

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

APRIL 21, 2022

Mount Vernon Trail Turns 50

Trail volunteers and a bald eagle were recognized at the birthday celebration.



The Friends of Mount Vernon trail discussing the strategy for cutting down kudzu plants.

BY MIKE SALMON
GAZETTE PACKET

It was 1971 when Ellen Pickering and Barbara Lynch thought up the idea for the Mount Vernon Bike Trail along the Potomac River, and their efforts were highlighted at the 50th anniversary celebration on Saturday, April 16. Especially Judd Isbell, the president of the Friends of Mount Vernon Trail who repeated their mantra: "We were just two women that said 'why don't we' and we did," Isbell said to the crowd that gathered at Daingerfield Island.

Pickering and Lynch got signatures on a petition and then the support of the National Park Service before the first 4.5-mile stretch of the trail opened in 1972. Since then it has grown and so have the numbers of volunteers that help maintain it, as several people pointed out. "Their volunteerism is what this is all about," said Charles Cuvelier of the National Park Service. "It started as a dream and a passion," he said.

One of those volunteers is David Bouk, a member of the volunteer trail who loads down his bicycle with a gas powered trimmer, a couple of rakes, and clippers to maintain the vegetation that gets out of control in the spring. He straps all this to his bike with Velcro and bungee cords for his trip. "When you volunteer, they give you hand clippers and over time, it evolved as I could see the need," he said.

Trailside Activities

At the ceremony, there were about a dozen tents with various groups including the National Park Service, Capital Trails, Rosslyn, Bike Arlington, the Alexandria Medical Reserve Corps, the Friends of Mount Vernon Trail and the



National Park Service superintendent Charles Cuvelier.

Friends of the Dyke Marsh, which is an ecosystem just south of the City of Alexandria. Most of these groups are at least partially staffed by volunteers.

"This trail is a case study in volunteer stewardship," said Isbell.

The Mount Vernon Trail goes from George Washington's Mount Vernon Plantation to Old Town Alexandria, past Daingerfield Island and Reagan National Airport to Rosslyn. That stretch is about 17 miles. On the southern end, there is an old portion of trail that is tough to navigate, but work is currently going on to extend the trail from the plantation, across Dogue Creek, across Richmond Highway and onto Jeff Todd Way. Throughout the trail corridor, other bike trails link to it so it is possible to travel throughout the region from the Mount Vernon Trail.

"Basically from Maine to Key West," said Elliot Caldwell with the East Coast Greenway Alliance. He admitted the Mount Vernon stretch is "one of the most visited parts of the Greenway route," he said,

Locals use it for commuting and exercise too. "I use it for recreation, about 90-100 miles a week in the summertime," said Joe Swartz.

Supervisor Storck uses it a lot



Bicyclists dominated the audience.



David Bouk, left, with his bike full of gardening tools.

too. "I love trails, I bike, hike and run, it's been a big thing in my life," Storck said.

Sean McCallum rides a lot too and brought up a couple of areas in the southern part of the trail



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/GAZETTE PACKET

Just north of Old Town, the trail stays busy.

that he said needs attention. His concerns include safety rails that are missing, parts of the trail that are washed out near the stone bridge, trees that have fallen this winter and root cracks that can be seen throughout the trail path. 50 years of ridership and exposure to the elements have taken their toll.

During Cuvelier's speech, a bald eagle was spotted over the crowd and there was a pause as everyone looked up. Eagles are another thing that has bounced back since the trail opened in 1972. Bald Eagles were on the endangered species list at that time, and now can be seen regularly along the Potomac River. Cuvelier pointed out the eagle.

"It does remind us of what a special place this is," he said.



From left, U.S. Rep. Don Beyer, Arlington Board member Katie Cristol, Judd Isbell, Sup. Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon), Superintendent Charles Cuvelier and Alexandria council member Sarah Bagley take in the moment.

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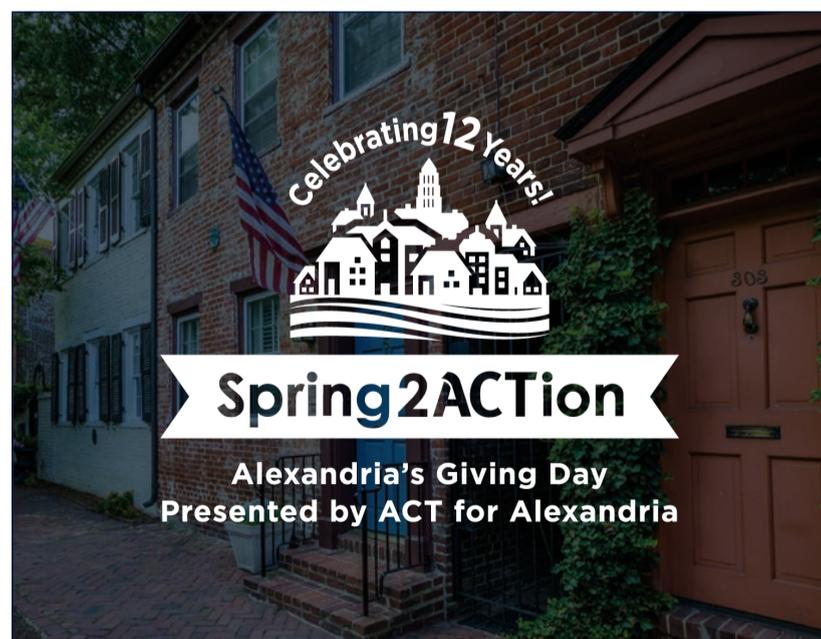
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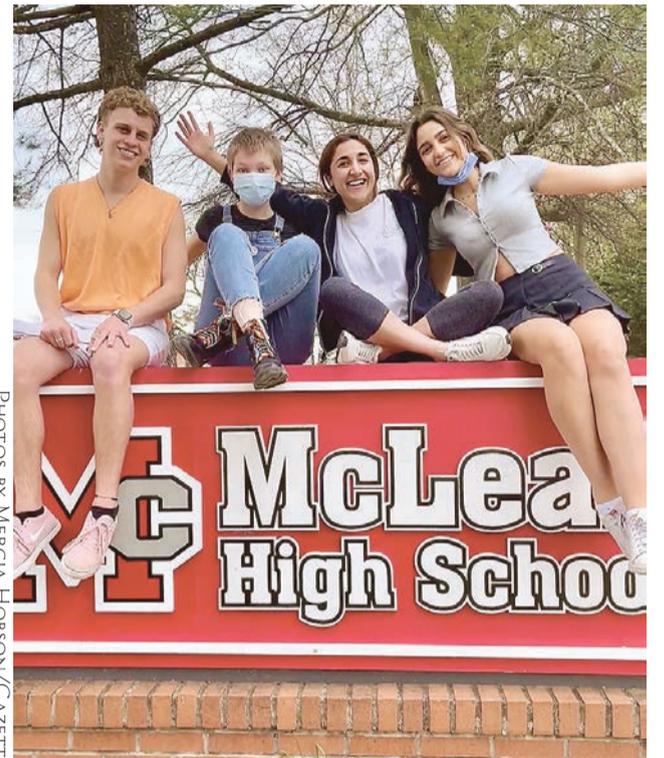




Student protest over the superintendent selection process at McLean High School last week.



Students stages walk out protests at McLean, Westfield and Mount Vernon High Schools, among others.



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/GAZETTE PACKET

Protestors at McLean High School (from left): Atticus Gore, Sierra Balleisen, Ava Farivar, and Layla Bizri, climb up on the school sign after demonstrating to raise awareness, advocate for their rights, and for students to have a voice in the selection of the new FCPS superintendent.

No Stopping School Board Naming New Division Superintendent

Student protests, petition and NAACP objections fail to derail the endgame.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
GAZETTE PACKET

On April 14, 250 high school students in Fairfax County staged walkouts and protests at multiple schools, including Westfield, McLean, Oakton, and Mount Vernon high schools

organized by the Pride Liberation Project. It is a student-led coalition of queer and allied FCPS students who advocate for the rights of LGBTQIA students.

