

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

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## Plan Your Escape

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Dominic, 4, of McLean, tries to hear a heartbeat with a little help from R. Fogelson at McLean Volunteer Fire Department's open house.

## NAACP Award for Parks

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## Real Estate Market Slows

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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	FLEWIS CHURCH RD/ 777	STYPES BRANCH	9/15/2022
ROANOKE	13392	1662	MCVITTY RD/ 1662	MUDLICK 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](mailto: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.*

## HALLOWEEN



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

### 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](http://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 start with a performance of Dracula followed by an indoor/outdoor dance party with all the food and drinks that a ghoul 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 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

## SoberRide for Halloween

A local nonprofit organization will make free safe rides available to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area during this Halloween weekend.

Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) the, 2022 Halloween SoberRide program will be in operation from 4 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 29 through 4 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 30 as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk period.

During this twelve-hour period, area residents age 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones, then enter the SoberRide code in the app's "Payment" tab (under the "Add Lyft Pass" option) to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's 2022 Halloween SoberRide promo code will be posted at 3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 29 on [www.SoberRide.com](http://www.SoberRide.com).

"Halloween is of particular concern for younger drivers as 2020 NHTSA data shows that 68-percent of drunk driving deaths on U.S. roadways during the fall holiday involve drivers ages 21 to 34."

During the 2021 Halloween period, 700 (777) persons in the Washington-metropolitan area used WRAP's SoberRide program rather than possibly driving home impaired. The charity also offers its SoberRide program on St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Independence Day and the winter holidays. Since 1991, WRAP's SoberRide program has provided 82,735 free safe rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

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Fire Chief Frank Smith, volunteer president and paramedic at Station #12



Dominic, 4, of McLean, tries to hear a heartbeat with a little help from R. Fogelson.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

## FCFRD Supports National Fire Safety Campaign

### Open houses held at local stations.

MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

In a fire, seconds can be the difference between a successful escape and a tragic outcome. With modern combustibles and synthetics, fires burn faster than ever, and people may have less than two minutes to escape or, if necessary, seek shelter in place.

On Saturday, Oct. 15, the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department celebrated the 100th anniversary of Fire Prevention Week alongside the National Fire Protection Association. The 2022 campaign, “Fire Won’t Wait. Plan Your Escape,” aims to educate everyone. This meant teaching not only children but caretakers, older adults, and those with disabilities about fire and the steps they can take to protect themselves and others, whether in their homes, workplaces, businesses, or public spaces.

The county’s thirty-nine fire stations and the City of Fairfax’s two fire stations opened their doors to the community. Fairfax County Fire and Rescue is one of only three accredited agencies worldwide holding an ISO 1 rating and serving a population of over one million people. “We are focused on meeting the needs of our community,” said Fire Chief John S. Butler in the online Chief’s Message. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire-ems/fcmessage>

[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

#### Station #1 McLean Volunteer Fire Department

A short eight miles from Station #12 is the McLean Volunteer Fire Department Station #1. As part of the county’s department, they invited the community to their Open House to tour the ambulance, meet firefighters, EMTs, and paramedics, and even spray a firehose. According to John Hootman, volunteer chief of the McLean Volunteer Fire Department, Station #1 has a Tower Ladder 401 with a bucket on top instead of a straight stick ladder truck because of the area it serves.

“There’s a number of unique things around here (in McLean), especially if you go down the George Washington Parkway where we can do low-angle rescues,” Hootman said. “Because we have the bucket out front, that gives us lots of options to safely rescue folks from cars that have gone off and other accidents.”

According to Hootman, Station #1 is “in a nice middle ground.” There are some mid-rise buildings, such as the Palladium, seven stories or less, as opposed to the high-rise buildings at Tysons. “We can use the bucket to do all sorts of different things, such as bringing patients off the roofs of buildings,” said Hootman.

SEE OPEN HOUSES, PAGE 5



McLean’s Tower 401 with a bucket on the front.



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



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

# 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 leader-

ship, 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 region 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 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, 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 Febru-

ary, 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](http://novaparks.com/News) for more information about Northern Virginia's inclusive history being shared in parks.

