

Great Falls CONNECTION

Meralee Fredenburgh,
new executive di-
rector of the Arts of
Great Falls, stops by
its School of Arts.



Great Arts In Great Falls

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Can't Afford a Vacation? Try a Staycation

This area offers a wealth of opportunities for families who are staying local this summer

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION



PHOTO COURTESY OF AVA BLACK

Ava Black's budget is tight this year so she will not be taking vacation. Instead, she's creating a staycation for her children.

FOR ANOTHER TAKE ON STAYCATIONS, SEE "SUMMER'S HERE AND POSSIBLY TIME TO STAY PUT"

<http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2022/jun/13/summers-here-and-possibly-time-stay-put/>

Eating french fries and burgers with her young children, Ava Black asked them what they learned during a trip to Glen Echo Park earlier that afternoon. They told her that they had fun riding the carousel, but her six-year-old son said they found out that only whites were allowed to enter the park when it was first established. The Alexandria single mother of two usually takes her children on at least one vacation each summer, but this year forgoing an out-of-state trip and opting for a staycation.

"They've been asking to go to our family reunion in North Carolina," she said. "We drive there every year, but [the cost of] gas is too high so we're staying at home. They are going to have to settle for a call to their aunts, uncles and cousins."

Like many families who are grappling with inflation, Black's budget is so tight this year, that they are eschewing a summer vacation and opting for a local staycation. From Mount Vernon to Great Falls, the Washington, D.C. region offers a wealth of options for families who are staying close to home.

"Family adventures are wonderful ways to introduce children to new places and interests," said Lisa Turissini, Ph.D., Director, School of Education, Marymount University. "So, whether you are getting away on a vacation or staying home to enjoy a staycation, your child will thank you for the opportunity to explore a new location or to be able to act like a tourist in your own city."

"Children can learn so much from staycations," added Mary Mukherjee, Senior Program Director, Montgomery College Youth Programs. "They learn about different cultures, the geography, the language, the food. The possibilities are endless."

Slathering on sunscreen, packing a lunch, and heading to the National Mall can feel like a vacation, says Turissini. "One of the easiest ways to squeeze in a little learning during your vacation is to visit historic sites and museums," she said. "We are so lucky to live in the DC area with a number of living history museums such as the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History and historic buildings such as Ford's Theatre, the White House [and] the Lincoln Memorial."

With two-thousand acres of land and 32 miles of trails for hiking and biking, Rock Creek Park is just one of the options for families who want to spend time outdoors. "Something as simple as exploring nature

can be a great adventure for the little ones, said Turissini. "Great Falls Park is a great place to enjoy hiking trails, biking, bird watching, and picnicking. You don't have to be a child psychologist to see how much our children learn when they are just being kids and enjoying themselves."

Picking fruit at a local farm combines educational opportunities with family fun. "Once you're at home with your fruit, you can all measure the ingredients needed to bake an apple or blueberry pie or make a delicious smoothie," she said,

"Another great adventure is to spend time at the National Zoo," she continued. "Children love animals. Have them learn about endangered animals that you might be able to visit. And take advantage of any one-of-a-kind animal encounters or activities that may be available for your visit."

Staycations can be found inside your home, says Mukherjee. "Go through family photo albums and learn the genealogy of the family," she said. "This could lead to online research or even interviewing relatives like grandparents, aunts and uncles in person, over the phone or using Zoom. Be sure to write everything down. These stories and snippets of information are priceless."

Exploring your neighborhood and learning about its history can be challenging and enlightened, Mukherjee says. "Who established it originally? What is the history of the street names? Streets are often named for important people in the world and that particular neighborhood. Are there any historic houses? What is the geology of the neighborhood? What types of plants and trees grow there and why?"

By taking staycations, families can still have experiences that last a lifetime, Turissini says. "Teaching them these skills at a young age will serve them well as they grow up," she said. "And, as parents, joining your children in new adventures provides a fresh perspective and a view of the world through their eyes which strengthens family bonds and builds lasting memories."

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Meralee Fredenburgh, new executive director of the Arts of Great Falls, stops by its School of Arts.



