopted home, perhaps taking on the role of experienced home office assistant. We are not sure what skills Gandalf brings to his position beyond impeccable liter

box training, and being super cuddly. If one considers "hiring" him, it should be said that Gandalf fits the expression, "doesn't work for peanuts." He works for blueberries. Readers looking for more information about adoption and other shelter services can find it and view adoptable pets at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter.

Those viewing the Facebook page, Fairfax County Animal Shelter, should be forewarned that the level of irresistible cuteness there is very high.

Beagles Find Heroes in General Assembly

By SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

As the Virginia General Assembly moves to the midpoint of its 2022 session, several animal welfare bills remain under consideration. This session both Houses took up possible regulation of breeders who raise animals for research; such breeders are not currently regulated by the Commonwealth. Ongoing issues, over several years at the only research animal breeder currently in the state, located in Cumberland County, prompted legislators to act. Eleven such bills were sponsored this session. Bills in the Senate took a one more "last chance" approach; while those in the House were written to shut down the current operation and any future violation-plagued research breeders.

Envigo, a large Indiana based corporation, which breeds Beagle dogs for research, has been cited for violations by inspectors from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). The site is currently under investigation with more charges expected in coming months. The facility is a large "factory farming" type operation, spread over the equivalent of five football fields; at times housing as many as 5,000 dogs breeding 400-500 beagle puppies per month sold within the United States and to foreign customers for animal testing and research.

Seven bills were submitted in the Senate by Sen. Dave Marsden, (D-37), chairman of the Senate companion animals subcommittee; Sen. Bill Stanley, (R-20), a frequent sponsor of companion animal bills; and Sen. Jennifer Boysko, (D-33). Boysko last year sponsored legislation which now limits cosmetic testing on animals in Virginia and prohibits sale here of cosmetic products tested on animals.

Marsden's bill would establish an Animal Welfare Oversight Officer report-



Sen. Jennifer Boysko shares a moment with Tannis, a research Beagle surrendered to Richmond SPCA, which found her a loving home.



Tannis is comforted by Sen. Bill Stanley, whose bill would make adoption consideration a first alternative required for research animals prior to euthanasia.



Sen. Dave Marsden whose bill would establish an on-site animal welfare officer at research breeder operations.



Sen. Jennifer Boysko (D-33rd) and Senator Bill Stanley (R-20th) reach across the aisle to protect animals from poor conditions at Virginia research animal breeder.

ing to the State Veterinarian's office, paid for wholly by research breeder fees, and with twenty-four hour access to the facility to assure on-going humane practices. The other Senate bills established requirements for regular reporting on animal dispositions after inspectors found 300 dead puppies; adoption opportunities for animals no longer needed in the operation as an alternative to euthanasia; and prohibiting sales to foreign entities or those U.S. research entities which conduct animal testing not required by federal law or regulation.

In the bill review process, some of the bills were amended in the agriculture subcommittee to add a "reenactment clause," a delayed date of effect; whereby the bills would not go into law unless reenacted by next year's General Assembly.