## BULLETIN BOARD

### FREE HALLOWEEN WEEK-END LYFT RIDES

Free safe rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area during this Halloween weekend. Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program

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

(WRAP) the, 2022 Halloween SoberRide program will be in operation from 4 p.m. on Saturday, October 29th and operate until 4 a.m. on Sunday, October 30th as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk period.

During this 12-hour period, area residents age 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones, then enter the SoberRide code in the app's "Payment" tab (under the "Add Lyft Pass" option) to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transpor-

tation home. WRAP's 2022 Halloween SoberRide promo code will be posted at 3 p.m. on Saturday, October 29 on [www.SoberRide.com](http://www.SoberRide.com).

**SUNDAY/NOV. 6**  
"The Oldest Hatred; Fighting Back."

11 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Via Zoom. The Generations After, an organization primarily comprised of children of Holocaust survivors, as well as survivors, and grandchildren of survivors, will present a program on antisemitism. "The Oldest Hatred; Fighting Back" will feature

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 6



John Hootman, volunteer chief, McLean VFD, and staff at Station #1

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Engine 401 pulls into the station after a call.

# Open Houses Held at Local Stations

FROM PAGE 3

Hootman said that all ambulances in the county have stair chairs. They have belted treads that allow the operator to glide the patient down the stairs, relieving strain on the EMS personnel's backs. The combination of tools enables a more efficient approach to assist community members. "All those tools come together and make it much more effective," Hootman said.

Hootman addressed high rise buildings, and said that very modern fire alarm systems, such as those installed in new buildings with more than six stories, will alert occupants to shelter in place or evacuate. National building codes require automated HVAC systems for more recent structures to either shut down or pressurize stairwells to keep smoke out, allowing people to evacuate via the stairs. In addition, alarm systems may activate on a subset of floors but not the entire structure. That is because if someone is below the fire, it may not be necessary to evacuate them first.

"You want to get the people from the most affected area out first. If you are well above it, that might not be as big of a problem because of the fire ratings of the stairwells and things like that. It behooves an individual in a high rise to understand where they are living and working," said Hootman.

"The theme for this year is to plan your escape. Know multiple ways out of your building, how your building works, and the expectations, especially in a work setting."

Fairfax County residents can get free battery-powered smoke alarms by contacting their local Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department (FRD) station, [www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

calling 703-246-3801, or emailing [fire.smokealarms@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:fire.smokealarms@fairfaxcounty.gov).

## Station #12, Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department

To achieve its responsibility, each station has different equipment based on factors such as its community's terrain, access to public water, types of roads, and building heights. According to Fire Chief Frank Smith, volunteer president and paramedic, the mission at Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Station #12 Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department is broader and slightly different than other stations.

"We don't have fire hydrants, so we have tankers. We take our water to a fire, for example. We also spend a lot of time supporting the topography of the area. We have four-wheel-drive vehicles and brush trucks for fighting smaller fires, usually in off-road areas. Even our ambulances are four-wheel-drive," Smith said. He added that a snow plow is part of their equipment because they plow their way to patients on the back roads of Great Falls.

Because Great Falls is adjacent to Maryland's Potomac River, Station #12 often responds to areas of the river around Great Falls along with the Montgomery County, Maryland departments. Station #12 uses its boats to take people off the rocks or if they go down to a place where they cannot come back up. Along Mather Gorge, the water can look calm, tempting waders pulling them into currents below the surface.

"Yes; the river belongs to Maryland, but we work pretty well with them on being able to get down there. It's all about the person in the river, not who's got the territory," Smith said.

# Starry Nights

Waterfront Cabin on 3 Acre Spring Fed Lake



Enjoy the quiet from the dock or from the Old Town kayak in the spring fed water

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# Slowing Real Estate Market

Local markets are experiencing declines in housing sales, according to the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors.

September continued the recent trend with a steep decline in housing sales, a result of rising interest rates, seasonal demand, and limited inventory. These conditions did not prevent home prices from going up, with the median cost climbing 4.1% from last year, according to the Northern Virginia Association of Realtors (NVAR).

“Market forces are at work, resulting in fewer transactions. However, demand for homes in the DC-area is causing prices to still slowly rise, keeping sellers in charge but giving buyers a little more of a voice,” Thai-Hung Nguyen, NVAR Secretary/Treasurer, and Realtor, Better Homes & Gardens Real Estate Premier.