The Fairfax County School Board was scheduled to vote that evening naming Michelle Reid, Ed.D., as Fairfax County Public Schools' next superintendent. Reid

is currently the superintendent of the Northshore School District in Washington state.

Sierra Balleisen, a McLean High School student protestor, said, "I'm here as a neurodivergent student trying to advocate for our rights and allow the students to have a voice in the new superintendent ... There should be nothing about us

without us."

According to Pride Liberation Projects' Student Statement Supporting NAACP Letter Regarding Superintendent Search, outreach to the community during the search for new superintendents was limited to fifteen days in January. The only outreach to students was an 11-student panel, chosen

through a process not revealed to the general student body. "Though these 11 students are likely immensely qualified, they nonetheless cannot represent the views of a 180,000+ student body that attends 198 schools and centers, speaks 200+ languages, and belongs to a diverse range of socio-
SEE STUDENT PROTEST, PAGE 8

Fairfax School Board's Frustration Shows

Does the process diminish new superintendent's appointment?

BY MERCIA HOBSON
GAZETTE PACKET

At its regular meeting on April 14, the Fairfax County School Board voted 9 to 3 to appoint Michelle Reid, Ed.D. as division superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools, effective July 1, 2022, and ending June 30, 2026, replacing Superintendent Scott Brabrand, who is stepping down. The appointment was accompanied by concern and angst by

school board members. Laura Jane Cohen (Springfield) described the board as "a collective group of 12 very different people."

Rachna Sizemore Heizer (Vice Chair and Member-at-Large) said that Reid performed consistently at the top of the candidates for superintendent of FCPS, impressing them with her "thoughtful, brilliant, and insightful analysis, her work around STEM, and strong academics for all students, and an understanding that our focus must also be on the whole child." Sizemore Heizer said she was

also impressed with Reid's work on racial and educational justice and inclusion, demonstrating support for and deep understanding of LGBTQIA students, students of color, students from various re-



Rachna Sizemore Heizer (Vice Chair and Member-at-Large)

ligious backgrounds, English language learner students, immigrants, students with disabilities, and those with different gender identity. "She was the only one to talk about ableism and demonstrate understanding of the concepts of neurodiversity."

Karen Keys-Gamarra (Member-at-Large) made a motion to delay the vote, seconded by Dr. Ricardy Anderson (Mason District). Keys-Gamara addressed
SEE FAIRFAX SCHOOL, PAGE 10



CASA members at the April 14 rally support the proposed Trust Policy.



CASA members hold signs urging FCSB to adopt the Trust Policy.



A CASA speaker advocates for the Trust Policy.



Diane Burkley Alejandro, Lead Advocate for Fairfax Virginia People Power.

FCPS to Consider Trust Policy

CASA members and allies speak out at rally and public hearing.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE GAZETTE

CASA, a nonprofit immigrant advocacy group, held a press conference and rally outside Luther Jackson Middle School in Falls Church early on the evening of April 14, the site of the Fairfax County School Board's regular meeting. Public hearings were planned to start at 6 p.m.

"We are here to support the Fairfax School Board Trust Policy and have community members coming to speak to the school board members," said Christian Martinez, CASA Advocacy Specialist. "We've been involved throughout the whole process, and we have not seen any (cause for) concern."

As a new item for discussion on the school board's agenda, there would be no vote on the policy that night, but the school board is expected to vote on the policy on April 28, according to Martinez. The Fairfax County Public Schools Trust Policy aligns with Fairfax County's Public Trust and Confidentiality Policy, adopted on Jan. 26, 2021. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/sites/topics/files/assets/documents/pdf/fairfax-county-trust-policy.pdf>

For students, if the new policy is adopted, the most noticeable change, Martinez said, "would be that they'd be able to have trust when they go to school. ... They won't have to worry about anything else besides getting a good education," he said.

Approximately 30 attendees, dressed in CASA sweatshirts, gathered around a microphone set up near the front sidewalk of the school. In their remarks, representatives from immigrant organizations as well as immigrants themselves expressed their mistrust in FCPS and their support for the proposed School Public Trust and Confidentiality Policy.



Outside Luther Jackson Middle School, where the Fairfax County School Board would be meeting that evening, a CASA speaker advocates for the Trust Policy.

Diane Burkley Alejandro, the lead advocate for Fairfax Virginia People Power, a grassroots organization founded by the national ACLU, described how CASA welcomed the organization into the fight for immigration rights before the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted its Trust Policy (2021) to help immigrants remain safe from police and other cooperating agencies.

"Now it's time for the schools to do their part ... Schools would have the same trust policies that the county does," Alejandro said. "We know that a lot of you came to Fairfax for your children. My husband and I came to Fairfax for our children because they have good schools. Your children have a right to be safe and to get a good educa-

tion," she said.

According to the Trust Policy, its purpose is to confirm the school board's commitment to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all students and their families, protecting them from fear of deportation.

Janis of Honduras said she immigrated to the United States 16 years ago because of poverty and a lack of opportunities in her home country. "For a long time, I have felt insecure because... [of my] immigration status. And despite the fact that my son was born in this country, in the United States, and attends school, due to my legal status, I am always afraid that my information is going to be exposed to these immigration

entities." She talked about the fear parents have of being deported and how it is essential to keep information private so that students can access services without exposing family details to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

If adopted, the Trust Policy would end any collaboration with federal immigration agencies such as the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.), which helps in detaining and deporting immigrants without documentation.

A. Hernandez, an immigrant living in Springfield, is the mother of an FCPS elementary school student. "I am often afraid when it comes to personal information because I am an undocumented mother. I am afraid my information will be shared with other agencies or with I.C.E. For many reasons, many times, I am afraid at school. It is difficult for my son to enroll in different educational programs. We always have to give all our personal data or present an identification from our country, which makes it more obvious that I am undocumented ... The policy provides us with well-being, security, and confidence by ensuring that parents and immigrant children of our country will be able to access school benefits and services without fear that the information we share will be disclosed to federal immigration officials."

Under the proposed school Trust Policy, FCPS employees would refer all requests for information or records from immigration enforcement officials or agents to the Office of Division Counsel for review. Employees could not grant access to school sites without approval from the Office of Division Counsel.

According to the April 14 agenda, the recommendation is that the Board approves the Trust Policy. An overview of the FCPS Trust Policy-New is available at <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/fairfax/Board.nsf/Public>. A video of Video - Spring Public Hearing is available at <https://www.fcps.edu/node/43732>.

Mural Project Spreads Positive Vibes in Mount Vernon

One of several planned for the Richmond Highway corridor.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Arts has an impact on the surrounding community, says Evan Kaufman, Executive Director of the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation in Mount Vernon. That's the idea behind a new initiative SFDC launched recently, Paint the Corridor project, which was kicked off earlier in April with a mural jazzing up a vacant wall space on a building at 8121 Richmond Hwy., just up the hill from Little Hunting Creek.

This colorful mural has paper planes, a bird and water features that stand out in this area which is dominated by vacant lots, empty buildings and the run-down space where the Thieves Market once stood. The building was once an airplane parts store serving two former airfields at Hybla Valley and Beacon Hill and the paper airplanes on the mural reference that history. Wildlife reflects life in the stream valley and Potomac River environments.

On the 'cool' scale, it ranks up there and Kaufman explained the value of 'cool' to the Board of Supervisors at a board meeting on April 13. "Cool comes from creative expression, and this mural adds a sense of cool on the corridor," he said. Part of his mission is to create a stronger sense of place



PHOTO BY SFDC

The mural overlooks Hybla Valley along Richmond Highway.

"Cool comes from creative expression, and this mural adds a sense of cool on the corridor."

