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Nathaniel Kebede and Younes Elomari, both 13 years old, their brothers and friends, listen and live stream speakers as they wait for the new Lorton Library building to open.

All of Lorton Turns Out For Opening

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Two Vie To Be Fairfax City Mayor

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NEWS

Lorton Celebrates Opening of Community Center, Library and Park

New center combines senior and Community Action centers.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Community members in the large crowd which came to the ribbon cutting and grand opening of the Lorton Community Center, Library, and Park were not reserved in their descriptions of the new facility. Comments included: “huge”, “wonderful”, “enormous”, “soaring”, “dope”, “wowing”, and “pretty cool.” Even those laudable descriptors may not be sufficient to capture the essence of the crisp, bright building with its state of the art features and elements poised to help those of all ages to get a leg up in our modern day world.

Lorton celebrated the opening of the new facilities on October 15th, with tours, activities, and refreshments. Fairfax County Mount Vernon District Supervisor, Dan Storck, and Board Chairman, Jeff McKay, former Mount Vernon District supervisor, Gerry Hyland along with other county and state officials and U.S. Congressman Don Beyer, were on hand to officiate the opening of the combined Library, Community Center and adjacent, new playground and renovated park. The new facility, previously the site of the Lorton Library and the separate Lorton Community Action Center, now combines the functions, and those of a previously off campus senior center, into the new, and much larger building and reworked parking area.

As emcee of the program, Storck praised the “combined services, resources, entertainment, and education that are all in one place for all ages.” Describing the new center as “the Lorton hub,” he said, “This part of Lorton needed these services because we have folks who needed help to make a difference in their lives; who needed sometimes a hand up. Sometimes just some stair steps to go a little bit higher. Those things are what we’ll be able to do with this facility. This colocation of not only the neighborhood and community services, we have the senior and teen center. We got a library. We got a park and we’ve got new playgrounds. We’ve got a lot of wonderful things going on.”

Board Chairman McKay described the building as “so beautiful,” adding, “You can see that in every square inch ... thought and energy was put into designing it in a way that it can accommodate the community’s needs for such a long time. People have a yearning to come together as a community. They need intergenerational interaction. What I really love is when you walk through here, you’ll see all the great amenities for seniors, the library, the teens and young people in our community [will] be able to come together in one place, not dividing our com-



Nathaniel Kebede and Younes Elomari, both 13 yrs old, their brothers and friends listen and live stream speakers as they wait for the building to open



With the poise of an adult professional speaker, 12 year old Ivan Robles told the crowd what the new center meant to him.

munities up but bringing people together in one place so that we can learn from each other ... This is a beautiful building, with a lot of great opportunities, but it’s the people who are going to go inside this building that are going to add the real beauty and prove to us the real benefit of why we make infrastructure investments like this.”

The building and grounds are a model of environmental sustainability. Chris Herrington, director, Public Works and Environmental Services explained the elements that will designate the facility as LEED Gold standard, after installation of rooftop solar panels. “The building enjoys energy efficient



Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay looks forward to the center providing for interaction of our “richly inclusive diverse, proudly international community ... and for intergenerational interaction.”



Community members eagerly awaited the ribbon cutting as officials, Dan Storck, Brian Hill, Jai Cole assisting a young ribbon cutter, Gerry Hyland, Jeff McKay, Lloyd Tucker, Ivan Robles, and other young members of the community assist.

mechanical and electrical systems, abundant natural light in the interior spaces, and systems and materials that not only reduce energy and water consumption but also create a healthy indoor environment for everyone

who will be using the facility. We’ve gone above and beyond our regulatory requirements, including reducing stormwater run-

SEE NEW CENTER, PAGE 8

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

‘Focus on Affordability Issues’

Meet Fairfax City mayoral candidate Sang Yi.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

A Fairfax City resident since 2013, Sang Yi is a senior aide on Capitol Hill and an officer in the U.S. Navy Reserve. He’s also served two terms on City Council and proudly notes he was the “top vote-getter” in both his elections.

But he’s now vying for mayor and, if elected, he’d become Virginia’s first-ever, Korean American mayor and the first nonwhite mayor of Fairfax City. Yi said he’s seeking this post because of the leadership the job requires, and he likens it to being chairman of a board of directors.

“The mayor has an impact on the Council’s agenda, receives Council input, builds consensus and helps build collaboration among the Council members for direction,” he explained. “That’s important because the Council creates policies and points of view that City staff can act on. If staff doesn’t know what to do, it can be dire for the residents.

“It’s also why it’s critical that the mayor works closely with the Council. And I’m proud to have the endorsement of six of the nine Council candidates, who all represent a wide berth of diverse viewpoints. That’s what the City needs, and our nonpartisan elections allow for that.”

Yi said Fairfax has lots of hometown charm, but added, “We’re in danger of losing it because of how we develop and where we develop. When you start building large structures, what happens to, for example, Old Lee Highway where lots of people live and two schools are? The mayor should represent those kind of ideals – which I think I share with most of our City residents.”

He also believes Fairfax’s mayor should make sure the City runs efficiently – and that includes streamlining the Council meetings. “When Council meetings run really late, Council members’ attention wanes, residents watching want to go to bed, and it’s not fair to the applicant,” said Yi. “We need to get out the main points of an agenda item, without having it go on for hours.”

The main planks of his campaign platform are affordability, development and City walkability. “The City should focus on affordability issues – not just of housing – but rising cost-of-living issues everyone is facing,” he said. “I don’t want to keep adding different taxes. It’s more transparent if money comes from the general fund because, then, people know what their tax dollars are funding.”

“I don’t want us to just pay lip service to building affordable housing,” continued Yi. “I want people to actually create a diverse housing stock with purpose-built housing for seniors. We should preserve our mar-



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Sang Yi outside a Point 50 business in Fairfax City.

ket-rate, affordable housing, as well. And we also need new housing in a variety of price ranges – expensive, mid-range and cheaper. We need to keep our residents here and not tax people out of their homes.”

Regarding development, he believes in Fairfax “growing and developing sensibly so it maintains its tight-knit, community feel. I like our different festivals, as well as the various programs the City offers for children. My daughter even referred to Old Town Hall as ‘Mr. Skip’s House,’ because she’s gone to Story Time with Mr. Skip there.”

And, said Yi, “These things build a family-friendly environment. Also important are our great parks, and we should rejuvenate them for all the parents and children who use them, as well as for adult fitness. And that’s how you build community.”

As for walkability, he said it should be accomplished while preserving all modes of transportation in the City. “Connectivity is important, but I don’t want to shrink our roads to where they’re impossible to use,” said Yi. “We also need good traffic flow.”

He said he also wants to make sure that Fairfax City’s public school system remains really strong. “I’m looking forward to working with our new superintendent and school board,” said Yi. “Right now, we’re focused on school security and making sure our schools are safe and secure.”

Protecting the natural environment is important to him, as well. “I’m a big proponent of tree preservation,” he said. “But there’s a growing problem with invasive species and dead trees, so I was a huge proponent of having an arborist on the City staff.”