Meralee Fredenburgh, newly appointed executive director of the Arts of Great Falls

Meet the New Executive Director of the Arts of Great Falls

Strong arts community benefits businesses.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Arts of Great Falls, a community-supported nonprofit organization, welcomed its new executive director, Meralee Fredenburgh, on July 1. Fredenburgh is an eight-year resident of Great Falls and brings to the role her professional experience as founder of Radiant Marketing, a company that “shines the spotlight on small businesses and nonprofits through marketing services designed to maximize impact.”

Fredenburgh also brings her strong background in grass-roots service leadership and fundraising, as evidenced by her work with the Women’s Club of Great Falls, Celebrate Great Falls Foundation, and, most recently, the Great Falls Grange Foundation. According to Fredenburgh, “What is the magic recipe to pull people together and encourage them to compromise for the greater good ... so that you can move forward?”

Fredenburgh’s short-term goals as executive director of the Arts of Great Falls begin with improving awareness of the nonprofit

organization. She wants to boost the awareness of all the arts groups in Great Falls.

“Collectively, in their strength, we unite together,” Fredenburgh said. “There is data behind this. When you have a strong arts community, it attracts people from all over the area. I think that benefits businesses and real estate,” Fredenburgh said. She made an analogy to good schools drawing people to an area. So too, a strong arts community draws people to an area.

Fredenburgh understands that the art groups have worked hard to form their identities. She is collaborating with many groups in Great Falls.

“If we come up with ways to describe and distinguish each of these unique groups, but also collectively promote how many artists and how much art (produced) are part of the Great Falls community, I think that goes a long way. ... Pull people together and build strength in numbers,” she said.

Fredenburgh’s second short-term effort is to bring awareness of the arts in Great Falls through activities like the recent booth at the 4th of July Celebration. Finally, awareness can be expanded through the “dou-



Meralee Fredenburgh, newly appointed executive director of the Arts of Great Falls.

ble-edged sword” of having a social media presence. “Incredibly important, not just for individuals and celebrities, but also for community organizations,” Fredenburgh said. It combines communication vehicles

to improve awareness and draw new people to the studios, online gallery exhibits, and website.

Fredenburgh’s long-term goal is to increase collaboration with community partners, businesses, and other organizations, such as the Arts of Great Falls did recently with the Great Falls Garden Club for its tour on June 4.

“The collaboration between the Arts of Great Falls and the Great Falls Garden Club for our garden club’s 80th anniversary Garden Tour was a huge success,” said Amy Kiser. “The Arts of Great Falls connected its plein air artist community with our garden club to offer artists an opportunity to paint at various Garden Tour venues.” Tour attendees, venue owners, and artists all enjoyed the experience, and our club is so grateful. We are looking forward to future opportunities to work together to connect our Great Falls community further.”

The Arts of Great Falls Foundation offers classes for adults, teens, and children (8+) of all skill levels; rents shared studio space to local artists; and hosts community art events in Great Falls, Virginia.

Visit <https://greatfallsart.org/about-us/> or email Executive Director Meralee Fredenburgh at meralee@greatfallsart.org.

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NEWS

NVTA Adopts \$625 Million Six Year Program

Fairfax County lands \$336 million.

By **MERCIA HOBSON**
 THE CONNECTION

With the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority unanimous vote on June 14 to adopt the FY2022-2027 Six Year Program, Fairfax County, Virginia's most populous jurisdiction, was allotted more than \$336 million, 53.7 percent of the \$625 million in approved infrastructure project funds to impact the region at large. NVTA received proposals for 26 FY2022-2026 SYP transportation candidate projects, and they adopted 20 multimodal transportation projects for full or partial funding. Six projects are in Fairfax County; one in the Town of Herndon; one in the City of Falls Church; two in the City of Alexandria; one in Arlington County; four in Loudoun County; four in Prince William County; and one in the City of Manassas.

The vote was both unanimous and nonpartisan. "That is just a very impressive thing to be able to do in this day and age," said Phyllis J. Randall, NVTA chair and Loudoun County chair (D-At-Large), who spoke at a press conference Friday morning, July 15.

"The fact that we passed this out last night unanimously, with every member of the Authority except one, being in the room. Everyone from Alexandria to Dumfries to Manassas to Loudoun, the entire region was there ... and of course, we also have State Senator Jennifer Boysko representing the State Senate and two gubernatorial appointees," Randall said. Del. Dave A. LaRock (R-33), who was put on the NVTA board by the governor and whose House district is north and west of Leesburg, was not present.