— Evan Kaufman, Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation

and identity to the Richmond Highway Corridor.

"These residents deserve the same level of cool as other parts of the county," Kaufman added.

The plan for this year is to create two more murals in the area and maybe more in the future. "As many as we can do within our budget and available grants," Kaufman said. For this mural SFDC partnered with Community Art for Everyone, another local non-profit,

and a \$4000 grant from ArtsFairfax.

"We supplied the rest of the funding from our sponsors, and another grant from Transurban," Kaufman said. Transurban is an Australian engineering company that built the express lanes in this area.

The murals won't have a certain theme to follow, but they are sticking with positivity. "In general we are working with each property owner to develop murals that may help tell the history of the property and the general area or just be really fun, colorful, and whimsical," said Kaufman.

Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) highlighted the mural on social media with a picture of his staff in front of the wall. "Team MVD loves the new mural! Thank you Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation - SFDC for beautifying our neighborhoods. Can't wait to see the next one!" they wrote.



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Poor Penmanship: What About All Those Vetoes?

BY SEN. ADAM EBBIN

The heavy workload of this year's General Assembly session produced some 728 bills from our bipartisan legislature. Though the outcome of some key pieces of legislation and an agreement on our biennial budget remain outstanding, these bills reflect the urgent priorities of lawmakers and those they are elected to represent. With a different party controlling each chamber of the legislature, the only bills which made it to the Governor were the product of bipartisan compromise built on long-standing relationships, intensive stakeholder input, and the shared priority of doing the people's business.

Each year, at the adjournment of session, focus shifts to the Governor's policy team as they review the often complex, diverse slate bills we send them. A new administration often means that aides who were not involved in the crafting and amending of these bills, and who are still honing their subject matter expertise, face a monumental task. The Governor is Constitutionally required to approve, amend, or veto all bills communicated to him within 30 days of the end of session. That deadline was

Monday, April 11th.

With no bills possessing a major partisan bent in the mix, Governor Youngkin's team was granted a rather unique opportunity to fully put aside political maneuvering and focus completely on vetting the policies.

Unfortunately, as the clock ticked towards midnight on his last day to act, the Governor squandered that rare opportunity with a flourish of his pen — vetoing 25 uncontroversial, bipartisan bills, all carried by Democrats, in a harried attempt at political retribution. These included nine of the 10 bills I sent to his desk — five which passed unanimously, and four others which passed with more than 2/3rds of both bodies voting in favor. These bills provided real, meaningful change for Virginians, including reducing the backlog for benefits at the Virginia Employment Commission, increasing consumers' privacy over their personal data, providing employment and insurance protections for living organ donors, and reducing overburdensome taxes on growing businesses. In five cases, the Governor signed identical House bills, then vetoed my Sen-



Ebbin

ate version. This is an unprecedented practice, devaluing the teamwork and collegiality which allow House and Senate patrons to navigate each other's chambers. The Governor and I have had several congenial, productive meetings since he took office, and though we have clashed over several of his first choices for appointed positions, I was surprised by this rather churlish use of his authority.

Generally, the Governor provides a thorough written explanation for his legislative actions to the Assembly — making his case to uphold a veto or win approval of an amendment. However, despite vetoing more bills than any first-year Governor since Jim Gilmore in 1998, details on the Governor's reasoning remain sparse. In one case his office pointed out several flaws in a bill, introduced by Sen. Dave Marsden (D-Fairfax), regulating cars blocking a right of way. The only problem? The final version of this bill already addressed these concerns — one can only infer that their analysis was based on the unpolished, introduced version. The Governor attributed three oth-

er vetoes to "industry opposition" including a bill by Del. Cia Price (D-Hampton) to give localities the ability to sue dangerously negligent landlords, one from Sen. Marsden to reduce high-risk braking by 18 wheelers during snowstorms, and one by Sen. Scott Surovell (D-Fairfax) to index the cost of solid waste disposal. But in all three cases, the industry stakeholders didn't oppose the bill — in fact they had actively supported and collaborated with the patron to improve the bills. The Governor vetoed several bills creating studies stating that we should not waste public dollars on studying issues — "the time for action is now." This stands in clear contrast to the multiple times Youngkin's office offered amendments to bills that changed active policy to studies and workgroups.

This lack of consistency surely leaves Virginians scratching their heads. Is it indicative of a prolonged learning curve, a signifier of priorities focused outside the lawmaking process, or simply frustration boiling over from a session where less than 50% of the Governor's agenda made it to his desk? Whatever the answer, these actions serve neither the deliberative and effective culture of the General Assembly, nor the people of Virginia, well.

Earth Day: We Can Do Our Part

BY DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK

When you read about climate change and the environmental crisis, do you get overwhelmed? When you read that every minute the equivalent of one dump truck load of plastic enters into the ocean, how does that make you feel? Are you angry, depressed or frustrated? So, what can you do? How can we sort through all the information out there on how to be environmentally aware and purposefully green? Well, I too don't have all the answers but I know what I try to do and what you can do too, and that's to make small changes in your life to make a positive impact. When coupled with what millions of people around the world are also doing on a daily basis to address climate change, we have the opportunity to make a big impact. Here are some things we all can do:

1. Recycle and do it right. It's important to get it right because we single stream recycle here in Fairfax County, no longer sepa-

rating materials at our curbs into paper, plastic and metals. It all goes into one big blue bin and, if you are good, that bin has a lot more in it than your gray trash can. But, unfortunately, a quarter of recycled materials are unable to be processed due to contamination. That's way up from just 7% ten years ago. With single streaming we get more participation, but it also leads to an increased number of contaminants. It is critical to always clean and dry food containers before recycling. Liquid can soften paper products and make them unrecyclable. Same thing with grease and food debris. Don't include them. Better to leave it out than spoil the entire load. Same thing for plastic bags or flexible plastics, like wet or soft paper, it can jam up the gears of the recycling machinery.

2. Switch to sustainability. Aim to use public transportation more often, or walk or bike for some errands if possible. If you have a



Krizek

gas guzzler, aim to get a gas sipper. Try a hybrid, or even better, an electric car if you can afford it. Remember that the E-vehicles have far fewer moving parts and fewer maintenance costs too. Over 20% of greenhouse gas emissions come from transportation. Solar is also a great way

to offset fossil fuel usage. Look into solar net metering programs to see if your home meets the requirements. And, finally, a quarter of emissions comes from the agricultural industry, particularly from the raising of meat. Try to cut down on your meat consumption. You don't have to become a vegetarian, though that would be great, but eat meat less often. Cat-

SEE KRIZEK, PAGE 7

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OPINION

Krizek

FROM PAGE 6

tle especially contribute to methane emissions and consume much of the food we raise. Fifty percent of all the land on earth is used for farming and three-quarters of that is dedicated to raising livestock. And over one-third of all potable water is used for livestock too.

3. Participate in community clean up efforts and other environmental programs in the community. Understand that if our common goal is to work together as a nation to combat the climate crisis, we will succeed. But we all must work together and do our part.

So, what are you waiting for? We are not helpless nor can we afford to be complacent. Celebrate Earth Day this year with a renewed commitment to the environment. You can join Sen. Scott Surovell and me on April 30th from 9am-12pm to clean up Little Hunting Creek. Our group will meet at the Janna Lee Avenue Bridge.

And, attend the Environment Expo this Saturday, April 23rd, at Fort Hunt Park from 10am to 2pm. It's a free family fun festival where we can enjoy exhibits on environmental challenges and solutions, workshops and educational entertainment.

The best thing that we can do is to take personal responsibility for our own consumption and recognize the areas in our lives where we are most wasteful and work to alter those habits that are hurting the Earth. Not only is this healthy for the planet, but it also helps to save a lot of money in the long run. With some small changes to your lifestyle, you can live a more eco-friendly life. To those of you doing your part, thank you. And, to the rest of us, let's be a part of the solution. It's never too late to make a difference. We only have one planet Earth.