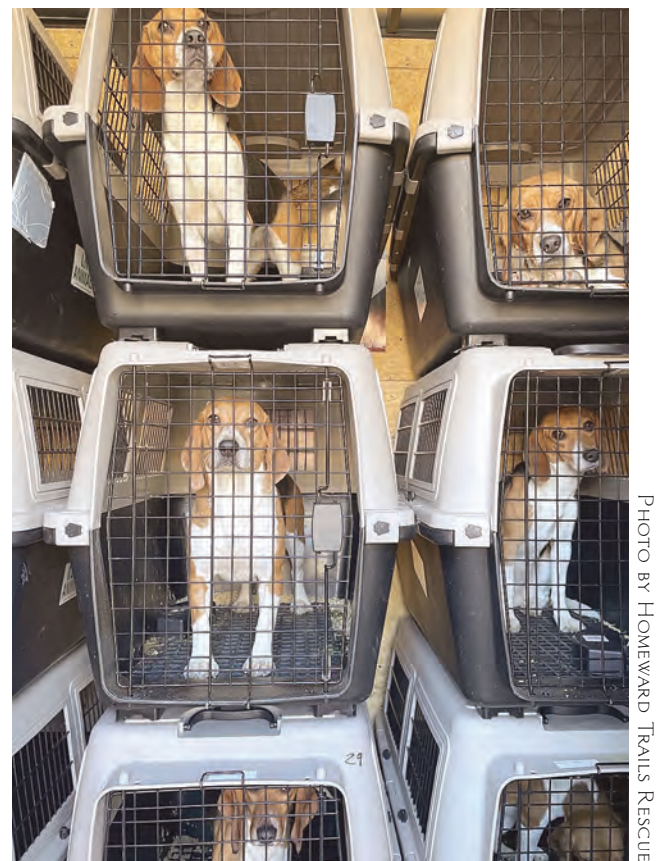
Adding that clause would have the effect of giving the research breeder additional time to correct their deficiencies. Following the attachment of the reenactment clause, Stanley successfully introduced a senate floor amendment substituting March 1, 2023 as the date at which any additional violations would be considered under the law. His action eliminated the need for the Gen-

eral Assembly to act again to protect the animals; a greater reassurance to animal advocates.

FOUR HOUSE BILLS also deal with research animal breeder issues. Bills sponsored by Delegates Shelly Simonds (D-94), Irene Shin (D-86), Kaye Kory (D-38), and Rob Bell (R-58), would prohibit the sale of research animals to foreign testing facilities; animal purchase by Virginia State testing facilities from research breeders with significant citations; and trading with an entity with critical animal welfare violations. Given Envigo's history of violations, these bills, if enacted, could prevent their operation for several years.

Having reached the point of the General Assembly's session cross-over, eight of the original eleven bills, which passed floor votes in each body, move to the other for consideration.

Although animal welfare bills are often viewed differently by legislators in rural and urban areas, passage of these bills with near unanimity demonstrates legislator's resolve to solve research breeder issues. Given the difference in approach taken by legislators, those following this issue must wait to see which will move forward.



More than 150 Beagles recently surrendered to shelters, although bred for animal research, sent by professional animal transport to two rescue groups.

County Animal Shelter Employees Care for Adoptable Pets

By SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Here are a few of the many caring employees of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, who daily care for homeless pets. From mice, guinea pigs, and bunnies, to snakes and turtles, to exotic birds and the occasional chickens and horse, and to the far too many dogs and cats who need a home, shelter employees provide a safe place, food, and human companionship.

In 2021, 3,177 animals of all types passed through those comforting arms, most on their way to connecting with an area family seeking a pet. Meet some of the shelter employees who make it possible for our voiceless, homeless animal neighbors to find lasting comfort and a home.

Anna Wilson with Snowball, a one year old male mouse, now at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, described by staff as "the best mouse in the whole wide world," and that's a lot of mice!



Katherine Denvano, humane education coordinator, with 2 year old Toby, a friendly, fast learner with a huge smile (Pet ID 42623643)



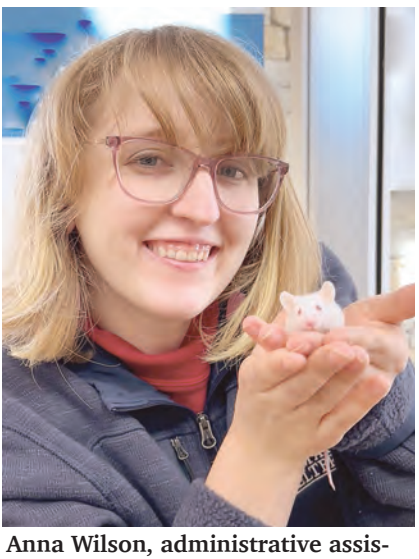
Heather Baskett, animal care manager, with Storm, aka Stitch, a 2 year old happy-go-lucky, full of fun girl (Pet ID 49389592)



Melanie Leopold, foster & rescue coordinator, with chatty and snuggly, Dio, an orange 5 yo male short hair, with a freckled nose (Pet ID 47573053)



Dannie McClammy, shelter caretaker, with Duff, an 8 month male Guinea pig, a playful dude, who was adopted soon after being photographed.