Monica Brockman, chief executive officer of NVTA said during the press conference that NVTA is in its sixth funding program since the passage of HB 2313, which is the transportation funding bill. "We are looking at slightly over \$3 billion (\$3.12 billion) in regional multimodal congestion relief solutions right here in Northern Virginia."

The projects will impact the region in three ways: first, as a multimodal/corridor focus with an emphasis on roadway/Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on the Rt. 1 corridor; second, the projects include transportation technology, decarbonizing transit fleets, and an ITS (Intelligent Transportation System) along the Rt. 7 corridor; third, the

Northern Virginia Transportation Authority FY2022-2027 Six Year Program: Adopted by the Authority 7/14/2022				
Jurisdiction	Application ID	Project Title	Requested Amount	Approved Amount
Arlington County	ARL-021	Ballston-MU Metrorail Station West Entrance*	\$ 80,000,000	\$ 80,000,000
Fairfax County	FFX-126	Fairfax County Parkway Widening: Nomes Court to Route 123*	\$ 108,000,000	\$ 108,000,000
Fairfax County	FFX-124	8 New Battery Electric Buses - Fairfax Connector Buses for Tysons to Franconia Service	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 10,000,000
Fairfax County	FFX-131	Richmond Highway Widening From Mt. Vernon Memorial Highway/Jeff Todd Way to Sherwood Hall Lane*	\$ 60,207,038	\$ 60,207,038
Fairfax County	FFX-128	Richmond Highway (Route 1) BRT*	\$ 80,000,000	\$ 80,000,000
Fairfax County	FFX-121	Soapstone Drive Extension: Sunset Hills Road to Sunrise Valley Drive*	\$ 73,793,037	\$ 73,793,037
Fairfax County	FFX-125	Seven Corners Ring Road Improvements: Arlington Boulevard (Route 50) Westbound Ramp to Castle Place/Sleepy Hollow Road	\$ 94,800,000	\$ 4,200,000
Loudoun County	LDN-023	Route 7 Corridor ITS Implementation Program	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 2,500,000
Loudoun County	LDN-025	Route 7 Improvements: Route 9 to Dulles Greenway	\$ 20,000,000	\$ 20,000,000
Loudoun County	LDN-024	Ryan Road Widening (Phase 2): Evergreen Mills Road to Beaverdam Drive	\$ 16,000,000	\$ 16,000,000
Loudoun County	LDN-028	Loudoun County Parkway Interchange at US 50*	\$ 35,250,000	\$ 35,250,000
Prince William County	PWC-028	University Boulevard Extension: Devlin Road to Wellington Road	\$ 53,000,000	\$ 53,000,000
Prince William County	PWC-036	Old Bridge Road Widening: Colby Drive to Minnieville Road	\$ 25,000,000	\$ 25,000,000
Prince William County	PWC-027	Van Buren Road North Extension: Route 234 to Cardinal Drive	\$ 80,000,000	\$ 8,000,000
Prince William County	PWC-030	Route 1 at Route 123 Interchange	\$ 61,200,000	\$ 3,000,000
City of Alexandria	ALX-018	West End Transitway Phase 1b: South Van Dorn Street and Bridge Design*	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 5,000,000
City of Alexandria	ALX-020	Alexandria Bike and Pedestrian Trails Construction and Reconstruction: Holmes Run Trail - Dora Kelly Fair-weather Crossing Bridge	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 5,000,000
City of Falls Church	CFC-008	North Washington Street Multimodal Improvements Project: Great Falls Street to Gresham Place	\$ 22,500,000	\$ 22,500,000
City of Manassas	MAN-002	Liberia Avenue 3rd Lane Eastbound: Route 28 to Euclid Avenue	\$ 8,851,639	\$ 8,851,639
Town of Herndon	HND-005	Herndon Parkway Improvements at Worldgate Drive Extension	\$ 4,581,000	\$ 4,581,000
TOTAL			\$ 845,682,714	\$ 624,882,714
NVTA-approved				\$ 626,290,870
Regional Revenue				
Unprogrammed				\$ 1,408,156

NVTA approved funding amounts for candidate applications from eight jurisdictions.

projects represent a balance of transit, bike and pedestrian, and transportation technology projects, spread geographically.