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Student Protests, Petition and NAACP Objections Fail to Derail the Endgame



Jaya Nachnani, Mount Vernon High School student, was an organizer of the protest.

FROM PAGE 3

economic backgrounds,” said PLP’s statement.

The student statement referenced Reid’s record on closing achievement gaps and protecting students’ free speech, describing it as “lackluster.” “Moreover, Northshore School District’s history on protecting neurodivergent and disabled students is poor. For example, community members raised concerns of the restraint and seclusion of disabled students.”

“The need to hear our voices is more important than ever given the various concerns that have emerged over Dr. Reid’s approach to student journalism, neurodivergent students, and students of color,” protest organizer and Westfield student Aaryan Rawal said.

Reid and Dr. Cheryl Logan, the superintendent of Omaha Public Schools, had been the two finalists for the FCPS superintendent position. A select community panel met with the two candidates on March 28 and 29.

According to the April 9 Fairfax County NAACP release, the panel was made up of “individual members of selected School Board Advisory Committees; a few chosen FCPS elementary, middle, and high school principals; five members from the Fairfax County Council of PTAs (FCCPTA) to represent the five FCPS geographic regions; a representative from Northern Virginia Community College; a representative of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations (whose mission is to protect Homeowners Association interests); and the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce.”

The panel did not include representatives from the Fairfax NAACP or the Pride Liberation Project.

The Fairfax NAACP said that it had been “inundated with messages from whistleblowers (serving on the panel) sharing names and data points as well as overall impressions.”

The Fairfax NAACP said that many panelists were “shocked” that a superintendent (Reid) with only a \$400 million budget vs. a \$2.7 billion FCPS budget, 2,100 employees vs. 25,000 FCPS employees, and achievement gaps despite relatively high wealth and low poverty could have ended up as one of FCPS’s final two candidates.

The Fairfax NAACP reached out to school board members. While they received responses from a few, the members’ reactions were not about the data or comparative characteristics of the divisions but rather to express their dismay that whistleblowers reached out to Fairfax NAACP and Fairfax NAACP acted on their behalf.

“With so much at stake, we have determined to share this information with the public,” the Fairfax NAACP said.

The Omaha World-Herald reported on April 15 that Dr. Cheryl Logan informed the Omaha Public School board a week before that she had taken her name out of the FCPS superintendent search. Logan’s announcement and the NAACP’s release occurred on the same day. With Logan’s withdrawal, Reid was now the leading candidate to succeed Dr. Scott Brabrand, the current FCPS Superintendent.

In the 72 hours leading up to the protests and the school board’s pending confirmation vote for Reid, the Pride Liberation Project circulated amongst FCPS high school students its petition addressed to FCPS school board members and



Student protestors at Westfield High School.

GR Consulting. “FCPS cannot select a new Superintendent without thoroughly reaching out to students and addressing concerns,” the student group said.

In their petition, PLP requested that “FCPS conduct a public audit of the Superintendent search process and publicly release clear indications that the Superintendent was chosen for demonstrating success in key areas, including community outreach, closing achievement and opportunity gaps, mental health access for all students, and equitable school experiences for vulnerable student populations, such as neurodivergent, people of color, LGBTQIA+, and English language learner students.”

Westfield student Aaryan Rawal reported that over 500 students signed the petition requesting that GR Consulting and the school board do more to reach out to students during the final stages of the superintendent search. PLP proposed holding student town hall meetings during high school free (advisory) time to allow students to voice concerns and provide board members with “important context.”

Jaya Nachnani was the primary organizer of the Mount Vernon High School protest. On April 14, she tweeted that they had two protest goals: “to get more time to investigate the allegations made against Reid and raise concerns regarding the difference in demographics between the counties (FCPS and Northshore school districts).”

FCPS has an enrollment nearly



Student protestors at McLean High School



Student protest at Mount Vernon High School.

CALENDAR

NOW THRU MAY 5

Solo Art Exhibition. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Art & Framing, 694 N. St. Asaph St., Alexandria. Art & Framing will be home to the exhibition "Works from Nature's Jewel Tones: Paintings by Kathleen Callery. The show features 20 of Callery's works. The jewel tones found in nature have been the main inspiration for these paintings--Kathleen Callery.



The Barber & Brahms Resilience concert will be held on April 23-24 in Alexandria. (Pictured) Dylana Jenson, violin.

NOW THRU APRIL 30

Second Life Exhibit. 6 p.m. Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday; 9 p.m. Friday. At Del Ray Artisans gallery in the Colasanto Center, 2704 Mount Vernon Avenue, Alexandria. The "Second Life" exhibit features art made with recycled materials. Workshops and events are also scheduled throughout the month. Details: delrayartisans.org/calendar/#event=second-life

NOW THRU JUNE 5

"SeeWorthy" Exhibit. At Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 North Union Street, Studio #9, Alexandria. View ship construction through the eyes of maritime archaeologists in SeeWorthy, a new exhibit from Alexandria Archaeology highlighting the technology used to digitally reconstruct historic vessels. Recent development along the waterfront has led to significant discoveries by archaeologists, including the remains of four historic ships. These remnants have been laser scanned to create models showing what they would have looked like in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

NOW THRU MAY 1

Cherry Blossom Exhibition. At the Torpedo Factory Art Center, 105 N. Union Street, Alexandria. Art lovers are encouraged to stop by the Torpedo Factory Art Center throughout April to view floral art displayed on all three floors. Participating artists will display their most colorful spring and cherry-blossom-inspired works in their studios from Saturday, April 2 until Sunday, May 1. Torpedo Factory Art Center is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Masks are required for all visitors regardless of vaccination status. Visit torpedofactory.org.

NOW THRU JUNE 12

MVUC Greenhouse Plant Sale. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Weekends only. At Mount Vernon Unitarian Church, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. The Annual Spring Plant Sale at the MVUC Greenhouse opens April 2 and 3, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., weekends only. They have a variety of vegetables and flowers for sale again this year. Lots of regular and heirloom tomatoes and not-too-hot peppers (more than 20 different varieties) as well as some of your favorite perennials, annuals, and herbs. Visit the lovely, old greenhouse and buy some new plants for your spring garden.

NOW THRU MAY 28 (SATURDAYS)

Washington Whiskey Tasting. 2-5 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. At this outdoor event, sample George Washington's whiskey and other distilled spirits made at Washington's Distillery.

Enjoy a rare opportunity to taste Mount Vernon's one-of-a-kind

distilled spirits. Sample 3 distilled spirits, made using 18th-century distilling methods and techniques. Hear from Mount Vernon's Historic Trades team about the history of distilling spirits, and tour George Washington's Distillery. This event is held at George Washington's Distillery & Gristmill which is located 2.7 miles from the main estate entrance. Guests may arrive directly at the facility and free parking is available on-site.

NOW THRU MAY 4

Screen Dream and Life is Fragile Exhibit. At The Art League, 105 North Union Street, in Alexandria. Lights! Camera! Action! Screen Dream takes its cue from the big and small screen. Member artists created works—drawings, paintings, glass, mixed media, sculpture, and photography—inspired by the stories, images, writers, actors, directors, and musical scores from popular movies and television. Browning-Dill will be in conversation about her exhibit and artistry in The Art League Gallery on Thursday, April 21, from 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. RSVP here. Both Screen Dream and Life is Fragile: Handle With Care are on view through May 4. Visit www.theartleague.org.

THURSDAY/APRIL 21

Beatrice Farrand's Legacy at Green Spring Gardens. 4-5 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. In honor of the 80th anniversary of the installation of Beatrice Farrand's garden at Green Spring Gardens, join landscape historian and author Judith Tankard as she talks about the incredible garden designs of America's first female landscape architect Beatrice Farrand. Call 703-642-5173.