Anna Wilson, administrative assistant, with "best mouse," Snowball, a one year old male, who likes to be held and to snack on string cheese and veggies (Pet ID 47890843)



Reasa Currier, shelter director, with Gandalf, a 3 year old male Chinchilla rabbit, coming in at 12 pounds. This gentle giant with office assistant experience, is ready to take over a home office staff of kids and small dogs (Pet ID 49422570)

PET CONNECTION



Lucy, 9 ½, “is the sweetest girl who wants love, attention, and a comfortable bed.”
<https://www.lab-rescue.org/seniors>



Rudolf, 10, is “a true gentleman with impeccable manners and a kind, gentle demeanor ... He would be very happy with a single person or an older person looking for loyalty and companionship.”
<https://www.lab-rescue.org/seniors>



Sunny, 9, is “up for anything, like swimming and long walks, and has lived happily with children and the commotion they bring.”
<https://www.lab-rescue.org/seniors>



Duke and Luke, both male, are a bonded pair, 12 years old, and “excellent work-from-home buddies ... laid-back, happy and affectionate.”
<https://www.lab-rescue.org/seniors>

Adopting a Senior Dog Could Be a Better Match, Really

One woman's passion and 'Tribute'.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
 THE CONNECTION

Senior dogs are Barbara Nugent's passion and calling. In her free time, Nugent, Park Services Division Director at Fairfax County Park Authority, is a volunteer for Lab Rescue LRCF, <https://www.lab-rescue.org/>, serving as a transporter for the non-profit organization. She drives the dogs to the vets, helps deliver them to their foster and adoptee homes, and welcomes often overlooked senior rescue dogs into her home, and adopts them herself.

As young as seven or eight years old, they are the dogs with the sugar muzzles of gray fur under their eyes, on their noses, and around their mouths. Nugent made the choice many years ago when her Labrador retriever, a “wonderful dog,” died at 16 years. “I knew that I had room in my heart and my head to continue to address the issue of making sure that senior dogs have a forever home,” Nugent said.

Chester and Sarge, a bonded pair, were Nugent's first adoptees when she returned to Northern Virginia, both 12 years old and from Lab Rescue.

“Oh my, there was part of me that was saddened that someone would surrender a 12-year-old dog. You never know why, and I don't need to know the backstory,” Nugent said. “I just hold on to them as long as I can.”

Nugent continued to adopt older labs throughout the years, possibly a dozen in all, providing them forever homes. Some were the more typical bonded pairs who couldn't be separated, with one very old dog and one much younger, “So, I keep rotating through and making sure that when I lose an older lab, I can cycle into another lab. I typically have two,” she said.

Nugent says they all deserve as good a home as she can provide them, and she spoils them. Currently, Nugent has Molly, thirteen, and Sadie, eight. Nugent takes Molly “water-walking” once a week to assist the muscles in her rear legs. Water-walking is a kind of zero-impact training in which the hydrostatic pressure of the water reduces weight or strain on the dog's joints. Warm water helps to relax the body and promote



Jacinta, 10, “doesn't get on any furniture and is easy on the leash.”
<https://www.lab-rescue.org/seniors>

mobility.

“They have treadmills filled with water, and the dogs walk on the treadmill as the bottom moves. With Molly and some of the dogs, they will put up a small dish with suction cups and put peanut butter in it. Molly would walk all day if you do that,” she said. Molly has improved, now able to hop on the bed and walk upstairs.

It's critical to rehome senior rescue dogs and place them with their second chance families; it is immaterial whether they end up in an apartment, townhouse, or detached home. “They need to be in a home so they can continue to work on their manners,” Nugent added, rather than having them stay longer at shelters and kennels and possibly live out their lives there. “It's a challenge to find people who will foster and adopt older dogs. Lots of people like the puppies and the middle-aged dogs who are already house trained,” said Nugent.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals reports that older dogs are adopted at a rate of 25 percent. In contrast, younger dogs and puppies are adopted at 60 percent.