So why should people vote for Yi for mayor? “My four years and three months on Council, plus my professional background, are all indicative of the experience I can bring to the Council as mayor,” he replied. “I have lots of applicable, real-world experience, and I believe it’s important that people

SEE SANG YI, PAGE 5

‘Better Representation of All the City Residents’

Meet Catherine Read: Fairfax candidate for mayor.



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Catherine Read in her Fairchester Woods backyard.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

If elected Fairfax City’s mayor, Catherine Read would be the first woman and first GMU alumni in that post. She’s lived here 22 years, and her active participation in both Fairfax City and statewide elections taught her that government needs diversity of perspective, thought and experience.

“Everyone’s voices deserve to be heard – that’s what makes good government,” she said. “People need to discuss what’s best for all of us.”

Believing “the foundation of good leadership is to first listen,” she’s traversed the City to hear what people think are Fairfax’s greatest challenges and opportunities. Her focus is on good stewardship of the City’s parks, schools, established neighborhoods, new residential projects, historic downtown, commercial areas and CUE buses. And she wants decisions to reflect the community’s values and input.

From Southwest Virginia, Read entered GMU as a sophomore in 1981, living in its first dorm and obtaining her bachelor’s degree in government and politics. In 2000, she permanently moved to Fairfax, where her three children attended public schools here, graduating from Fairfax High.

She’s worked in IT, human resources and real estate; and in 2007, she started a social-media consulting business. Her company works with nonprofits, plus political candidates – especially women, minorities and young and first-time candidates. Read even helped City Councilmembers So Lim and Jon Stehle with their previous election campaigns because “they brought the experience and diversity the Council needed.”

She hosts weekly TV shows and a radio show for Fairfax Public Access, interviewing nonprofit representatives, elected leaders and authors. She’s currently board chair of nonprofit GrandInvolve, which enables older adults to help elementary-school students

achieve classroom success.

Read’s also on the Virginia Poverty Law Center’s Advisory Council and the Equality Virginia PAC Board. She’s a Rotarian and served nine years on the board of Fairfax-based nonprofit Britepaths.

So why run for City mayor? “No one else was running [against candidate Sang Yi], and this City would have had a new mayor without a single ballot ever being cast,” explained Read. “I thought it was unconscionable.”

Furthermore, she said, “I felt I needed to represent what I believe are the City’s core values – being a welcoming and inclusive place that fully funds public education and cares about housing affordability, a more walkable City and the environment.”

“In whatever project the City considers doing, it must ask, ‘What’s the environmental impact?’” said Read. “And we need to address housing affordability because, if residents had to buy their own homes here today, they couldn’t afford to. That also means people who’d like to live here are prevented from moving into this community. We need homes that aren’t just affordable for low-income people, but ones that senior citizens, GMU grads and young people can afford.”

So, she said, “We have to decide what kind of city we want to be in the future. And we need to build sidewalks. This City was built post WWII around cars when urban planning was all about car ownership. You can’t walk the City safely with the sidewalks we currently have, and we shouldn’t assume cars will still be here in the future.”

Besides that, said Read, “Many people don’t know the CUE buses are free because there’s no signage on the buses and bus stops saying so, or even a map listing the stops. I also want solar-powered, digital displays at bus stops so people would know when the next bus is coming. Some aren’t even aware the CUE bus goes to the Vienna Metro, and not everyone uses apps.”

“So we need to do more with what we already fund. If we did, seniors and middle- and high-school students would know they could take the bus for free. Kids could get them from school to job and then home. Or they could stay after school for an activity and still catch a bus home. Many kids from low-income families don’t participate in these activities because no one from home can pick them up.”

Read said Fairfax should also create a “pipeline of talent” by mentoring young people and giving them “something substantive to do that they’re passionate about. If not, we won’t have a bench of talent when the boomers retire. Young people want to make

SEE CATHERINE READ, PAGE 5
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Wheelchair Athletes Fit in Community Sports



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION
Spencer Davis in the gym at St. James.

Conference looks at inclusive sports with the parks and recreation leaders in mind.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Sports for people with disabilities are alive and well, but certain entities could embrace the connection more. For those who use a wheelchair, current sporting activities just need to be inclusive so everybody can participate.

That's the message that was discussed at the ADAcon Pre-Conference event held recently at the St. James Sports, Wellness and Entertaining Complex in Springfield.

For Ann Deschamps, the Mid-Atlantic ADA Center Director, the question is: "How can we include the people with disabilities?" Deschamps is a Reston resident that was at the conference to explore the issue alongside

of the Parks and Recreation representatives from around the country, including reps from Reston and Herndon and Fairfax County. It's not about new programs, but about including everyone in existing programs, Deschamps said. "There's so much to learn, learn what is possible," she said.

Spencer Davis was in the gym shooting baskets from his wheelchair. He started participating in junior tennis, not knowing if he could do it all, but that first step when he joined a team has opened the door to other

SEE WHEELCHAIR ATHLETES, PAGE 15

Sang Yi

FROM PAGE 4

serve their community.

"I want to focus on issues that impact people, neighborhood by neighborhood. Our City is a really special place, and we need to preserve its uniqueness. And if people vote for me as mayor, I'll work every day to make sure we don't lose our special sense of place here. It's really been an honor to serve the residents on City Council. I've learned a lot that I can use to serve the residents well as their next mayor."

Catherine Read

FROM PAGE 4

a difference, but we need to give them a seat at the table and include them on the City's boards, commissions and committees."

She said Fairfax's youth could be involved in the planning, feedback and work of implementing walkability or a City more concerned about the environment. For instance, said Read, "We could ask the people who'll use bike racks and scooters where they should go and how we should be using them."

Basically, she said, the City needs to let residents understand there's a path for them

to do something benefiting their community. "We have drinkable water in a safe City," said Read. "We're fortunate we don't have to struggle over issues of safety and health – and it's also why people want to live here."

Overall, she believes the City's decisions should reflect community values and input. "We need to look at the way we include people in our local government," she said. "Where are the opportunities for younger people, new residents, new Americans and Mason students? I want to open the City to many different voices so there's better representation of all the people living here."

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OPINION

35 years of Domestic Violence Awareness Month

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK



This October marks the 35th year that our nation has observed Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Each year, this month serves as a way to connect and unite individuals and organizations working to combat and raise awareness about domestic violence, to support domestic violence survivors, to hold abusers accountable, and to create and strengthen legislation to further these goals.

Domestic violence is characterized as a pattern of coercive behaviors used by an individual to gain or maintain power and control over another individual in the context of an intimate, dating, or familial relationship. These behaviors are not limited to physical violence, but can also include stalking, sexual assault, financial control, verbal abuse, isolation from family and friends, and threats to harm loved ones and pets, among other tactics.

Domestic violence is all too terribly common. It is pervasive across all walks of life, varying age groups, all backgrounds, all communities, all education levels, all economic levels, all cultures, all ethnicities, all religions, all abilities, and all lifestyles. 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men in the United States have experienced some form of physical violence by an intimate partner. Each year, more than 10 million adults experience domestic violence, and 1 in 15 children are witnesses to intimate partner violence. Intimate partner violence accounts for 15% of all violent crime in

the United States. 72% of all murder-suicides in the United States involve an intimate partner, and 94% of the victims of these murder-suicides are female. An abuser's access to a firearm in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide by 500%. Indeed, the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence notes that 498 gun-related domestic violence deaths have occurred so far this year.