THURSDAY/APRIL 21

Outdoor Bluegrass Concert. 5-6 p.m. At The Rectory on Princess Street, 711 Princess Street, Alexandria. The father-son team Ken & Brad Kolodner crosses the boundaries of Old-Time, Bluegrass and American Roots music in a transfixing, elegant program played in sophisticated arrangements for banjo, hammered dulcimer and fiddle featuring distinctive songs, traditional pieces and original music. Visit the website: <https://www.classicalmovements.com/secretgardenconcerts/>

FRIDAY/APRIL 22

Garden Talk - Deer-Resistant Gardens.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 14

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Public Hearings

Funding the Right Transportation Projects

You are invited to share comments on transportation projects that have been recommended for funding in the FY2023-2028 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). Additionally, pursuant to §33.2-202, comments will be accepted for new projects valued in excess of \$25 million. The Commonwealth Transportation Board will take your comments into consideration as it develops the FY2023-2028 SYIP. The program allocates public funds to highway, road, bridge, rail, bicycle, pedestrian and public transportation projects. All federally eligible projects in the SYIP will be included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program to document how Virginia will obligate its federal funds.

Meeting materials will be available <https://www.ctb.virginia.gov/planning/springmeetings2022/default.asp> before April 25, 2022.

Public meetings begin at 4 p.m. in each of the locations except as noted below:
A formal comment period will be held at these meetings.

Monday, April 25 Fredericksburg District James Monroe High School 2300 Washington Avenue Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401	Tuesday, April 26 Culpeper District Culpeper District Auditorium 1601 Orange Road Culpeper, Virginia 22701	Thursday, April 28 Richmond District Richmond District Auditorium 2430 Pine Forest Drive Colonial Heights, Virginia 23834
Monday, May 2 Staunton District Blue Ridge Community College Plecker Center 1 College Lane Weyers Cave, Virginia 24486	Tuesday, May 3 Lynchburg District Virginian Hotel, 712 Church Street Lynchburg, Virginia 24504	Wednesday, May 4 *Northern Virginia District Northern Virginia District Office Potomac Conference Room 4975 Alliance Drive Fairfax, Virginia 22030 <i>*meeting begins at 5:30 p.m.</i>
Monday, May 9 Hampton Roads District Hampton Roads District Auditorium 7511 Burbage Drive, Suffolk, Virginia 23435	Wednesday, May 11 Bristol District Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center One Partnership Circle Abingdon, Virginia 24210	Thursday, May 12 Salem District Holiday Inn Valley View 3315 Ordway Drive NW Roanoke, Virginia 24017

*The Northern Virginia District meeting will serve as the required joint public meeting with the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, the Virginia Railway Express, and the CTB per § 33.2-214.3 of the Code of Virginia.

You can submit comments by email or mail by May 23, 2022.

For roads and highways: Six-YearProgram@VDOT.Virginia.gov, or Infrastructure Investment Director, Virginia Department of Transportation 1401 East Broad St., Richmond, VA 23219.

For rail and public transportation: DRPTPR@drpt.virginia.gov, Public Information Office, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation 600 East Main Street, Suite 2102, Richmond VA, 23219.

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Fairfax School Board's Frustration Shows

FROM PAGE 3

Reid, who sat in the audience, saying that what she was about to say had little to do with Reid but with the process. "As many people know, our community has expressed some outrage. I can't blame them," Keys-Gamarra said. The people who reached out were community members, according to Keys-Gamarra. "It is our job to hear them. For a public school system, our school system belongs to the public. So, my objection today has to do with the fact that we seem to be rushing this decision ... This is their community, and they care. It's our responsibility to listen and not to jam this vote through. In my opinion, it is sending them a message that they don't matter."



Karen Keys-Gamarra
(Member-at-Large)

Dr. Ricardy Anderson (Mason District) concurred, saying that the community bombarded them with emails and phone calls. "They have asked to be heard. I strongly believe that we should afford ourselves the gift of time to reach out to those who have expressed their concerns and to listen more closely before finalizing our decision."



Dr. Ricardy Anderson
(Mason District)

Laura Jane Cohen (Springfield) said she respected how Keys-Gamarra and Anderson felt and would not pretend to say that she understood their hurt. She said the system was imperfect, run by human beings. "There's not a person up here who does not understand how high the stakes are ... I'm proud of who we chose, and I trust you to get us to where we need to be. I hope that we're all going to do our best to work together and figure out how in the heck we got here."



Laura Jane Cohen
(Springfield)

Elaine Tholen (Dranesville) said she struggled with this as the board worked for months and held public sessions. "We tried to hear from the public. I am really hurt people feel disenfranchised ... All I can say is I worked in good faith. I have read resumes. I have interviewed people over and over and over. What we put these candidates through

was so intense. We got to a point where we had two incredible, incredible people. As we slowly went through the interview process, the decision was tough ... We voted as the board, and Dr. Michelle Reid came out on top, fair and square."



Elaine Tholen
(Dranesville)

Megan McLaughlin (Braddock) expressed empathy for her colleagues and the public, who felt hurt and concerned about the process. She reaffirmed that the board was transparent in publishing the calendar and the process. It would be a confidential search because the board was trying to attract the best candidate, and they didn't necessarily want to leave their districts. She said that the recruiting company had found strong candidates, and she wanted to celebrate the board's incredible finalist. "I don't believe that we are discounting the people who we were elected to represent. I don't feel that we've rushed this process or had a lack of transparency. Our calendar, our timeline, our entire process was all published ... I believe all 12 of us care deeply, and we recognize that, sadly, there are hurt members in our community."



Megan McLaughlin
(Braddock)

Tamara Derenak Kaufax (Lee) welcomed Reid as the board's top candidate. "We knew that when we extended the offer to you on April 2, we were getting a visionary educator who was known both regionally and nationally for your outstanding instructional leadership." Kaufax said that FCPS is not without its challenges, but Reid had described herself as a "visionary, as an incurable optimist."



Tamara Derenak Kaufax
(Lee)

"You will need that here," Kaufax said. "I look forward to working with you to build community trust and to bring our community together."

Melanie K. Meren (Hunter Mill) described Reid as a "thought leader," saying it is an accomplishment few people can obtain because it demands discipline of curiosity, investigation of data, and the calculated

risk of innovation. Meren said Dr. Reid demonstrated intimate knowledge of data about Fairfax, and she heard in her voice the eagerness to see and experience for herself that data as it comes to life through the county's students, staff, and communities. Meren appreciated how Reid understood the value of play. "I believe that Dr. Reid will lead Fairfax County into fulfilling the birthright that is public education in America."



Melanie K. Meren
(Hunter Mill)

Karen Corbett Sanders (Mount Vernon) said that this had been a difficult decision for this whole board. "It impacts everything FCPS does as a system and each student in ways that the school board knows and ways that they do not yet know. ... As stewards of a \$3.3 billion entity, we know that FCPS is both a complex business entity and an academic center of excellence," Sanders said. She knew the application process had been extensive, yet FCPS's needs were vast and differed from those of the district Reid currently serves as superintendent. "My decision to vote no tonight is a difficult one, and it is based on my concerns that center around the ability to scale up from a small school system ... to a system the size of Fairfax County with 180,000 students, (and) the absence of experience in a large, diverse district."



Karen Corbett Sanders
(Mount Vernon)

Karl Frisch (Providence) said he was thrilled when the school system received dozens of "amazing, qualified, and impressive applicants." "Through round after round of interviews, with tough, probing questions, I was always impressed with Dr. Reid's answers, not only for the clarity and detail with which she described her work as superintendent, but with her insights about Fairfax County Public Schools," Frisch said. According to Frisch, Dr. Reid "routinely spoke unprompted about the ways she addressed the equity needs of her student body: LGBTQ students, Muslim students, students of color, English language learners, students with special needs, and more." Her commitment to eq-



Karl Frisch
(Providence)

uity was woven through her answers and accomplishments, he said.