As a consequence, senior pets are often overlooked. Prospective owners might reassess their expectations and consider adopting senior dogs to provide joy, and less stress than a puppy.

An older dog can be the unexpected ideal



Rescue dogs. Molly, 13 years old, is the yellow Lab, and Sadie, eight years, is the chocolate lab. They are a bonded pair, not to be separated and love their forever home with Barbara Nugent.



The Labrador retriever who changed the course of a woman's life and that of over a dozen rescue dogs.

fit, Nugent said. What you see is what you get. A puppy's personality and attributes may alter with time, but a senior dog's personality has already been established. Senior dogs also generally know all the basic commands. And although all dogs need medical attention, Nugent has discovered that the expenditures are not greater for senior dogs.

When she adopts a senior dog, she brings them to the veterinarian for a baseline senior panel to evaluate “how their kidneys, liver, and other things are doing.” Then, if anything gets their attention, “we watch,

monitor, and attempt to mitigate it,” she said.

Puppies, on the other hand, may be highly costly, and middle-aged dogs can experience severe injuries if they get loose or go to a dog park where there might be rough play. Senior dogs are more mellow in activity and are less prone to high-energy injuries.

Finally, senior dogs settle into a home better; they get each other, as Nugent said. She is not a “pup” herself. “I understand much more about senior dogs after all these years than I did before. I think I can read them when they are a little off,” she said.

Finally, if something were to happen to Nugent, the dogs would be cared for. “With Lab Rescue, I signed a contract for each and every one of my dogs that if something happens to me, Lab Rescue takes the dogs back... to rehome them,” she said.

Nugent considers it an honor to have been a part of the lives of the over a dozen dogs she has welcomed into her home, regardless of how long they have been there. Her story is one of honoring and paying homage, a tribute to her first Lab through her adoption of older Labs.

“I've done that since I've been in Northern Virginia. ... All these dogs have been a tribute to her,” said Nugent. “She was a wonderful dog. I miss her all the time.”

Her name was Tribute.

SCHOOLS

HHS Band Director Named '21-'22 Outstanding Teacher

BY EMDAD SWAPAN
HHS NEWS EDITOR

Herndon High School Band Director Kathleen Jacoby was named FCPS's Region 1 2021-22 Outstanding Secondary Teacher. Mrs. Jacoby was presented the award by Region 1 Assistant Superintendent Douglas Tyson, alongside HHS Principal Dr. Liz Noto.

Mr. Tyson said, "People outside of Herndon sat down, looked at what was on there on paper about you and said, 'this person represents what we want as an outstanding educator inside of Region 1.' And we felt she is the person to represent us all."

An HHS Senior said, "She most definitely deserved this award. Mrs. Jacoby works endlessly to ensure her students are always well prepared for every single performance. It speaks to how much she cares about her students."

Mrs. Jacoby's many accomplishments as Band Director



Herndon High School Band Director Kathleen Jacoby with Region 1 Assistant Superintendent Douglas Tyson

have not gone unnoticed. She prepared her band students in just one month's time for a performance at the National Parade of Heroes last Veterans Day weekend. Under her leadership, Herndon's band program has seen success. In 2013, the band was selected by the U.S. Congress to represent Virginia at the 72nd Anniversary of Pearl Harbor Memorial Event in Honolulu, Hawaii. At that event, Herndon won the title of grand champion. Then, in 2019, Herndon was again selected to perform, this time as one of ten choice U.S. high school bands to perform at the 75th Anniversary of D-Day in Normandy, France.

Mrs. Jacoby majored in music education at James Madison University, graduated with a teaching license, and immediately started teaching high school band. She taught for four years at Courtland High School before coming to Herndon High because she wanted to be closer to her family. Mrs. Jacoby has been teaching at Herndon for 14 years.

CALENDAR

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.