Over the past several years, the Virginia General Assembly has taken several steps to combat this issue. In 2020, we passed a law prohibiting respondents to final domestic violence protective orders from possessing, purchasing, or transporting firearms, and a bill to require background checks for firearm purchases. Also in 2020, my bill HB 1044 passed, increasing the penalty for the unauthorized use of tracking devices, frequently used by abusers to stalk victims. I also plan to reintroduce a bill that would require anti-harassment training in the workplace, an effort to curb sexual harassment, discrimination, and other abusive behaviors that can become pervasive in a workplace environment if allowed to continue.

Domestic violence doesn't end when October does. Everyone should do their part to learn and recognize the signs and symptoms of do-

An abuser's access to a firearm in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide by 500%.

estic violence and learn how to be an engaged bystander on this issue that, unfortunately, affects so many of our neighbors. The Virginia Department of Social Services, and organizations like the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence provide fact sheets and resources on their websites to educate everyone on these abusive behaviors, how to seek help in an abusive relationship, and how to support victims and survivors in our lives.

Sexual and domestic violence programs provide crisis services, emergency shelter, and resource-based support. The Virginia Statewide Hotline is ready to help (24 hours a day, 365 days a year), and sexual and domestic violence programs all over the state. If you or someone you know needs help, please call: 1-800-838-8238, text: 804-793-9999, or chat: <https://www.vadata.org//chat/>.

To report a crime, call the Fairfax County Police Department at 703-691-2131 or, for emergencies, please call 911. To support charitable efforts to combat domestic violence please consider donating to the Family and Children's Trust Fund <http://www.fact.virginia.gov/donate-2/>, the only organization in Virginia devoted to treating and preventing family violence across the lifespan.

In Support of Truthful Education in FCPS

Dear Dr. Reid and School Board Members,

We are heartened to see the Truthful Education In FCPS resolution on the Board's October 20 agenda for a vote. We appreciate the efforts of Dr. Ricardy Anderson and Karen Keys Gamarra to put this important Board statement in front of the community. <https://go.boarddocs.com/vsba/fairfax/Board.nsf/vpublic?open>

This coalition of advocacy makes clear that the Fairfax County community supports the teaching of truth about important subjects like racial and social justice, and the educators who do that hard work. Our teachers and this community are looking to the Board for clear leadership in these politically charged times.

As current and former FCPS students, teachers, and parents, we in Free and Antiracist Minds (FAM) know that students and parents want truth in teaching, and educators need and want support to do that work. Local support for this resolution makes that abundantly clear and aligns with national trends. This Rand study shows that teachers need the support of school system leadership to teach about

racism and bias in this political climate https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1108-5.html. The study also shows that lack of support is a significant factor in teacher satisfaction, especially for teachers of color, which is incredibly important in FCPS where we strive to hire and retain more teachers of color to reflect the demographics of our student population.

Some have suggested that the FCPS Controversial Issues Policy, if amended, could provide the support teachers need to teach historic truths and representative literature. That policy provides limited guidance at best, and is not the public statement of confidence and leadership that educators and the community want to hear. Words spoken from the School Board dais are often the Board's most important work.

FAM began reaching out to Board members in August, and Dr. Anderson has been in contact with all Board members about this resolution since early September. We very much appreciate the input of Dr. Reid and some Board members about the resolution's language. FAM has accepted language changes that would not water down the

message in the eyes of the coalition of supporting organizations. At this time, gathering that support for further amendments would not be possible.

We, and the coalition of supporting organizations, look for the unanimous support of the Board. Thank you.

**Free and Antiracist Minds, FAM
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Fairfax County Federation
of Teachers
Fairfax County Council of PTAs
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Girl Scout Troop Honored for Planting Trees, Working in Gardens

The 6th grade Juniors Girl Scout Troop 52032 earned a Bronze award, which is one of the top three awards possible in Girl Scouts. It started in May with a Take Action Award. This is where the girls planted native trees to support wildlife at Orange Hunt Elementary School. ReLeaf of Fairfax supported the girls for the planting. Then, in June and September the scouts weeded and planted at Greenspring Senior Living community common area where the residents enjoy outdoor activities. Also, they helped a resident weed her personal plot to prepare for planting. The scouts learned a lot and take pride in servicing their community in a lasting way.

Swing for Pink with Tennis and Pickleball racquets at Burke Racquet and Swim Club

Play tennis, pickleball, socialize or volunteer on Saturday, Oct 29, 6:30-9 p.m., at Burke Racquet and Swim Club. This Breast Cancer Charity Event includes a silent auction, snacks, wine tasting and 50/50 raffle. In partnership with the Inova Schar Cancer Institute, all proceeds benefit breast cancer education, screening and treatment at The Breast Care Institute at Inova Mount Vernon Hospital and the Joseph Viar Jr. and Bonnie Christ Cancer Center at Inova Alexandria Hospital. Visit <https://swingforpinkmtvac.wordpress.com> for complete details on registration and sponsorship.

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Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

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

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
GILES	8517	643	GRAY SULPHUR SPG/ 643	SULPHUR BRANCH	9/27/2022
POWHATAN	10136	684	BELL RD	STEGERS CREEK	9/26/2022
GILES	13259	626	CASTLE ROCK DR	DOE CREEK	9/26/2022
GILES	2918	623	RIVER RD/ 623	NEW RIVER/NS RWY	9/26/2022
GILES	10171	635	BIGSTONEY CR RD/ 635	WHITE ROCK BRANCH	9/22/2022
GILES	12345	623	CASCADE DR/ 623	LITTLE STONEY CREEK	9/22/2022
MONTGOMERY	13414	616	DOBBINS HOLLOW RD/ 616	BRUSH CREEK	9/22/2022
FALLS CHURCH	13413	0	SHERROW AVENUE	TRIPPS RUN	9/21/2022
SCOTT	13290	617	SHELLEYS RD	BRANCH	9/20/2022
ROANOKE	13269	864	OLD CATAWBA RD/864	MASON CREEK	9/19/2022
FALLS CHURCH	13283	0	S. OAK STREET	TRIPPS RUN	9/16/2022
ROANOKE	2782	637	BOTTOM CREEK LANE	LAUREL CREEK	9/16/2022
FRANKLIN	3455	757	SKILLET RD/ 757	STORY CREEK	9/15/2022
ROANOKE	13396	777	FTLEWIS CHURCH RD/ 777	STYPES BRANCH	9/15/2022
ROANOKE	13392	1662	MCVITTY RD/ 1662	MUDLUCK CREEK	9/15/2022
BOTETOURT	13410	615	CRAIG CREEK RD/ 615	DUTCHMAN BRANCH	9/14/2022
CARROLL	14974	747	PINE GROVE RD/ 747	BRANCH SHORTS CREEK	9/14/2022
FRANKLIN	5503	623	FAIRSTONE PK RD/ 623	RYANS BRANCH	9/14/2022
FRANKLIN	5556	825	HILLOCK RD/ 825	RENNET BAG CREEK	9/14/2022
ROANOKE	10147	696	APPLE GROVE LANE/ 696	BACK CREEK	9/14/2022
BOTETOURT	10152	616	BLUE RDGE SPGS/ 616	BRANCH OF GLADE CREEK	9/13/2022
FRANKLIN	13278	919	GRASSY HILL RD/ 919	LITTLE CREEK	9/13/2022
FRANKLIN	13337	688	POTEET RD/ 688	GILLS CREEK	9/13/2022
BEDFORD	13317	695	GOOSE CK VLY R/ 695	N. FORK GOOSE CREEK	9/12/2022
BEDFORD	13336	639	HURRICANE DR/ 639	NORTH OTTER CREEK	9/12/2022
BEDFORD	13303	680	MURRELLS GAP RD	SHEEP CREEK	9/12/2022
BEDFORD	3387	680	PATTERSN MILL RD/ 680	LITTLE OTTER CREEK	9/12/2022
ROANOKE	12355	666	BANDY CREEK RD/ 666	BACK CREEK	9/12/2022
BOTETOURT	12304	606	GROVE HILL RD/ 606	CATAWBA CREEK	9/9/2022
FRANKLIN	18127	697	BRICK CHURCH RD/ 697	LITTLE CREEK	9/9/2022
BOTETOURT	18065	737	HOGAN HOLLOW RD/ 737	CATAWBA CREEK	9/6/2022
DINWIDDIE	14789	709	SHIPPINGS RD	BUCKSKIN CREEK	9/2/2022
BOTETOURT	14773	1324	PATTONSBURGLA/ 1324	PURGATORY CREEK	9/1/2022
BOTETOURT	14801	764	SPEC MINE RD	BRANCH OF BACK CREEK	9/1/2022