Abbar Omeish (Member-at-Large) said, "Today, I am asking for a rare commodity in our public arena, and all I can offer you is good faith, hard work, thoughtful consideration, and a track record of sincerity, dedication, and advocacy for equity and inclusion. I'm not here to dismiss anyone's feelings nor discredit the multitude of perspectives, and insights community members have around how we experienced today." Omeish added that she agreed that there were concerns. She had her own reservations. But the reality was that "the work of democracy is always messy to bring 12 people behind one decision. I'm supporting Dr. Reid today for several exciting reasons, one of which is because she had the most holistic equity responses we've encountered."



Abbar Omeish
(Member-at-Large)

Stella Pekarsky (Chair, Sully) spoke directly to Reid. "Nothing is easy in Fairfax. But I am sorry, I am sorry because you deserve a much warmer, better welcome than we were able to give you tonight. And it is my opinion that none of this has to do with you. You are an exceptional educator-exceptional; and those who strive for excellence, never settle for anything else."



Stella Pekarsky
(Chair, Sully)

Pekarsky said she was honored to have Reid present, selected by the school board, as it begins writing the next chapter for Fairfax County Public Schools in partnership with the community.

"Dr. Michelle Reid exemplifies the critical characteristics of servant leadership in every way and is driven by a vision for public schools that is resolutely student-centered, a vision not for what education is today, but what it could be, what it must be for kids who will be the leaders of tomorrow."



Michelle Reid, incoming superintendent

Reid received her doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Washington, master's degree in educational administration from University of Washington, and her bachelor's degree in natural science and chemistry from the University of Puget Sound.

Student Protests, Petition and NAACP Objections Fail to Derail the Endgame

FROM PAGE 8

ten times larger than Northshore (20K v.180K students). According to a demographic and program comparison released by the Fairfax County NAACP on April 9, 2022, FCPS has five times the percentage of Black students, slightly more than twice the percentage of Hispanic students, more than twice the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced priced meals, and nearly three times the number of English Language Learners. The differences in actual numbers of students in each category are vast.

In one of its final attempts to be heard, Pride Liberation Project issued an April 14 release, stating: "Don't confirm Dr. Reid or any other candidate on Thursday, April 14 ... until students and community members are allowed to participate in the process through student town-halls in each of FCPS' regions during advisory periods, along with community panels open to any organization."

On the evening of April 14, stu-

"Dr. Michelle Reid, incoming superintendent exemplifies the critical characteristics of servant leadership in every way and is driven by a vision for public schools that is resolutely student-centered, a vision not for what education is today, but what it could be, what it must be for kids who will be the leaders of tomorrow."

– Stella Pekarsky (Chair, Sully)

dent Aaryan Rawal said, as the Fairfax County School Board was preparing to vote on Reid's confirmation. that PLP sent its petition to school board members and GR Consulting that evening.

When asked what response they received, Rawal said that the only response from FCPS was a call from someone in the division's communications office who "pressured us not to criticize Dr. Reid until after tonight's meeting."

Following nearly two hours of discussion, the FCSB voted 9 to 3

naming Michelle Reid, Ed.D., as the next division superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools, effective July 1, 2022, and ending June 30, 2026.

School Board members Melanie K. Meren, Elaine V. Tholen, Megan McLaughlin, Tamara D. Kafax, Rachna S. Heizer - vice chair, Stella Pekarsky - chair, Laura Jane H. Cohen, Karl V. Frisch, and Abrar Omeish all voted in favor. Ricardy J. Anderson, Karen A. Keys-Gamarra, and Karen Corbett Sanders voted no.

Westfield student Aaryan Raw-

al followed up in a second email, "We are incredibly disappointed that the school board ignored the voices of student protestors, petitioners, and the countless others who were simply never given the needed information by our schools to participate in this process ... We will continue to organize and advocate for our community ... It's up to the county to acknowledge our voice. We sincerely hope Dr. Reid proves us wrong."

Fairfax County NAACP tweeted, "We are appalled that despite

community outcry, the @fcpsnews SB has chosen to plow through a superintendent vote tonight. Revelations regarding Special Education practices make the Northshore candidate (Reid) even less suitable than we knew." The following day, Jaya Nachnani, a student protestor at Mount Vernon High School, tweeted, "Today we met with Dr. Reid and members of the school board. Here's what I have to say: this entire protest is not against Dr. Reid (but) rather FCPS chose not to listen to the students and the teachers, and I'm highly disappointed."

According to NSD.org, Reid was unanimously chosen as superintendent by the Northshore School District Board of Directors in June 2016. Before Northshore, Reid was the superintendent of South Kitsap School District, her first position as superintendent. The South Kitsap school board unanimously approved Reid as superintendent in February 2013, reported the Kitsap Sun.

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Obituary

Obituary

Joseph B. Tompkins Jr.



Joseph B. Tompkins, Jr. ("Joe") passed away peacefully at his home in Alexandria, VA, on April 15, 2022, at age 72. Joe was an avid sports fan, global traveler and faithful Methodist, who quietly and selflessly cared for anyone in need. He always found ways to bring loved ones together and derived tremendous joy from being with his family.

Joe was born in Vinton, VA, and was predeceased by his parents, Joseph B. and Rebecca J. Tompkins. Joe is survived by his sons, Graves (Colleen) and Forbes (Caity), and his grandsons, Brooks, Walker and Teddy. He is also survived by his brothers, Curtis and Deal.

Joe earned a B.A. from Washington & Lee University, a J.D. from Harvard Law School and an M.P.P. from the Harvard Kennedy School. Joe had a distinguished law career, working in the Criminal Division of the United States Department of Justice from 1979-1982, where he served as Deputy Chief of the Fraud Section from 1980-1982, and practicing as an attorney at Sidley Austin for more than 40 years (before and after his tenure at the DOJ).

A celebration of Joe's life will be held at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Alexandria, VA, on Friday, April 22, at 2pm. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that any contributions in Joe's honor are made to the Not Too Far From Here Fund, which supports the outreach of Aldersgate by providing immediate financial assistance to those in need of housing, clothing, food and medical care (<https://onrealm.org/Aldersgate/give/NTFFH>).

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Needing More at County Budget Hearings

Comments favor funding for low-income and affordable housing, police and first responders pay increases, parks, and more.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
GAZETTE PACKET

Key concerns at the Board of Supervisors last week included competitive compensation for county employees, particularly police and first responders; support for vital nonprofit community programs and county parks; and affordable and low-income housing on an ongoing basis.

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors held their Public Hearing on the County Executive's Proposed FY 2023 Advertised Budget Plan, the Advertised Capital Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2023-2027 (CIP) (With Future Fiscal Years to 2032) and the Current Appropriation in the FY 2022 Revised Budget Plan from April 12-14. Residents, employees, and nonprofit and organization leaders testified.

Stella Pekarsky, chair of the Fairfax County School Board, said she appreciated the collaboration with the Board of Supervisors and thanked County Executive Bryan Hill. He had presented the Board with an advertised budget that "fully funds the superintendent's fiscal year 2023 proposed budget. "Our schools are the cornerstone of a strong community, educating the leaders of tomorrow," she said.

Fairfax County employees, including SEIU Virginia 512 members, testified. Last October, a collective bargaining ordinance passed in Fairfax County, allowing employees more voice for improved pay, benefits, and working conditions. Members requested fully-funded pay plans and lowered health care expenditures.

SEIU member Karen Johnson is a child educator who testified on housing challenges. "I can't afford to live in Fairfax, so I live in Fredericksburg," she said, leading to a four-hour daily round-trip commute.

SEIU member Sunny Carito is a county librarian. Carito says fully-funded raises would help offset rising healthcare costs that have been "gobbling up" her earnings. "[Due to rising healthcare costs,] my take-home pay, with the same benefit choices, has fallen \$75 per paycheck," she said.