The number of closed sales in September 2022 was 1,442 units, down 30% compared to September 2021 and down 17.7% compared to August 2022. The number of closed sales is also down compared to pre-pandemic September 2019, when there were 1,578 closed sales.

The time it took to sell a home also increased. The average days on the market in September 2022 was 25 days, up 19.1% compared to September 2021 when it was 21 days. Although it took longer, supply was still low.

The month’s supply of inventory for September 2022 was 1.2 months, up slightly from August 2022 when the month’s supply was 1.1 months but down 3.1% from September 2021. It remains a seller’s market, but homebuyers have a little more power.

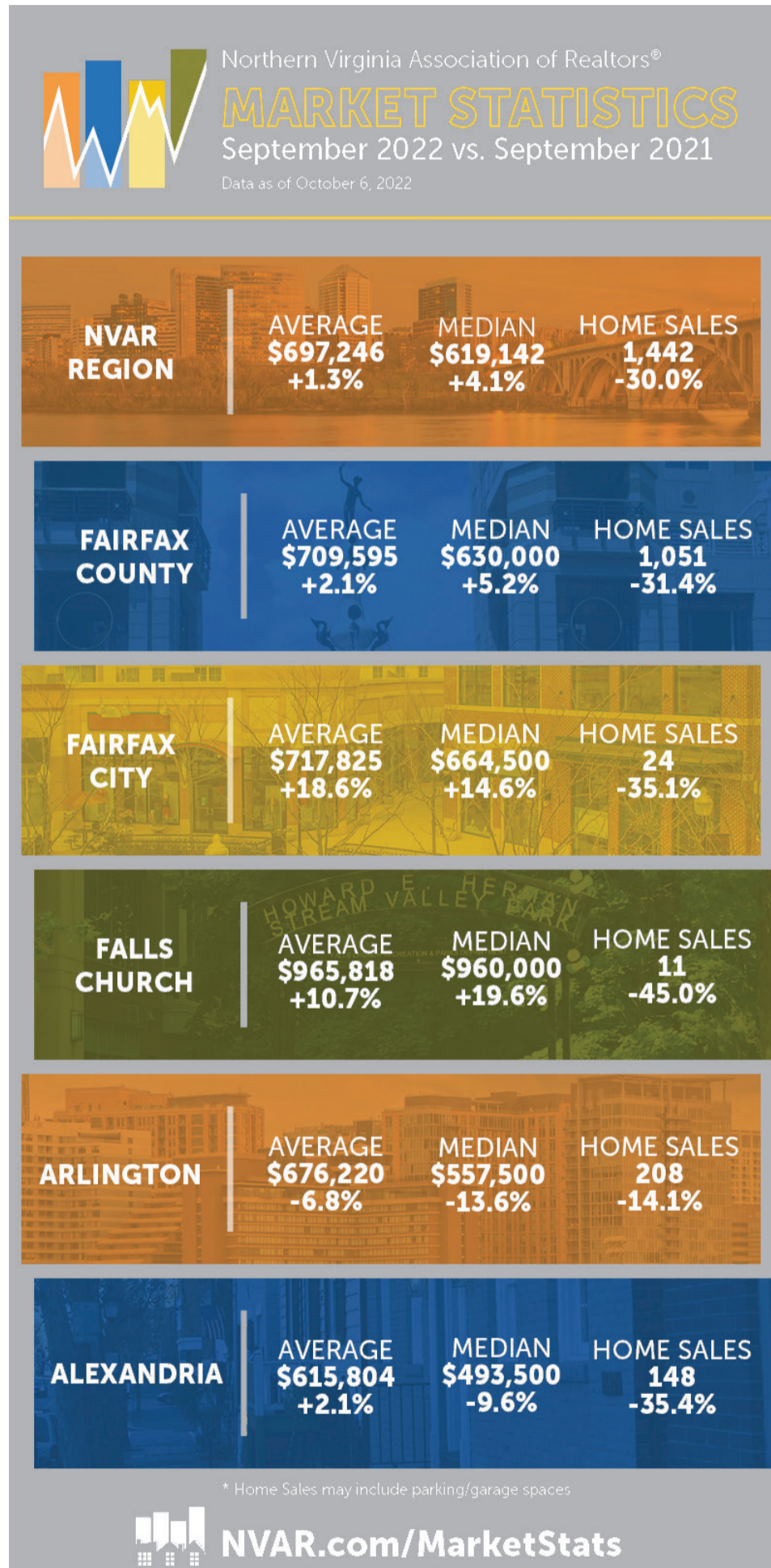
Home prices — along with interest rates — continued to climb, meaning buyers paid more for the purchase and the financing. The median sold price for a home in September 2022 was \$619,142, up 4.1% compared to September 2021. This is also a significant increase compared to the (pre-pandemic) September 2019 median sold price of \$510,000. However, it was less than August’s median price of \$627,500.