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

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

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

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

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Upon entering, visitors were greeted by smiling county employees Kinda Mimes and Keesha Gill who handed out souvenir bags and cups



In the reception area, staff organized tours of the large and bright building



Multi-purpose rooms provide space for games, meetings and other uses

New Center Combines Senior and Community Action Centers

FROM PAGE 5

off by providing bio-retention rain gardens, landscaping features, and underground stormwater quality treatment device, enhancing stormwater quality treatment on-site. There's a reduced parking footprint. I'm happy that we preserved the White Oak tree and we've used native plants in a bird friendly design."

Construction began in July 2020 on the 30,000 square foot facility and adjacent community park. The new park includes an updated playground, fitness area, open field area, plaza, and loop trail. The library features an expanded children's space, teen gaming room with large screen video stations, Wifi/laptop bar, and group study, conference and community meeting rooms. Linked by a shared entrance and reception area, the Community Center includes several large multipurpose rooms, art and game rooms, exercise area, pantry with large refrigerator/freezers, and a sensory room for children with sensory issues. The gymnasium will open later, after correction of issues with the floor.

Perhaps the biggest round of applause during the speaking program was heard in recognition of 12-year-old speaker, Ivan Robles, who summed up what the center means to children. Robles shared, "Since I was little, my mom used to bring my brothers and I to LCAC to participate in all the programs, where we did homework and played games. Now I'm happy that they have built this new center here in my community where we will have the opportunity to have more programs and a safe space to play and study."

The Center is located at 9520 Richmond Highway in Lorton.



Joshua Henry, Director of Nutrition for The Lorton Community Action Center is pleased with larger space, more shelves, and larger refrigerator and freezer for the community pantry



Library users try their skill in the origami activity



The Hawaiian Stars provided a Hula demonstration as part of the cultural celebration; an ensemble from the South County Marching Stations performed before the ceremony



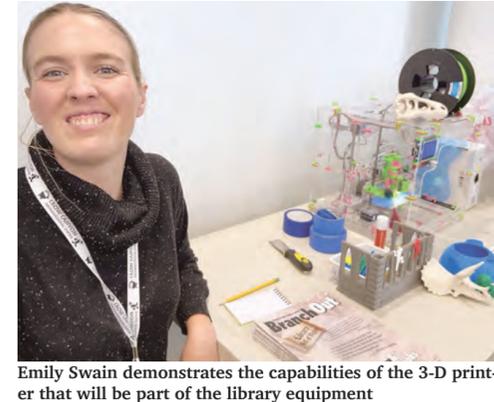
The library provides a mix of traditional paper media, digital and online information



The library portion of the center includes Wifi and a laptop bar, and an inside park for children



Emir Elmansouri, 13, shows off the button he made during a craft activity in the library



Emily Swain demonstrates the capabilities of the 3-D printer that will be part of the library equipment



A range of generations was on display at the playground

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Fire Prevention Week in Lorton Plan your escape.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Newly dedicated Fire and Rescue Station 19, in Lorton, hosted an Open House on Saturday, Oct. 15 in observance of Fire Prevention Week, Oct. 9-15. The annual event is intended to help members of the public, at all ages, learn how to stay safe in

case of a fire. Fire Prevention Week was started by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) in 1922 to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. Public education about lifesaving measures can drastically decrease casualties caused by fires.

And as a few young members of the public discovered, it can be fun to learn about life saving techniques.



Jace Badros, 7 yrs old, discusses life saving CPR compressions with firefighter Samuel Santana, of Lorton.



Benjamin Eggleston, 4, asked about the fire truck after taking the wheel, says "It looks great."



Firefighters of Station 19: Pat Bebereia, 3 years experience, Stafford; Brian Krause, 7 years, Baltimore; Guadalupe Flores, 8 days, Fredericksburg; Jason Peterson, 10 yrs, Lorton; Jason Kim, 13 yrs, Centerville.



Fire and rescue never takes a holiday, as equipment was called to respond to a vehicle accident during the open house.



Fire truck equipment at Lorton's Station 19 kept at the ready and looking "great."



Rookie firefighter Flores, just 8 days out of the Fire Academy, has seniority over Benjamin Eggleston, 4 years old of Lorton, who has only a few minutes on the job.



Seven year old Jace Badros, Lorton, practices live saving technique with others on the fire station main equipment floor.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

NAACP Recognizes NOVA Park's Paul Gilbert

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Branch of the NAACP has acknowledged the work of NOVA Parks Executive Director Paul Gilbert with a Freedom Fund Community Advocate Award. The Award recognizes community members working for racial equality. NOVA Parks partnered with the Fairfax County NAACP to help tell the stories of the Black community's contributions to Northern Virginia.

"Fairfax NAACP has enjoyed a strong partnership with NOVA Parks. We owe that to Paul Gilbert," said Reverend Lynda Alicudo, Chair of the Religious and Community Coordination Committee for the NAACP Fairfax County Branch. "Paul has been tireless in his commitment to a vision that includes programming that engages our community, the African American community, and tells a more inclusive history."

The award is the result of an on-going NAACP/NOVA Parks partnership, focused on telling a more inclusive history of Northern Virginia. Under Gilbert's leadership, NOVA Parks unveiled nine interpretive signs that focus on a diverse history, and adopted 'Belonging' as one of the five main priority pillars of its 2023-2027 Strategic Plan.

"What we sometimes call 'Black history' is really our history. It is the history of our re-



Paul Gilbert, Executive Director of NOVA Parks, was honored with NAACP's Freedom Fund Community Award, announced Oct. 4.

gion and our nation," Gilbert said about the award. "Understanding our past is important because we all get to collectively write the next chapter, and we can make choices about what that future will be. Public lands like NOVA Parks belong to everyone.