Randall said that NVTA is the "financial engine of the Commonwealth" in many respects, and congestion relief is its first goal. "If we cannot get home ... to our jobs, if we cannot get around, it does affect not only our economy but the economy of the entire Commonwealth. Transportation is a quality-of-life issue," Randall said. NVTA works on a 30 percent split, meaning that 30 percent of NVTA funds go back to localities. They can use those funds in whatever way they choose. "If they want to do bike and ped (pedestrian) with that 30 percent money, they are certainly welcome to," Randall said.

Seventeen of the 20 approved roadway transit, intersection, bike and pedestrian, and transportation technology projects are fully funded in line with requested funding amounts. Three are partially funded, preliminary engineering phase only.

Two of NVTA's three most significant funded projects are in Fairfax County: \$108 million for Fairfax County Parkway Widening, with a congestion reduction relative to cost rank, or CRRC, of #3 out of the 26 candidate applicants. \$80 million is for the Richmond Highway

way Route 1 BRT, bus rapid transit. CRRC rank #17. Arlington County's Ballston-MU Metro Rail Station West Entrance is tied funding-wise at \$80 million.

FAIRFAX COUNTY CHAIRMAN Jeffrey C. McKay (D-At-Large) said, "We regularly talk about our goal in Fairfax County to 'move people' no matter how they choose or need to travel. I could not be more pleased with this investment in our community. I am especially thrilled for how we are transforming bus service in Fairfax County. The Fairfax Connector will add eight battery-powered vehicles, providing a clean, quiet, and efficient trip for customers traveling between transportation and employment hubs."

McKay said that when construction begins for The One, the county's new BRT, or bus rapid transit, in the Route 1 corridor, it "will completely remake this section of the county from a congested, aging commuter route into a vibrant, mixed-use model of living, working, and relaxing."

Mark Duceman, transportation planner at the Town of Herndon, noted that the NVTA funding of \$4.581 million does not fund the actual roadway extension for the Herndon Parkway at Worldgate Drive Extension project. The roadway

project depends on the town's additional state funding under VDOT's Smart-Scale funding program. While the town is in Fairfax County, it is a separate jurisdiction.

Duceman explained that the project is directed toward the signalization of the future intersection of Worldgate Drive Extension with Herndon Parkway. "The signalization project is to relieve peak-hour congestion by increasing roadway capacity via additional turning lanes, raised median, and mode-separated ADA street-scape and cycle track. Ultimately, the project will result in improved traffic flow, safety, and multimodal circulation for drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders for access to Metrorail as well as local and regional destinations," he said.

NVTA is a regional governmental entity of 17 members established to plan, prioritize, and fund regional transportation programs. The program funds what the Authority has deemed to be the most important transportation projects that would relieve congestion in relation to cost and improve the quality of life for Northern Virginians. The program focuses on geographic and modal balance.

What Makes a Project More Likely to Receive Funding?

Determining which projects land funding and which do not is tied to four key components of NVTA's project selection process. It begins with an eligibility review. The candidate project must be in a NOVA jurisdiction. Second, a quantitative analysis of congestion reduction relative to costs and long-term benefits. Third, qualitative analysis, past performances, external funding, projective readiness, and modal and geographic balance. Finally, NVTA considers public comment.

NVTA received 1,609 comments from 448 members of the public on the 26 candidate projects, according to the NVTA approved summary minutes. The public comment period ran from April 15, 2022 to May 22, 2022. On June 2, NVTA's CEO Monica Backmon posted a summary report of public comments along with the comments themselves on NVTA's website.

NVTA funds pedestrian and bicycle modes only if they lead to a more extensive transportation system.

"If there is a bike path that leads you to the Metro, then that is something we will look at. But for NVTA overall, our first goal is to do congestion relief," Randall said.

NVTA's next Call for Regional Transportation Projects is anticipated for May 2023.

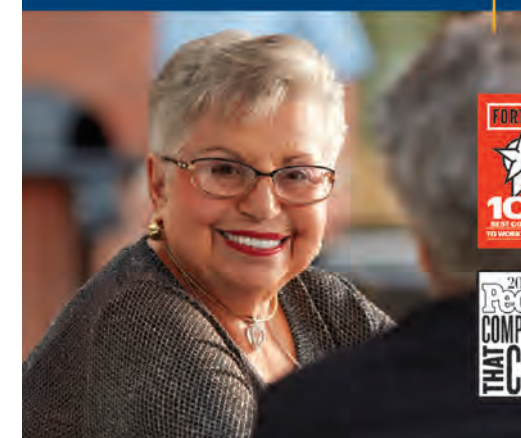
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CALENDAR

SATURDAY MORNINGS
Summer Programming for Kids. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Reston Museum, 1639 Washington Plaza, Reston. Reston Museum is launching new summer programming for kids! Visit the Reston Museum to participate in fun and creative activities inspired by Reston's history. Program is free and everyone will receive an Explore Reston packet.