“Northern Virginia’s bustling economy due to tech and government drive demand for housing. Interest rates are making it more expensive to buy homes, but lack of available product is really tempering growth and driving up prices. For both buyers and sellers, having a Realtor will help ensure a smoother process with the best outcome in this changing and unique market,” said NVAR CEO Ryan McLaughlin.

The Northern Virginia Association of Realtors reports on home sales activity for Fairfax and Arlington counties, the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church and the towns of Vienna, Herndon and Clifton. Below is August 2022 regional home sales compared to August 2021 for Northern Virginia with data derived from Bright MLS as of Oct. 1, 2022 (total sales and listings may not include garage/parking spaces):

The sold volume in September 2022 was \$1,015,036,083, down 28.3% compared to September 2021.

The average sold price for a home in Sep-



tember 2022 was \$697,246, up 1.3% from the previous September and significantly more than September 2019 (pre-pandemic), when the average sold price was \$600,398.

The number of active listings in September 2022 was 2,366, down 16.57% from

September 2021.

September pending sales, an indication of future activity, were 1,386, down 34.4% compared to last year.

Read more about the NVAR region housing market at [NVAR.com/public](http://NVAR.com/public)

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

guest speakers Mark Weitzman and Jonah Cohen. Mark Weitzman is Chief Operation Officer of the World Jewish Restitution Organization. He previously served as Director of Government Affairs for the Simon Wiesenthal Center. Weitzman spearheaded the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s (IHRA) 2016 adoption of the Working Definition of Antisemitism. Cohen is the director of communications for the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA). His articles on Jews, Israel, and human rights have appeared in numerous publications. Following the program, The Generations after will hold their annual meeting and elections, at approximately 12:15 PM. To register for the program and/or the annual meeting, copy this link: [The Oldest Hatred; Fighting Back, Nov 6, 11 AM ET + Annual Meeting/Elections, 12:15 PM | Cognito Forms](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-oldest-hatred-fighting-back-nov-6-11-am-et-annual-meeting-elections-12-15-pm-cognito-forms)

### SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax) or [www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html](http://www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html).

The Shepherd’s Center of Northern Virginia Caregivers’ Support Group takes place the first and third Tuesdays of each month, 10-11:30 a.m. via Zoom. This group is for caregivers of family members with dementia. Meetings are gently facilitated. For more information and to get the Zoom link, contact Jack Tarr at [jtarr5@verizon.net](mailto:jtarr5@verizon.net) or 703-821-6838.

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, [www.havenofnova.org](http://www.havenofnova.org) or [havenofnova@verizon.net](mailto:havenofnova@verizon.net).  
Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group Meets from 1:30-3 p.m. the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW. 703-532-4892.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League’s programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email [info@alnv.org](mailto:info@alnv.org), or visit [www.alnv.org](http://www.alnv.org).

Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed. Help assist the Department of Family Services’ BeFriendA-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil at [Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov) or 703-324-4547.

Operation Paws for Homes, a Virginia based 501(c)(3) organization seeks volunteers, especially to foster dogs. See [www.ophrescue.org](http://www.ophrescue.org) for information and all volunteer opportunities.

## CAPPIES REVIEW



PHOTO BY BLAKE TIPPENS

Katie Murchison, left and Brady Kastner

# 'The Man Who Came to Dinner' at Langley High

BY MCKENZIE PHELAN  
QUINCE ORCHARD HIGH SCHOOL

What do a Hollywood star, a Broadway composer, two penguins, and an Egyptian sarcophagus have in common? They all ended up at the Stanley household for Christmas in Langley High School's production of "The Man Who Came to Dinner."