1 p.m. At The Alden, McLean Community Center, McLean. Learn a little about the performing arts through these one-hour (or so) documentaries. Safety permitting, join Performing Arts Director Sarah Schallern Treff for a discussion after.

NOW THRU MARCH 13
"Every Brilliant Thing." At Next-Stop 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. At times humorous and at others gut-wrenching, this extraordinary, interactive play brings the actor and audience along together on a unique journey of shared discovery and catharsis. Visit www.NextStopTheatre.org.

FRIDAY/FEB. 25
Sweetheart Parent & Child Dance. 7-9 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingle-side Ave., McLean. For all ages. Children can come to MCC for a fancy "date" with their parents or guardians. Create lasting memories by joining us at the MCC's Sweetheart dance. Activities include a dance lesson, music played by a DJ, a photo booth and craft activities. Visit www.mcleancenter.org

FEB. 21-MARCH 30
Fiber Optics. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At McLean Textile Gallery, 6819 Elm Street, McLean. Philadelphia printmaker Fay Stanford will show her fabulist banners. Stanford creates wry fairy tales about suburban family life - especially death, disease and aging. Visit the website: mcleantextilegallery.org.

FRIDAY/FEB. 25
McLean Art Society Meeting. 10 a.m. to noon. Via Zoom. Ann Wallace, an established local artist who paints with pastels, will be the featured presenter at the meeting of the McLean Art Society. The meeting will be held on Zoom and the art demonstration will begin at 11 a.m. Guests are invited and anyone who would like to be included for the Zoom presentation should contact M.A.S. President Anna Katalkina at annakatalkina@aol.com.

THURSDAY/FEB. 24
Performing Arts Documentaries.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

THE CONNECTION

Newspapers & Online

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3/16/2022.....A+ Camps & Schools
3/23/2022.....Senior Living
3/30/2022.....Spring Family Fun

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4/6/2022.....Wellbeing
4/13/2022.....HomeLifeStyle
4/20/2022.....A+ Camps & Schools
4/27/2022.....Senior Living

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NEWS

County's Fire & Rescue Program

FROM PAGE 5

and Rescue says to place ashes in a heavy metal container with a metal cover. Never place the ashes in a paper bag, cardboard box, or plastic trash bag, and never vacuum them up. A garage, house, or deck are dangerous locations for ashes to cool.

After the ashes have cooled in the metal container, find a suitable disposal site. A garden or flower bed away from structures and wooded areas may be treated with the cooled fireplace ashes adding nutrients to the soil. Remove any dried leaves or combustible material and moisten the soil.

According to the public service program: "The most important contribution you as a homeowner can make to our campaign is simply to heed our message of prevention and pass it along to family and friends. Our goal is to eliminate this problem in Fairfax County and the Commonwealth of Virginia. Every fire we prevent brings us closer to success."

Improperly Discarded Fireplace Ashes Cause Herndon Fire

On Monday, Feb. 14, at approximately 3:46 a.m., units from the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department and the Loudoun County Fire and Rescue Service, were dispatched for a house fire in the 12000 block of Sugarland Valley Drive in the Herndon area of Fairfax County.

Units arrived on the scene of a two-story, single-family home with fire visible in the attached garage. Crews worked quickly to extinguish the fire. The fire damage was isolated to the garage. There were no reported civilian or firefighter injuries.

Five occupants were home at the time of the fire. The fire was discovered when the occupants woke up to the smell of smoke. Upon investigation, smoke and flames were observed coming from inside the garage. Working 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 in the attached garage. The cause of the fire was improperly discarded fireplace ashes into a trash receptacle.