NOW THRU DEC. 31
Crafts for Kids. 10 a.m. to 12 noon. At Reston Art Gallery and Studios, 11400 Washington Plaza W at Lake Anne, Reston. Free, themed art projects for children (with guardian) are offered at Reston Art Gallery and Studios every Saturday from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. Visit the website: www.restonartgallery.com

SATURDAYS UNTIL DECEMBER
The Reston Farmers Market (sponsored by the Fairfax Co. Park Authority) will take place at Lake Anne Village from 8 a.m.-noon. SNAP beneficiaries receive up to \$20 match. Visit <http://restonfarmersmarket.com/>

MCLEAN FARMERS MARKET
The McLean Farmers Market opened for the 2022 season on May 6th, at Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. The market will run every Friday from 8 a.m. to noon through November 11. Local farmers and producers will sell fresh produce and fruits; breads and pastries; prepared foods; meats; herbs; flowers, and more. All products are grown or produced by the vendors and come from within 125 miles of Fairfax County. For more information, see: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/>

HERNDON FARMERS MARKET
Thursdays through Nov. 3, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 765 Lynn St., Herndon, VA, 20170 <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/herndon>

GREAT FALLS FARMERS MARKET
The Great Falls Farmers Market Outdoor Market is open every Saturday, Spring and Summer, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., 778 Walker Road, Great Falls. For vendors and weekly highlights see <https://www.greatfallsfarmersmarket.org/>

NOW THRU AUG. 26 (FRIDAYS)
Storytime for Little Historians. 11 a.m. The second annual Storytime for Little Historians program returns this summer. Reston Museum invites our youngest visitors to the Reston Museum every Friday at 11 a.m. to listen to a story about Reston or one of Reston's founding principles. Books for the program come from the Reston Museum and Reston's Used Book Shop. Program is offered free of charge and each child will receive a goodie bag. Program is recommended for children under 7. Visit www.restonmuseum.org.

NOW THRU JULY 24
"Memory and Illusion." At Jo Ann Rose Gallery, 1609-A Washington Plaza, in Reston. A retrospective exhibit of more than 50 original paintings by Reston-based painter Sandra C. Dovberg will be shown in the Jo Ann Rose Gallery at Reston Community Center-Lake



Lil'Maceo will appear in Summer Sunday Concerts in the Park in McLean on Sunday, July 24, 2022.

Anne. Dovberg's solo exhibit, "Memory and Illusion," is a highly eclectic collection of paintings that show the versatility of the artist who is also an award-winning silversmith and jewelry designer. Everyone is welcome to an informal reception to meet the artist at the gallery on Sunday, July 10 from 2 until 4 p.m.

NOW THRU JULY 31

Art in Motion. At Reston Art Gallery, 11400 Washington Plaza West, Reston. Mobiles and Stables by Wayne Schiffelbein on display. An array of mobiles suspended from the ceiling and stables displayed on tabletops are presented by Wayne Schiffelbein in his show, "Art In Motion." The show offers 20 pieces of Schiffelbein's latest 'Calder-esque' works that range in size from 1 ½ inches to 46 inches in width, each with its own distinctive character in combinations of colorful aluminum and glass balanced with stainless steel.

NOW THRU AUG. 18 (THURSDAYS)

Farmers' Market Fun Days. At Town Green, 730 Elden Street, Herndon. Enjoy free kid-friendly entertainment on Thursdays running July 7–August 18 from 10:30-11:15 a.m. on the Town Green, 730 Elden Street. Before or after the performance, people are welcome to shop the locally grown and homemade goodies at the Farmers' Market from 8 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., on Lynn Street in historic downtown Herndon. If inclement weather occurs, call the Inclement Weather line at 703-435-6866 for the status of the performance.