Scott Spitzer, president of the McLean Citizens Association, testified that there were "reasonable and prudent budgetary approaches and specific proposed funding that the MCA urges the Board of Supervisors to revise from the advertised budget." MCA advocated for funding the Park Authority's proposal for an additional \$751,954 for natural resource management and sustainability. He expressed concern about the county police department's 200 open positions.

An MCA resolution encouraged the county to reduce the transfer to the Fairfax County Public Schools to pay for additional spending on maintenance, including natural resource management for the Park Authority, and larger raises for new, less senior police officers. "FCPS student enrollment has de-



Penny Gross



Elizabeth Villatoro



Kerrie Wilson



James Waller



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY SEIU VIRGINIA 512

Karen Johnson, SEIU Virginia 512 member.

clined and is projected to continue declining through FY 2027," Spitzer said.

"There is no human service response without the nonprofits," said Allison DeCoursey, president and CEO of United Community. The organization provides human services along Richmond Highway in Mount Vernon and Lee districts. DeCoursey described the poverty and unequal opportunity there, particularly in two of the county's three poorest census tracts, calling it an island.

"The life expectancy of folks on this island is ten years less than the mean of the county; 31 percent are uninsured. The median household income for Fairfax is \$112,000. On this island, it's \$55,000."

The nonprofit is working to change islands of disadvantage and create communities of opportunity. The organization's first Lived Experience Consultant is Elizabeth Villatoro. She said, "Sixteen years ago, I am a person who lived in the shadows as a woman, a mother, and an immigrant for 14 years. Nobody saw me." Villatoro started as a school volunteer, then became a Neighborhood Ambassador.

"This country gave me a lot even when I

was in the shadow. Today I feel like I am a part of this country because I can give you something back." She said when she first came here, she had only cereal to eat. "I remember how terrible that feels. So, my message to you today is, please don't give up. We need you; we need your support. We really need you."

Anita Irvin is the executive director of Insight Memory Care Center. "As of 2020, an estimated 14 percent of Fairfax County residents are 65 or older, and by 2035, this number is projected to be 17.6 percent. Funding from [Consolidated Community Funding Pool] will support our programs, services, and financial assistance fund, allowing more residents in Fairfax County to receive the care and support that they desperately need."

Deborah Hammer, chair of the Fairfax Area Disability Service Board (FA-DSB), said that 87,000 citizens of Fairfax County have a disability. She requested the board's support and proposed a funding increase for the co-responder model, allowing first responders in Fairfax County to better meet

the needs of people having a behavioral health crisis. She also advocated for permanent funding for one nurse in each Fairfax County public school; and funding for five new positions in the county's Department of Housing and Community Development to support the creation, rehabilitation, and preservation of affordable housing throughout Fairfax County.

"FA-DSB specifically requests that the current 5 percent set aside for accessible housing be increased to 10 percent due to the extensive need in the county for housing that can be accessed by those with physical or motor disabilities," Hammer said.

James Waller, president of the Friends of Colvin Run Mill, member of the Alliance of Park Friends, said that at another budget hearing, Supervisor James Walkinshaw, "hit the nail on the head."

"To win the new competition to attract firms with remote workers, and thereby help drive the county's budget and economic growth ... more investment is needed in schools and our premier parks," he said.

Waller said parks had received low priority in the budget, half of what they were 30 years ago. The tax of the park taxpayer budget was the equivalent of 2.6 cents of our real estate taxes and now is the equivalent of one cent, he said. "Give parks a higher priority ... Give them two cents."

Kerrie Wilson spoke on behalf of the Affordable Housing Advisory Council: housing is foundational to the county's prosperity, its communities, and families. The board recently adopted a new minimum goal of 10,000 affordable homes by 2034.

"But I want to put that in the context of the initial need that was documented in 2018, where we have a gap of nearly 31,000 homes already existing, in addition to making room for the new workers and people we want in our county," she said. According to Wilson, reaching the county's minimum goal and the unmet housing needs requires a dedicated recurring source of funds to get to the resource equivalent of the two pennies of the real estate tax that was committed.

According to Wilson, short-term carryover funds, federal ARPA, and other nonrecurring resources are essential. "But they won't meet the needs to sustain the pipeline that is already underway with the good efforts of FCRHA and the housing department."

"Recovery is years in the making," said Wilson. "I want to acknowledge Supervisor Alcorn; we serve in his district. I think he would agree that there has been recent awareness and sort of maybe awakening to the plight, particularly of people who remain unhoused."

According to the Budget Process Timeline, on April 22, the Board of Supervisors Budget Committee meets for pre-markup. On April 26, the Board of Supervisors marks up the FY 2023 Budget, and on May 10, the Board of Supervisors adopts FY 2023 Budget. On May 26, the School Board adopts its FY2023 Approved Budget. The FY 2023 Budget year begins on July 1, 2022.

NEWS

Gala for Children's Inn at NIH

The Children's Inn at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will hold its 10th Annual "An Evening for Hope" Gala on April 30, 2022, at The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner. An important NIH partner in medical discovery, The Inn is a private nonprofit that receives 80% of its funding from private philanthropy. Acting NIH Director Laurence A. Tabak will deliver the keynote. NBC News 4 anchor Shawn Yancy, a recipient of Emmy Awards and the Edward R. Murrow Award, will serve as the event emcee.

The gala returns to an in-person gathering with several COVID-19 protective measures, including proof of vaccination and capped attendance at half capacity to allow for more distancing.

"We are beyond excited and grateful to once again host our signature event," said Jennie Lucca, CEO of The Children's Inn at NIH. "This gathering is an opportunity for The Inn to recognize our unwavering and committed partners whose generosity improves the health and well-being of Inn families while they seek medical treatment at the National Institutes of Health. After the challenges of the past two years, we look forward to an evening with you as we celebrate life and hope." The Inn, located on the NIH campus in Bethesda, enhances groundbreaking medical discoveries in advancing cases. Since the gala's inception in 2013, the funds raised at the "An Evening for Hope" gala have been the single largest source of income to support The Inn's ongoing operations.

"I would like to express my profound gratitude to the organizing committee for helping us plan and bring back An Evening of Hope despite new challenges," noted Todd Pantezzi, 2022 Hope Gala Chair, Children's Inn Trustee and Chief Strategy Officer at CVP Corp. "This distinguished gala is a testament to the power of many different people working toward a common goal. ... Additionally, because of your continued support, The Inn can continue its vital role as a partner in hope and discovery with the National Institutes of Health."

The Children's Inn at NIH has served more than 14,500 children, teens, and young adults, and their families from all 50 states and 105 countries since its opening in 1990. Located on the NIH campus, across from the world's largest hospital dedicated entirely to clinical research, The Inn's children, teens, and young adults have participated in 522 clinical research studies, representing advances in treating cancer, bone and growth disorders, mental illness, genetic conditions, and other serious health issues. The gala will include a gourmet dinner, silent auction, cocktail reception, live auction, and a celebratory after-party. For more information on event details, sponsorships and how to donate, please visit the event page. <https://childrensinn.org/event/hope2022/>

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The Cancer Effect



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

From February 28th until April 9th, approximately 40 days – and nights, I had 19 medical commitments; among them being pre- and post-surgery/procedure, actual procedure and separate surgery, lab tests, infusions, covid tests, diagnostic scans, nuclear medicine; and telephone and video appointments. This was hardly a normal month. It was abnormal and not necessarily cancer related but most likely cancer affected.

As you might imagine, being infused for nearly 10 years with extremely toxic substances will wear and tear the recipient's body, inside and out. Consider further that said recipient (yours truly) began this cancer business at age 54 and a half and over this 10-year period, I have not been getting any younger. And what you end up with is a perfect storm of an age and an immune-compromised patient succumbing to the cumulative side effects of cancer treatment, direct and indirect.