"It is important for the history we tell to reflect the entire community," Gilbert said. "The award from the NAACP is a great indication that we are on the right track. It



PHOTOS COURTESY NOVA PARKS

Fairfax NAACP President Karen Camplin and NOVA Parks Executive Director Paul Gilbert mark new signage telling the story of how Jim Crow laws impacted people riding trains in Virginia.

has been a real pleasure to work with the NAACP to deliver these and other stories." The stories told on the newly placed signs

highlight a painful, at times inspiring past. The signs dedicated in February, in Arlington, highlight a painful, at times inspiring past. The signs dedicated in February, in Arlington, highlight a painful, at times inspiring past. The signs dedicated in February, in Arlington, highlight a painful, at times inspiring past.

SEE NAACP, PAGE 15

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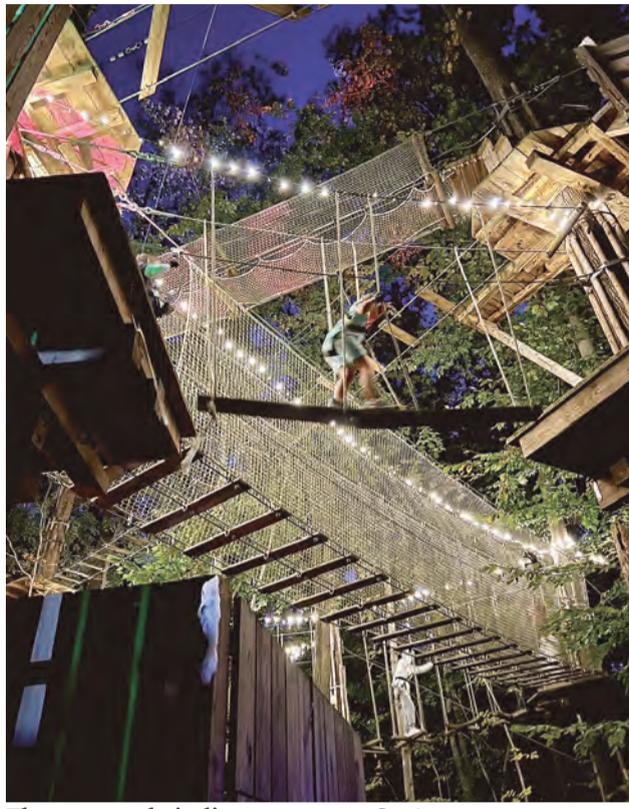
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FRIGHTS

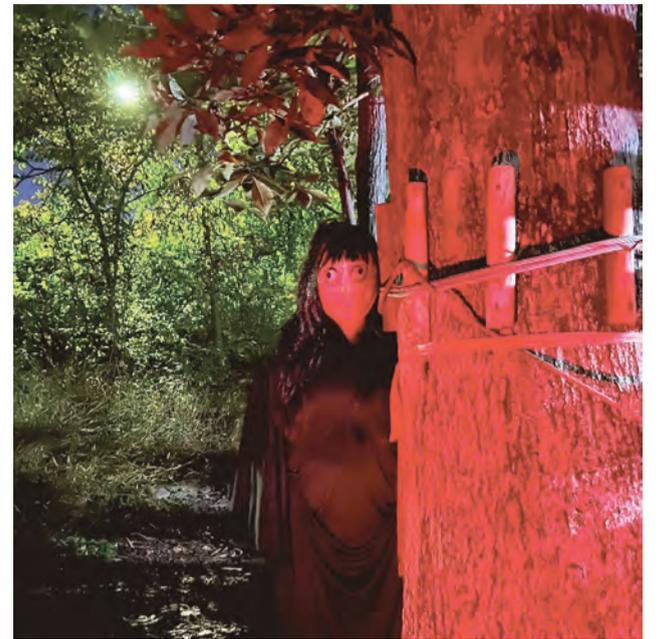


PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Scare actors Eleuterio Flores, and Jennifer Yim, both of Springfield, add living ghoulish spirit to tree canopy adventures during October



The rope and zip-line courses at Go Ape create a sense of adventure, with night time light and sounds enhancing the tree canopy experience reaching an even higher degree with seasonal fright enhancements



As in many fairy tales, the Springfield woods may hide ghoulish dangers as spirits lurk

“This activity is not for the faint of heart. Open to everyone, but highly recommended only for those prepared to be scared.”

Heights in the Dark Not Enough Fright?

Frights at Height, a gravity defying, scream-filled adventure after dark.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

By all accounts, nice people who hold normal jobs during the day, at night, scare actors Eleuterio Flores and Jennifer Yim take ghoulish pleasure in making people jump in fright when encountering them in dimly lit woods. Ghosts, ghouls and zombies are expected to invade Springfield several nights this month. Go Ape Zipline & Adventure Park, located at the South Run RECenter, has prepared a frightening experience for those “who dare to be scared”. Their venue adds a very adventurous way to celebrate Halloween in a gravity defying, scream-filled way. On select evenings in October, the site’s course in the woods will be haunted by the undead, who may be expected to appear, unexpectedly, from dark corners within the adventure courses. Go Ape says, “This activity is not for the faint of heart. Open to everyone, but highly recommended only for those prepared to be scared.”

While Go Ape is open before the sun goes down, with Halloween themed rope course adventures, candy, cobwebs, pumpkins, and ghostly sounds, it gets especially eerie around twilight, and the dark hours are described as “super scary.” Those who prefer a less ghoulish rope course adventure may designate themselves “not to be scared”.