No occupants were displaced because of the fire damage being isolated to the garage. Red Cross assistance was not needed. Damages as a result of the fire were approximately \$87,500.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 9

FEB. 25-26

Capital Remodel and Garden Show. At the Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. Barry Williams, former teen star of "The Brady Bunch" and of HGTV's "A Very Brady Renovation," will be headlining. More than 200 companies will be on hand to showcase the latest products and services in home remodeling, renovation, home décor, landscape and garden design. An ongoing schedule of home remodeling and landscape experts conducting seminars will be carried out throughout the three-day event. From 10 a.m. until 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday and from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets may be purchased at: www.capitalremodelandgardenshow.com

SATURDAY/FEB. 26

"I'Mpossible." 2 p.m. At Capital One Hall, 7750 Capital One Tower Road in Tysons. Led by Ringmaster Johnathan Lee Iverson, the talented cast of circus superstars presents a death-defying, awe-inspiring, and hilarious circus adventure. "I'Mpossible" is a show where there are no limits, no boundaries, and no barriers. Visit CapitalOneHall.com.

SUNDAY/FEB. 27

CIA's Project Azorian. 2-3:30 p.m. At The Cold War Museum, 7134 Lineweaver Road, Vint Hill, VA (Via Virtual). It Was a Top-Secret CIA Mission Against the Soviets. But Now There's a Court Case Involving It. How Do You Resolve That Fairly? Cost: \$20. Visit the website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-glomer-explorer-in-court-the-cia-in-a-court-case-on-project-azorian-tickets-243250427577>



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Skaters practice their jumps.

Sacred Roller Skate

FROM PAGE 3

specific needs of all levels of skaters, I strive to provide a safe, accepting, and judgment-free zone for members of the community. Come for the skates; stay for the comradery and good vibes," McDonald said. "I'm honored to give back to the town that helped shape me into the person I am today," McDonald said.

In addition to providing the high quality, industry standards of roller skate gear and customized, individualized attention to the specific needs of all levels of skaters, I strive to provide a safe, accepting, and judgment-free zone for members of the community. Come for the skates; stay for the comradery and good vibes," McDonald said. "I'm honored to give back to the town that helped shape me into the person I am today."

COMMENTS BY GUESTS

Marcia Furman, Alexandria: "We came

because Katie is awesome, and we want to support the skating community.

Maggie Wenz, Alexandria: "I got a hoodie, and I'm wearing it to the skate park."

Isabella Chevez, Reston: "I think Katie is the coolest, and we love having a shop where we can get skating items and be part of the community."

Brittany Henry, Falls Church: "I came to support Katie and buy parts for my skates in person rather than online. I normally skate at Arlington Skate Park. The W & OD Trail is on my plan for the summer."

Wes and Andrea McDonald (Katie's parents): "It's an amazing thing to see Katie bring this shop and skating community experience to Herndon and the Northern Virginia area. We are so proud of her and couldn't be happier for her and all the present and future folks who are going to have so much fun. It's a wacky, inclusive, sacred lifestyle ... friendship, community, experience, support, and love."

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By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Consider yourselves advised. Eighteen months or so into my treatment for thyroid cancer and the dry-mouth I've been "side-effecting" has not diminished one bit. In fact, it's gotten worse in one respect: the missing saliva or whatever it is causing this chronic condition, directly impacts your product line and dare I presume, your profits as well. Chocolate, miscellaneous cookies and snack cakes do not satiate like they used to. The constant dryness makes eating certain foods difficult. And as a result, less desirable, and not purchased nearly as much.

How much impact can one individual's changing eating habits have on a company's bottom line? I don't want to boast, but I have a long history of buying and re-buying the same foods repeatedly. If any of these three brands had frequent-buyer incentives when I was growing up, I would have saved my parents thousands of dollars at the supermarket. I recall my mother regularly collecting green stamps for something; I'm sure she would have saved box tops or whatever to earn additional discounts or a baker's dozen type of freebee.

Growing up, I had dessert with breakfast, lunch, after school/midafternoon, dinner and once more before bedtime. Five desserts daily. Part of the reason for this rigorous routine - which I thoroughly enjoyed, was my mother's desire to follow the regularly advertised calcium advisories for children to have strong bones: eight glasses of milk per day. And the way to get children to drink all that milk, at least in my mother's house, was to give us all that chocolate. Which brings me back to the point of this column. Though my chocolate consumption isn't nearly the same now (I know. How could someone keep up that pace?), it is still ample, to say the least, the very least. But unfortunately, I'm simply unable to maintain my life's work.