Nevertheless, having some kind of medical appointment every other day – on average, over 40 days is likely to make a Kenny a very dull boy. Not that I wasn't in control of my time or had to adhere to a schedule not of my own choosing; on the contrary, I was very much in control as I set my own appointments and times and places convenient to me. Still, the commitment of time and energy – and the anxiety associated with all these appointments, especially given my underlying medical diagnosis, was unpleasant and unsettling but thankfully very uncharacteristic of my previous cancer life, which was overall, unremarkable medically speaking, other than I didn't die within the "13 month to two years" prognosis I was initially given by my oncologist.

Typically, my cancer life has been very similar to my non-cancer life. There are things I must do, things I can't do, things I wish I could do and finally things that others require me to do. The only difference: the original stage IV non-small cell lung cancer "terminal" diagnosis I received in late February 2009. That kind of news puts a damper on any scenario, real or imagined. Moreover, a scenario which offered no guarantees other than the presumptive normal life expectancy I anticipated was no longer normal. In summary, your future is in doubt, your present is in crisis and your past hopes and dreams are fading fast unless you find a safety valve to help manage the emotional, physical, and spiritual upheaval dominating your life. Or the more likely you are to suffer at the hands of your disease and become another casualty of the cancer wars.

So, I had a lousy month. So what? I'm alive, aren't I? Thirteen-plus years later. Granted, fulfilling all these medical obligations of the last 40 days wouldn't have been my first choice of how I wanted to spend part of my retirement. However, given that I had no choice – after my diagnosis, to live my life as a cancer patient/survivor, as my friend Frank would say: "I'm in pretty good shape for the shape I'm in."

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

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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 9

1:30-2:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Has your garden become a smorgasbord for deer? While fencing and repellents are the tactics most often used, another good way to combat deer is to focus on plant selection. Learn from Extension Master Gardener docents about the many wonderful annuals, perennials and shrubs that deer don't find appetizing. \$10 per person. Code GCA.NGFA. Register online at www.fairfax-county.gov/parks/parktakes or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

Historic Garden Week Tour. Old Town Alexandria's annual Historic Garden Week tour offers a unique opportunity to go behind the doors of Old Town's most stunning and unique homes and gardens. The celebrated event draws more than 1,200 enthusiasts annually during the height of the spring blooming season. Tickets include admission to five exclusive private homes and gardens and six nearby historic public properties, including: Carlyle House, Lee-Fendall House, River Farm, Gunston Hall, Mount Vernon and Green Spring Gardens. Complimentary refreshments will be available at Old Presbyterian Meeting House. Advance tickets are \$55 online at www.vagardenweek.org and may be purchased tour day at the Alexandria Visitor's Center at 221 King Street.

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

Spring-Blooming Native Plants. 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. (16-Adult) Virginia is glorious in the spring when native perennials and wildflowers come into bloom. Join Green Spring horticulturist Brenda Skarphol on a walk of the gardens to discuss native spring bloomers for home gardens. Get recommendations for natives that will suit your garden's growing conditions so you too can enjoy the glory of a native Virginia spring in your own yard. Dress for the weather. \$18 per person. Code 2HL.0K3Z. Register online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/parktakes or call Green Spring Gardens at 703-642-5173.

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

Barber & Brahms Resilience. 7:30 p.m. At the Rachel M. Schlesinger Center in Alexandria. Brahms: Symphony No. 1 in C Minor; Barber: Violin Concerto; Prechtl: Tribute. Violinist Dylana Jenson sparks joy with her rendition of Barber's Violin Concerto. ASO presents Brahms' First Symphony and Brian Prechtl's Tribute featuring students from Sympatico commissioned by Classical Movements' Eric Helms New Music Program. Visit: <https://alexsym.org/performance/barber-brahms/>

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

Earth Day. 10 to 11 a.m. At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Featuring face painting, poetry, pictures and puppets. Make a special Earth Day craft and help decorate a tree. The cost is \$10 per person and this program is appropriate for participants ages 5 and older. Call 703-642-5173.

APRIL 23-24

Plant & Garden Sale. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Alexandria. Shop for heirloom vegetables, herbs, and annual flowers plus native perennials, trees and shrubs grown in Mount Vernon's Greenhouses. Advance tickets are not needed on Saturday and Sunday.

SUNDAY/APRIL 24

Del Ray Garden Fest. 12-5 p.m. At 2207 Mount Vernon Ave, Alexandria. Del Ray's first ever gardening festival, sponsored by the Del Ray Citizens Association. Arlington/Alexandria's Extension Master Gardeners will be there to celebrate sunshine and springtime by providing information on all sorts of gardening topics, including home composting, growing

native plants, beekeeping, and much more. There will be kid's activities throughout the afternoon, and a raffle to benefit the Charles Hill Scholarship Fund of Alexandria. Free. Email <http://delraycitizens.org>.

SUNDAY/APRIL 24

PNC Parkway Classic. 8 a.m. At Mount Vernon Estate to Old Town Alexandria. The race draws thousands of runners and spectators throughout the DC Metro region and beyond to experience the historic George Washington Memorial Parkway from a different vantage point during the Springtime. The event will once again feature two distance choices for runners (10 Miler or 5K) as well as a Kids Dash that features pre-race family-friendly activities. The finish festival will feature live music from area favorite The Joe Chiocca Band, Port City Brewery pop-up, and other special activities to celebrate the runners. Cost: \$85-10Miler (until March 18), \$45-5K (until March 18), \$20-Kid's Dash. Visit the website: www.parkwayclassic.com

SUNDAY/APRIL 24

Barber & Brahms Resilience. At 3 p.m. At the George Washington Masonic Memorial. Brahms: Symphony No. 1 in C Minor; Barber: Violin Concerto; Prechtl: Tribute. Violinist Dylana Jenson sparks joy with her rendition of Barber's Violin Concerto. ASO presents Brahms' First Symphony and Brian Prechtl's Tribute featuring students from Sympatico commissioned by Classical Movements' Eric Helms New Music Program. Visit: <https://alexsym.org/performance/barber-brahms/>

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 27

Student History Awards, 7-9 p.m. At The Lyceum, 201 S. Washington Street, Alexandria. Join members of the Alexandria Historical Society as they honor outstanding students of history, one from each of the four high schools in Alexandria. For more than 35 years, teachers from Alexandria High School, Episcopal High School, St. Stephen's and St. Agnes Upper School, and Bishop Ireton High School have recommended students for the awards based on their academic achievement and scholarship in American history. Each year, a seasoned historian gives a talk on their own path to a career in elucidating the past. This year's speaker, Tim Wilke, will share his own journey, including his work as a curator in the Division of Cultural and Community Life at the National Museum of American History. There, he has been involved in developing numerous exhibits, including the permanent exhibition "Many Voices, One Nation" and the children's learning center "Wonderplace."

SATURDAY/APRIL 30

Native Plant Sale. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. At 1701 N. Quaker Lane Parking Lot, Alexandria. Largest native plant sale in DC Metro Area hosts 10 vendors from 3 states and DC selling native perennials, shrubs, and trees for sun or shade. This event is free. Call 571-232-0375 or www.NorthernAlexandriaNativePlantSale.org.

SATURDAY/APRIL 30

Carrie Newcomer. 7 p.m. At St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 8531 Riverside Road, Alexandria. Carrie Newcomer is a songwriter, recording artist, performer and educator. She has been described as a "prairie mystic" by the Boston Globe and one who "asks all the right questions" by Rolling Stone Magazine. Tickets are \$35 in advance (\$35 at the door to members, \$40 at the door to non-members, virtual tickets purchased day-of are also \$40). COVID protocols, details and tickets at www.focusmusic.org

SATURDAY/APRIL 30

Community Pet Event. 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Stevenson Park, 300 Stultz Road, Alexandria. Join the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria for a Pets and People Community Wellness Event. Read more at AlexandriaAnimals.org/Pets-and-People. Visit the website: AlexandriaAnimals.org/Pets-and-People



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