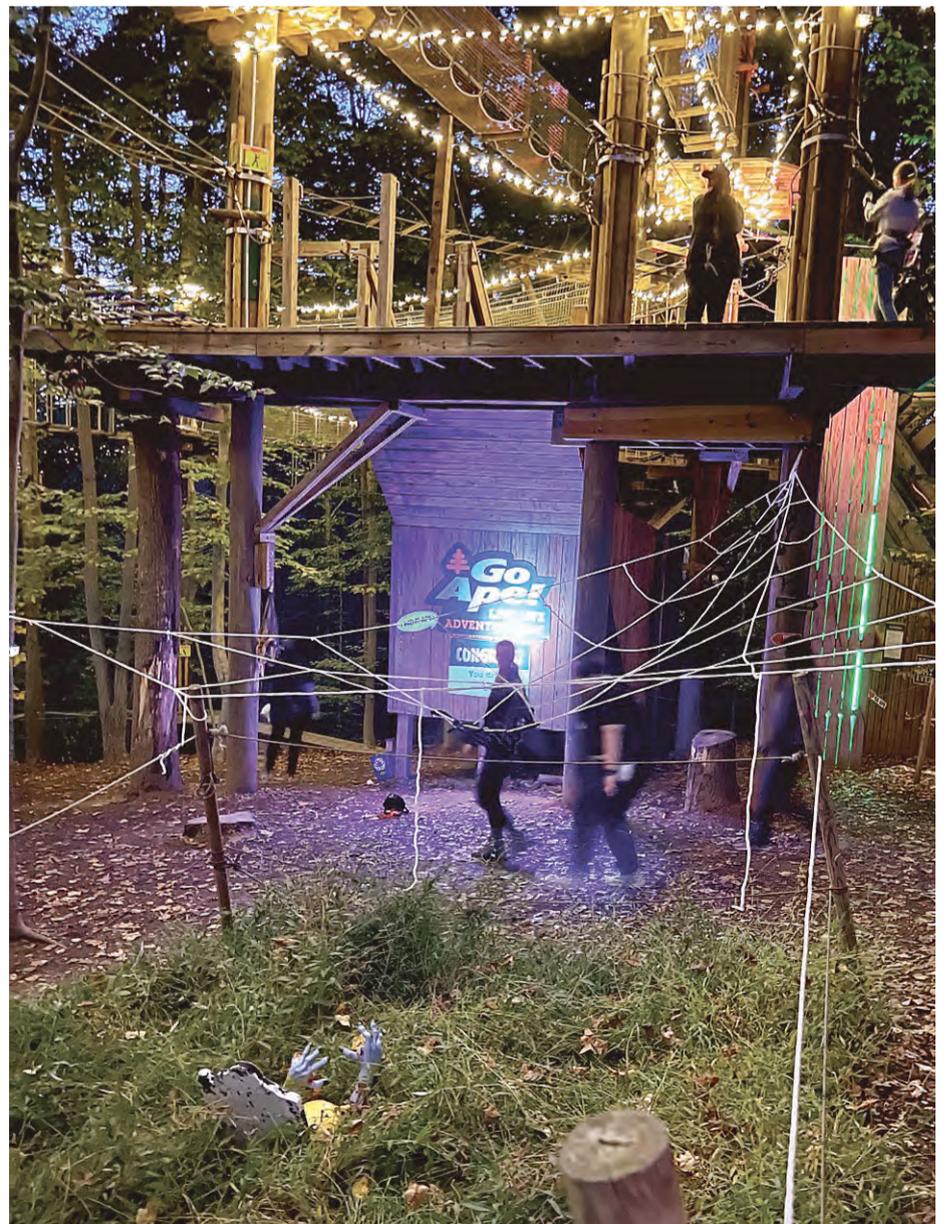


PHOTO COURTESY GO APE

Go Ape adds a new level to scary entertainment with Frights at Height

Go Ape’s Jason Sudden says, “We are very excited to elevate everyone’s holiday spirit this autumn at Go Ape. If you get an adrenaline rush from our zip-lines and ropes courses, “Frights at Height” is truly going to get your heart pumping. Our mission is to help everyone live life adventurously, and this Halloween celebration will bring that adventure to a higher level.”

Check for available dates and reservations are strongly encouraged at www.goape.com/book-now, (\$39.95 per person) for the gravity defying, scream-filled adventure after dark...if you dare.



Eerie lighting dimly marks forest paths in the rope course and Halloween decorations add to the spine-tingling adventure of being in the woods at night

CALENDAR

NOW THRU NOV. 15

Fruit Sale Signup. 7-11 p.m. Signup now for Fairfax Lions notices and discounts for Lions Club Fruit Sales in November and December. They sell fresh Florida oranges, mandarins, grapefruit; maple syrup, peanuts to raise funds for charity. Website: <https://www.fairfaxlions.org/citrus-sale-notification/>

NOW THRU NOV. 17

ESL Class. 7-9 p.m. Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Road, Fairfax. Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced level English classes. Classes will be in-person or online. Classes will meet twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Books are included in class cost.

OCT. 1 TO NOV. 5

Workhouse Haunt: Nightmare Harvest. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. This year's Haunt, titled "Nightmare Harvest," will run on weekends from Saturday, Oct. 1 through Saturday, Nov. 5. Friday and Saturday hours are 7-11 p.m. and Sunday hours are 7-10 p.m. The Haunt will also perform on Halloween night, Monday, Oct. 31, from 7-9 p.m. Each Friday and Saturday night from Oct. 7 through Oct. 29, live bands will perform in the Rizer Pavilion near the Haunt Bar, where guests can purchase snacks and beverages. Tickets are now available for purchase and prices start at \$30 per person. Visit www.workhousearts.org for schedule and event details.

OCT. 20-23

Annandale Book Sale. 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m. At George Mason Regional Library, 7001 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Thousands of books, CDs, DVDs, and more at the George Mason Friends Fall



The Tour de Mount Vernon 2022 takes place on Saturday, Oct. 22 starting from the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton.

Book Sale. Come early for the best selection, then come back on Sunday for half-price bargains. Visit the website: georgemasonfriends.blogspot.com.

THURSDAY/OCT. 20

Fairfax Wind Symphony Fall Concert. 7:30 p.m. At Katherine Johnson Middle School, 3801 Jermantown Road, Fairfax. A community band concert presenting dance music to please all ages. Music of Bernstein, Dvorak, Gershwin, Sousa and others. Free admission, donations accepted.

THURSDAY/OCT. 20

Stocking the Wine Cellar. 1:30-3:30 p.m. At The Virginian, 9229 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Featuring Virginian and European wines as well as a fine selection of cheeses curated by our Dining Services team. Along

with some delightful sipping and nibbling, you'll also get a sample of some of the amazing things coming to The Virginian, Fairfax's most exciting new Independent Living community. Visit the website: <https://liveatthevirginian.com/events>

FRIDAY/OCT. 21

Mason Opera Scenes. 3 p.m. At GMU's Harris Theatre, Fairfax. Free and open to the public.

SATURDAY, OCT. 22

Adult Hearth Cooking. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at George Mason's Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Mason Neck. Join the chefs at Gunston Hall for the ultimate slow cooking experience where they employ 18th-century cooking techniques to create period dishes over an open flame. \$125/person, \$100/member.

SATURDAY/OCT. 22

Fall Fest. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Springfield Town Center, 6500 Springfield Mall, Springfield. Family-friendly event with dozens of fun exhibitors outdoors while enjoying fall activities including pumpkin decorating, live music, a DJ, character performances, a magic show, and more. Family-friendly costumes are encouraged!

SATURDAY/OCT. 22

Tour de Mount Vernon 2022. Meet Up at the Workhouse for a Community Bike Ride. The 7th Annual Community Bike Ride will be on Saturday, Oct. 22, 2022, at 8:30 a.m., starting and ending at the Workhouse Arts Center. The Tour de Mount Vernon brings cyclists on a fun ride through the southern and central portions of the Mount Vernon District including a scenic route through Fort Belvoir. The route consists of paved roads, paved trails and has several challenging sections. Ride monitors and Fairfax County Police help with directions and keep everyone safe. Details and registration www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon/tour-de-mount-vernon-2022

SATURDAY/OCT. 22

Genealogy Gems. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Via Zoom. Fairfax Genealogical Society presents its Fall Fair 2022: Digging for Gems with Lisa Louise Cooke via Zoom. Cooke, owner of Genealogy Gems, a genealogy and family history multi-media company founded in 2007, is also producer and host of the Genealogy Gems Podcast (www.GenealogyGems.com). For more information and to register: [HTTPS://FXGS2022OCT.EVENTBRITE.com](https://FXGS2022OCT.EVENTBRITE.com). Open to the public, \$30 fee.