I blame this squarely on the thyroid cancer drug I've been swallowing every morning since Sept. '19. (In the interest of not defaming a drug/pharmaceutical company, I will not name names.) But there cannot be any other logical explanation. The only variable in my life these last 18 months has been this daily dose. And though initially the treatment didn't curb/impair my chocolate consumption, it seems the cumulative effect of over 500 pills ever since (my re-diagnosis from stage IV non-small cell lung cancer to stage IV papillary thyroid cancer being the cause) has led to this unpalatable condition.

For me, I'll adjust, though I'm not happy about it. There are other desserts, snack cakes and candy (specifically jellybeans of late) which will likely fill the void. But it will be a void, nonetheless. And that means less money going to these big three. I wouldn't say my lack of demand is going to affect the number of eight-hour shifts the manufacturers schedule, but if any line employees want to take early retirement, given the slack, it might be advisable to accept their offer. On the other hand, Jelly Belly's profits will likely increase.

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

PET CONNECTION



From Moscow to Alexandria

Journalist Lisa McAdams was covering the international cat show in Moscow, Russia, in 2003 when four-month-old Bella reached out with her paw to touch her and stole her heart. Now 19 years old, Bella has lived for the last 15 years in Alexandria, Virginia, with Lisa and her husband, Michael Collins, who affectionately refer to her as “the Czarina!”



Bella with Lisa McAdams in February 2022



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALCORN FAMILY

Hunter Mill District Supervisor Walter Alcorn gets some work done, while family cat Princess Carolyn opts for a nap. She was a 13-year-old rescue when she was adopted by his family.



Now going on two years old, Samson and Mishka were “pandemic puppies” along with their nine other siblings – born in the fall of 2020 in West Virginia to their mixed-breed mother, Sadie. In November, 2020, Sadie and her brood landed in the care of Animal Welfare League of Arlington <https://www.awla.org/>, who ultimately placed all eleven puppies into different foster homes in groups of twos and threes. In December 2020, the lucky brother and sister were adopted by a pair of next-door neighbors – Alyssa Tope and Galina Ginzburg of Arlington.



Juno has been a resident of Arlington for almost 6 years. Her eight sons and two daughters live all over the country, but a few still live in Arlington. She cries when she is reunited with anyone in her family — no matter the species. Like any new mother, she had a makeover when the pups were all gone and she could stop nursing them, finally, and getting her figure back, could dress up again.

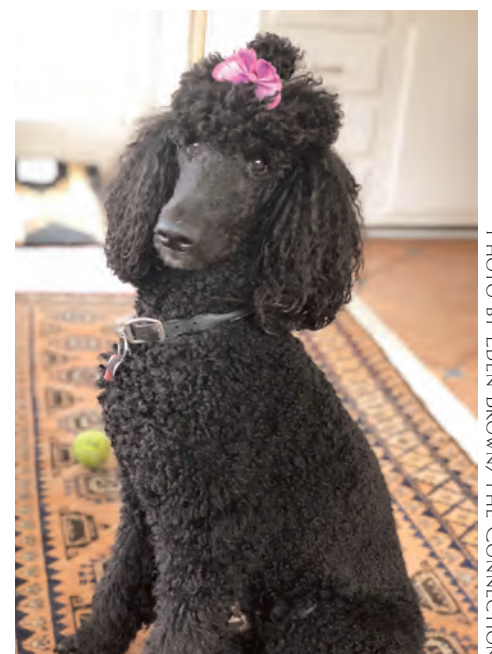


PHOTO BY EDEN BROWN/THE CONNECTION



David Griffin, Ana Claudia Griffin, Poppy of Alexandria
 “Poppy is a Basset Hound and is almost 1.5 years old. We got him from Peru which is where my wife (Ana, pictured) is originally from. He loves to chew any sticks he finds and really enjoys walking around Old Town. We also go to Blackjack Dog Park off Route 1 almost every day and he loves playing with other dogs.”