Entertainment Schedule:

July 21: Marsha and the Positrons - songs about science and how the world works
 July 28: Mr. Jon and Friends - Parents Choice Award winning music for kids
 August 4: Milkshake - music for little dudes
 August 11: Groovy Nate - fun and educational shows using exotic musical instruments
 August 18: Rainbow Rock - plays original children's music for the tot rock set
 To learn more about the Town of Herndon Parks and Recreation Department, visit herndon-va.gov/recreation, or call 703-787-7300.

JULY 22-24

"The Show Must Go On!" 8 p.m. At The Alden Theater in McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The Show Must Go On! A Musical Revue marks the return of the McLean Community Players to the Alden Theater after a three-year hiatus because of the pandemic. This gala revue remembers songs from past shows and looks to the future with songs from shows MCP has not done yet.

FRIDAY/JULY 22

"Something Different." 6:30 p.m. At the Vienna Town Green, Vienna. Come to a free outdoor family friendly performance suitable for ages 3 and up. Presented by Vienna Theater Company's TFYA (Theatre for Young Audiences). Produced by: Mary Ann Hall and directed by: Holly Harrington.

SATURDAY/JULY 23

Food Party. 4:30-7 p.m. At St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 432 Van Buren Street, Herndon. Food trucks, Moon Bounce, and fun activities will be available. Picnic on the church lawn and listen to Big Al's Garage perform live music.

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SATURDAY/JULY 23

Food and Hygiene Event. 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. The Rotary Satellite Club of Herndon-Reston holds a Nonperishable Food & Hygiene Event monthly on the fourth Saturday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Items may be dropped off at Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon benefiting LINK and F.A.I.T.H.

SUNDAY/JULY 24

Concerts on the Green. 6-8 p.m. At the Village Centre Green, Great Falls. Featuring Ranger Rik & The Trash Pandas - Dumpster-diving Rock-n-Roll so good you can't get the taste out of your mouth. Come relax at the Village Centre Green and enjoy laid-back evenings of good music and good times with your neighbors.

SUMMER SUNDAY CONCERTS

The Alden at the McLean Community Center is bringing great music to the great outdoors with its Summer Sunday Concerts in the Park series. The concerts are for all ages and include a wide range of music genres, from South Asian, to indie rock, to hip-hop, to Southwest Native American jazz fusion. The free concerts are being held at 3 p.m. on Sundays through July 31. The park is located at 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd.

Sunday, July 24, 3 p.m. Lil'Maceo. Old-school funky, foot-stomping R&B saxophone. Lil' Maceo's musical roots in funk, pop, dance and contemporary jazz will get you up and partying.

WEDNESDAY/JULY 27

Town Hall Meeting. 6:30 p.m. At 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The Great Falls Grange Foundation will host a Town Hall Meeting open to the public at the Grange. Come and learn about all the exciting things happening there. Board members will provide an update on investments, introduce the new program director and announce an expansion of board members. Email info@grange.org.

JULY 28-AUG. 7

The Logan Festival of Solo Performance. Presented by 1st Stage of Tysons. In the show, "Tomatoes Tried to Kill Me but Banjos Saved My Life" by Keith Alessi, Keith tells the story of his boyhood, meteoric rise in the boardroom, and the startling news that changed his life forever. He candidly reveals how he used that obstacle to find a new passion in music and a cathartic outlet in storytelling. It will run on July 29 at 8 p.m., July 30 and 31 at 2 p.m., and on August 2 at 7:30 p.m.

In "Spanking Machine" by Marga Gomez, Marga performs her by turns funny, intense, and heart-rending memoir of growing up brown and queer in Washington Heights. Devil Dogs, sadistic nuns on poppers, childhood pranks, assault, and suppressed memory play their parts in Marga's shift across gender, latitudes, and generations. It will run on August 3 at 7:30 p.m., August 5 and 6 at 8 p.m., and August 7 at 2 p.m.

"Wanda's Way" by Caleen Sinnette Jennings is the first of 1st Stage's Commissions of Solo Work to premiere at the Logan Festival. Based on real interviews, Wanda's Way explores the journey of a Black female police officer as she explains how and why she got into law enforcement. This intricately woven tale is one of corrupted dreams, seemingly impenetrable systems, and the extreme consequences of both acting and failing to act. It will run on July 28 at 7:30 p.m., July 30 at 8 p.m., July 31 at 7 p.m., August 4 at 7:30 p.m., and August 6 at 2 p.m.