OCT. 22-23

LEGO(R) Model Train Show. 12-4 p.m.

At The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. LEGO(R) Model Trains will be on display and running at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. Admission: Museum members and children 4 and under, free; children 5-12, \$3; adults 13 and older, \$5; special events, \$6. Seniors and military, active and retired, \$4. For more information on the Museum and events, www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, 703-425-9225.

TUESDAY/OCT. 25

Getting Started with Facebook. 1:15 - 2:30 p.m. At Wellness Center for Older Adults (WCOA), 4027-B Olley Lane, Fairfax. During this free hands-on workshop, you will sign up for Facebook and begin building your profile. You'll also learn how to find friends and use Facebook's privacy settings. RSVP: events.aarp.org/SPfacebook or call 1-877-926-8300.

SATURDAY, NOV. 5

Revolutionary War Day. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at George Mason's Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Mason Neck. Join Colonel Mason and his fellow Virginians as they support the war effort. This family-oriented program has activities for all ages that may be explored in whatever order desired. \$10/adult, \$8/child, 50% off for members

TUESDAY, NOV 15-17

Citrus Fruit Sale. 9 a.m.-6 p.m. at the American Legion Parking Lot, 3939 Oak St., Fairfax. Fairfax Lions sell fresh Florida oranges, mandarins, grapefruit, maple syrup, peanuts; we raise funds for charity. Sign up now for notices and discounts on the web page.

HALLOWEEN

NOW THRU NOV. 5

Workhouse Haunt: Nightmare Harvest. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. This year's Haunt, titled "Nightmare Harvest," will run on weekends from Saturday, Oct. 1 through Saturday, Nov. 5. Friday and Saturday hours are 7-11 p.m. and Sunday hours are 7-10 p.m. The Haunt will also perform on Halloween night, Monday, Oct. 31, from 7-9 p.m. Each Friday and Saturday night from Oct. 7 through Oct. 29, live bands will perform in the Rizer Pavilion near the Haunt Bar, where guests can purchase snacks and beverages. Tickets are now available for purchase and prices start at \$30 per person. Visit www.workhousearts.org for schedule and event details.

FRIDAY/OCT. 28

Synetic Theater's Vampire Ball 2022. At 1800 S. Bell Street, Arlington. Synetic Theater's Vampire Ball is DC's hottest Halloween party with everything you need for a spooktacular night. There will be Dracula themed cocktails, dancing, physical theater, spooky Georgian remixes, fun-sized candy bars, and more. The festivities



Halloween at The Perch takes place on Saturday, Oct. 29 in Tysons Corner.

start with a performance of Dracula followed by an indoor/outdoor dance party with all the food and drinks that a ghoulish could ask for. Gather all your Basic Witches for a party to wake the dead! Costumes encouraged!

Walker Nature Center Halloween House and Trick-or-Treat Trail. Advance online sales only for this sell out spectacular. Go to <https://bit.ly/2Oj1l6j>. Event Times: Fri. Oct. 26, 6 p.m. & 7:30 p.m., Sat. Oct. 27, 6 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.. For ages 3 - Adult. Reston Association

SATURDAY/OCT 29

Haunted Mini Golf. 5-7 p.m. At Oak Marr Rec Center, 3200 Jermantown Road, Oakton. Come in your favorite costume to Oak Marr Rec Center and play some Haunted Mini Golf. There will be spooky treats, face painting, Halloween games and food trucks with delicious offerings. Call 703-281-6501.

SATURDAY/OCT. 29

Halloween at The Perch. 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. At Capital One Center in Tysons. Capital One Center is



The Synetic Theater's Vampire Ball 2022 will take place on Friday, Oct. 28, 2022 in Arlington.

hosting a big Halloween costume party at The Perch - a 2.5 acre sky high gathering place adjacent to Capital One's headquarters in Tysons. Guests are encouraged to bring their furry besties and participate in dog and human costume contests at Starr Hill Biergarten and meet Lucky Dog Animal Rescue's adoptable pups in costumes. Family activities will be held from 12 p.m.-6 p.m. (everything from spooky golf at Perch Putt to face painting, pumpkin painting, inflatable bounce houses, live music, Wegmans-sponsored pumpkin pie eating contests, Halloween arts and crafts and more!). Once

the sun sets the ghostly vibes and spooky characters come out! College gameday watch parties and Hocus Pocus will be featured on the big screen, along with a bocce tournament hosted by DC Bocce and a pop-up box office hosted by Capital One Hall. Visit <https://www.capitalonecenter.com/events/halloween-at-the-perch>

HALLOWEEN OCT. 31

Great Falls Halloween Spooktacular 4 pm - 4:45pm, Pet Parade; 5:00pm - 7 pm Trick-or-Treating, Great Falls Village Centre

Obituary



God called **Mary Kathleen Norton** home on October 9, 2022, far too soon at the age of 44. She was born on June 10, 1978, in Honolulu, Hawaii, to Daniel Norton Sr. and Margaret Marron Norton, (formerly of Windber, Pennsylvania) and lived the majority of her life in Springfield, Virginia. She was the first born of four children. She is survived by both parents, her brother, Daniel Norton Jr, and twin sisters, Kathryn Norton and Kristine Riegner. Mary was handed a life of many ups and downs, but also an incredible amount of strength through all of the trials. She was someone who would give you the shirt off of her back and anything you needed. Mary suffered more physical and mental pain than the majority of us could ever imagine, but she powered through it each day. She will be greatly missed by her family and friends. The family will receive friends for visitation at Noon, Friday, October 21, 2022, at Harris Funeral Home, 500 Cherry Lane, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, followed by a funeral service to celebrate Mary's life at 1 p.m. with Fr. David S. Peles officiating. Please come to pay your respects. Committal, Richland Cemetery, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, in the Marron family lot. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made in Mary's name to The ARC (<https://thearc.org/get-involved/ways-give/>). The family will host a small local gathering following the service. Online condolences may be posted at www.wharrisfuneralhome.com.

Obituary

Obituary



Janet Haxton Holmes passed away September 4, 2022 due to complications from brain cancer. She is survived by her brother Flynn, sister Sherry Lyn, son Tristan, daughter Tara, and grandson Taylor. A graduate from San Francisco State University, Janet lived overseas in France, Switzerland, and several African countries. She was a long-time resident of Fairfax County where she worked for over 15 years at George Mason University. A private family memorial will be held in the future. Any contributions to her memory can be made to the Glioblastoma Foundation.

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Driver Strikes Lorton Pedestrian

A 52-year-old woman died this morning after being struck crossing Lorton Station Boulevard.

Detectives from our Crash Reconstruction Unit continue to investigate the fatal crash that occurred at 4:58 p.m. yesterday in the area of Lorton Station Boulevard and Old Beech Court in Lorton. Preliminarily, detectives determined Helen Bahta Oukubazghi of Lorton was crossing Lorton Station Boulevard near Old Beech Court. The driver of a black 2015 Chevrolet Equinox was traveling south on Lorton Station Boulevard and struck Oukubazghi in the roadway. The driver of the Chevrolet left the scene but re-

turned a short while later, upon observing the damage to the vehicle. Oukubazghi was taken to the hospital with injuries considered life threatening and succumbed to her injuries early this morning.