Visit www.1stStage.org or by calling the 1st Stage box office at 703-854-1856.

SUNDAY/JULY 31

Concerts on the Green. 6-8 p.m. At the Village Centre Green, Great Falls. Featuring Hit or Miss - Classic folk and rock songs from the '60s, '70s, and today
 Hosted by TD Bank, Great Falls. Come relax at the Village Centre Green and enjoy laid-back evenings of good music and good times with your neighbors.

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More Than I Bargained For



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

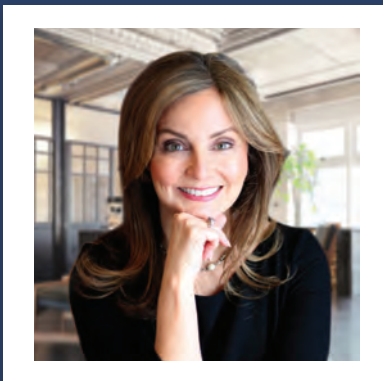
As a longtime homeowner of a historic home, one dating back to the early 1800s, to say there's ongoing upkeep/maintenance required is to state the obvious. What wouldn't be so obvious is the total inability of yours truly, cancer notwithstanding, to do any kind of constructive, presumed-to-be-within-the-man's purview-type repairs. Moreover, home improvement projects and/or any number of garden variety/common sense modifications like adding shelves, changing light switches/adding a dimmer, fixing a toilet, hanging pictures, et. cetera, are also outside of my comfort zone. A zone which barely exists. Nothing too complicated in the scheme of things mind you, but way too complicated for me. In addition, as you might imagine, tools are not my friends. In fact, they are my sworn enemies. If I pick up a hammer or a chain saw (which I do own), I'm more likely to hurt myself than I am to hit my target. I can live with my shortcomings. However, it's becoming increasingly difficult for my wife, Dina, to endure my incompetence.

Aside from my shortcomings, not being able to do anything costs money. And to hire anybody to do these kinds of homeowner tasks costs big money, usually a retail-type of cost to what it might cost compared to what it might cost a more capable homeowner – unlike myself, to do the job himself (wholesale). And other than Ghostbusters, who you gonna call? If you're lucky, you have a referral to somebody reliable and knowledgeable. If you're me, you don't so you have to find some other trusted resource. And that resource amazingly exists online. You simply list your project, your zip code and other pertinent information (cell phone and email specifically) and wait for the feedback. It's almost immediate. Within seconds almost, the plphone rings and/or your email receives - with offers. Within these offers are typically star-type evaluations and comments from previous users of this specific service. It's all, in my limited experience, reassuring and so I've hired these "pros" on multiple occasions and so far, so good. I still feel helpless, but I don't feel directionless – if that's even a word.

But there's a downside. The amount of communication either over the phone or electronically before the job and/or after the job has been completed is relentless. It's nonstop. Initially, there is the solicitation of the job which spawns any number of calls/emails offering. Once you're able to commit and hire the pro, the solicitations don't stop. On occasion, I've received calls/emails for another day or two until my non-reply eventually stops the outreach. It's intrusive enough before the job, but after, it's worse. In the pursuit of feedback, presumably (I've only responded electronically, never on the phone though), the calls continue for days. The caller ID tells me who's calling so I don't have to answer but I still make note – mentally, of who called. I don't tally the calls, but I can tell you, it's been upwards of a dozen over a couple of days – along with emails. I can appreciate that the service wants feedback from the person who hired the pro to post it on their site to educate the public, so to speak, but enough is enough. A good faith effort to contact me is all that's required. If I don't respond after a few calls, leave me be.

Nevertheless, because of this service, I have been able, recently to get out of my own way and let a professional handle the work. And so far, I have had good luck – with a plumber, an electrician, and a gutter/air-duct-cleaning service, to name a few. I feel as if we've made some progress, which as the owner of a historic home (yes designated as such), is a constant battle, one which I have consistently lost – for years. But I don't feel as irresponsible since I have a resource. I still can't do any homeowner-type stuff myself, but I can certainly hire someone. I just wish the cost – literally and figuratively, for the experience was less. Because, unfortunately for me, the demand far outweighs the supply, and the end is nowhere in sight.

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



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