Detectives from our Crash Reconstruction Unit will present details of the investigation to the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney for possible charges. Preliminarily, alcohol and speed do not appear to be factors in the crash.

Anyone with information about this crash is asked to contact our Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone - 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477).

NAACP Recognizes NOVA Park's Paul Gilbert

FROM PAGE 15

ton, Fairfax, and Loudoun counties, tell the story of Jim Crow era laws which discriminated against people of color who rode the Washington & Old Dominion railroad in the first half of the 20th century. Also, in February, NOVA Parks dedicated a site at Bull Run Marina in the Clifton area that had been a graveyard for enslaved people.

In June, the Fairfax County Branch of NAACP and NOVA Parks partnered to host the first annual Juneteenth event at Bull Run Regional Park in Centreville. Bull Run Regional Park is on land once part of the 18th century Leo Plantation, owned by Robert Carter III. After a religious experience, Carter built a church that was open to both Black and white residents of the area. He later emancipated over 500 enslaved people and allowed them to own land. Carter's actions resulted in a thriving freedmen's community at Bull Run 70 years before the Civil War and Emancipation Proclamation. A descendant of one of those freed, Alfred Harris, earned his law degree from Howard University, shortly after the Civil War. He went on to serve on the Alexandria City Council; and later moved to Petersburg where he became a State Delegate. Delegate Harris championed the bill that created the first University

open to people of color in Virginia.

These and other related stories on display for visitors at Bull Run Regional Park were researched by NOVA Parks historian, Paul McCray, a Parks employee with 40 years of service. Through McCray's work on the interpretive signs, visitors can follow a trail that leads to the site of the former Bull Run Baptist Church, which was created by Carter, and its cemetery. NOVA Parks has discovered over 90, mostly unmarked, graves in this area using ground penetrating radar. During the Juneteenth event and the unveiling of these newly discovered stories, the accomplishments of Del. Alfred Harris were celebrated with resolutions from the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, City of Alexandria City Council, and Virginia House of Delegates.

The result of the NAACP/NOVA Parks' partnership has been increased public awareness of the contributions of people of color to area history, and a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion in park programs, to engage the various cultures and communities that make up Northern Virginia and create a sense of belonging for all.

Visit novaparks.com/News for more information about Northern Virginia's inclusive history being shared in parks.

Wheelchair Athletes

FROM PAGE 5

sports he participates in. "I feel it really helps me with multiple sports, I also play basketball at my community in Maryland," he said.

It turns out there are many things everyone can do together, and that was a big point at the conference. Try one sport, and it opens the door to other things that can be done with a wheelchair. Larry Toler also plays tennis, but he started playing wheelchair basketball at age 17. He might try skiing soon. "I have a disability, but now I have an ability," he said.

Ray Petty is a technical assistance coordinator with the Great Plains ADA Center in the midwest. He worked with the Kansas City Royals baseball team and now is part of their wheelchair softball team. Taking part in that opened doors for him. Now he plays pickleball too.

"It's a life changing thing," he said.

Speakers and Sports

The main ADA conference was in the nearby Hilton, but the event at St. James was a pre-conference gathering where they could have room, speakers and sports. The St. James welcomed the group. They had the space and the sports attitude that conveyed to all. There were smiles and high fives everywhere.

Dr. Anjali Forber-Pratt was the keynote speaker and she is a two-time Paralympian and disability activist. She won her medals in wheelchair racing, and in 2020, the American Psychological Association awarded her the Citizen Psychologist Award for Advancing Disability as a Human Rights and Social Justice Issue.

The Rails to Trails Conservancy was there as well and promoted hiking with the wheelchair. There are area trails that are suited for this, and that includes the W&OD Trail, Holmes Run in Alexandria and the Mount Vernon Trail along the river.

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

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

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The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk.

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

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

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

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Twinkle Lourie. A Sad Tail.



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

May she rest in peace. Our 10-year-old, white domestic short haired cat was euthanized on Thurs., Sept 29. A month or so prior, after not eating for a few days, we took her to the emergency veterinarian near our home. (As you may or may not know, it's nearly impossible to get a time-sensitive appointment with a veterinarian. They're all either too busy or short-staffed and moreover, many are not even taking new clients. And this often applies to the emergency veterinarians as well.) And so, it was for Twinkle. Fortunately, we were existing clients. Otherwise, we would have been turned away, as the sign posted on their day informed, referring us to other emergency veterinary practices, all of which were hours away and who were totally unfamiliar to us and with our animals. Twinkle was admitted that first day and the evaluating process began. A few days and a few thousand dollars later, we received the very distressing news: cancer. Twinkle had a tumor near her heart. Her prognosis was not very encouraging.

Nevertheless, we took her home and for the next week or so and followed the pill regimen as directed. For a few days, there was marginal improvement, but soon thereafter, Twinkle reverted to her non-eating ways, even though she was on an appetite stimulant and was receiving steroids as well to treat her tumor. (Steroids have a side effect of increasing appetite.) If this combination didn't cause Twinkle to improve/eat, we were advised that Twinkle's survival was very much in doubt and perhaps we might be considering her quality of life at that point. We couldn't believe what we were hearing. It all happened so fast, and so unexpectedly. The three of us returned home and then began to organize and plan for Twinkle's next week - or less.

After another few days of Twinkle's continued decline at home despite following doctor's orders - and then another interim visit to the emergency vet. for a B-12 shot (to try again to boost her responses which ended up not helping), we decided that this situation/deterioration wasn't fair to Twinkle and so we made the difficult decision to end her suffering. I spent the last few hours of her life lying in bed with her reassuring and comforting her as best I could. Eventually, Dina came upstairs and suggested that it was probably time to go; that the waiting was too difficult, and that somehow, we needed to move forward, for all our benefits, especially Twinkle's.

We called ahead to the emergency veterinarian to let them know our decision and that we were on our way and that we lived five minutes away. Sure enough, they were ready for our arrival and quickly escorted all of us into an examining room. The vet. was kind and caring and couldn't have been nicer as she explained the process to us. Dina and I both held Twinkle as the vet injected the two medicines that would gently put her to sleep and ultimately end her life. When it was over, the vet. asked if we'd like some time alone with Twinkle, which of course we said we would. After we got our bearings and the vet. returned, she took Twinkle away to "prepare" her. At that point, we went back out to the waiting room, sat down, and waited to take Twinkle home.

Within 15 minutes or so, the vet. came out carrying a cardboard box - with Twinkle inside. It had her name on it and some pretty artwork as well. We took her home and kept her in the house that first night. We didn't want to leave her alone outside or in the car. We wanted her to spend her last night in the house with us. During that night, we decided when and where to bury her.

Twinkle was buried the next day on our property, "Beliacres" next to her two older siblings, Biscuit and "Chino" who preceded her in death. They're all buried close to the house so we can visit them often, which we do. Their graves are marked with stones. I miss Twinkle terribly. She had bonded with me alone as white cats do, according to an article Dina had read; and soon we were inseparable; during the day in my home office and at night, in bed. She was my cat, just as "Chino" (her brother) had been.

The last three weeks have been difficult for me. I feel cheated by her premature death. The loss is palpable. Something (Twinkle) is most definitely missing from my life.

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

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