"The Man Who Came to Dinner" was written by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart, and opened on Broadway in 1939, with multiple revivals since in both New York and London. The farcical comedy follows Sheridan Whiteside, an obnoxious radio personality, as he spends a month as the guest of the Stanley family after slipping on a patch of ice outside the front door. The Stanleys, and the rest of their small Ohio town, must attempt to cope with "Sherry's" outrageous demands as the most wonderful time of the year quickly proves to be anything but.

The show's central figure was the man himself, Mr. Whiteside, played by Conor Farah. Farah kept the audience chuckling through all three acts with his deadpan delivery and excellent comic timing, developing a delightfully disagreeable character. Despite his use of a wheelchair for the majority of the play, Farah's performance incorporated plenty of movement, often to great comedic effect. His interactions with his secretary, Maggie Cutler (the brilliant Sarah Hilton), were laden with both sardonic wit and, towards the end of the play, genuine tenderness. Hilton was a star in her own right, balancing bitter cynicism with hopeless romance while never losing her sense of professionalism. Poised mannerisms and a consistent transatlantic accent further elevated Hilton's refined performance.

Also of note was Ethan Bhatia as Bert

Jefferson: a newspaper man, aspiring playwright, and Maggie's beau. Bhatia approached the role with earnestness and good-natured humor, bringing both sensibility and levity to his scenes.

And rounding out the guest list were Scarlett Spano and Brady Kastner as Lorraine Sheldon and Banjo, two larger-than-life Hollywood personalities whom Whiteside employs in his ridiculous schemes. Both Spano and Kastner displayed remarkable stage presence and were unafraid to make bold choices for their characters, infusing them with an uproarious sense of flamboyance and fun.

The show's comfortably cluttered set (designed by Killian Korchnak, Victoria Scarpa, Mo Rees, and Talia-Rose Dioro) immediately transported audiences in the 1930s. Patterned wallpaper and a grand staircase added depth to the Stanley's front room, and pine trees visible just outside the windows were the perfect touch to create a fully immersive world onstage. The set's festive color scheme of reds, greens, and creams was also present in the show's costumes (created by Logan Dooley, Evey Burnette, Hannah Whalen, and Lorna Evans), which included authentic midcentury pieces.

Costume changes, as well as shifts in hair and makeup (Lily Bowers, Ashraya Suri, Jude Quol, and Anna Cox), were used throughout the show to reflect character development, such as Maggie's beginning to style her hair down as she falls in love with Bert.

Though most high schools may be daunted by the idea of putting on a three-act farce, Langley's theatre department rose to the challenge, and created a highly entertaining production. With devoted actors and a talented crew, "The Man Who Came to Dinner" is an unforgettable romp filled with plenty of Christmas cheer.

Join us for virtual and in-person information sessions in October, November, December, and January!



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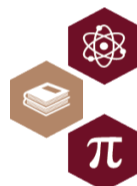


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# ENTERTAINMENT



The Peking Acrobats will appear at The Alden Theater in McLean on Sunday, Oct. 23, 2022.



The Vienna Theatre Company will present "Doubt: A Parable" Oct. 21-Nov. 5 in Vienna.

## NOW THRU OCT. 30

Fall Festival. At Reston Farm Garden Market, 10800 Baron Cameron Ave., Reston. The festival will run Friday, Saturday and Sundays September 24 to October 30 with five 90 minute online ticketed sessions. Fall Festival hours are Friday through Sunday 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., and 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. \$28 per child and \$7 per

parent, children 2 and under free. For times and tickets visit <https://www.restonfarm.com/fall-fest>.

## OCT. 1-30

"Modern Illuminations – Knowledge and Power" by Rosemarie Forsythe. Presented at Reston Art Gallery and Studios. Rosemarie Forsythe's intricately detailed paintings depicting symbols of knowledge, strength, hope and resilience will be presented in a featured exhibit,

"Modern Illuminations – Knowledge and Power," at Reston Art Gallery and Studios (RAGS) from October 1 until October 30. Everyone is invited to meet Forsythe when she is at the gallery for the show's opening weekend, October 1 and 2.

## OCT. 6-27

Sights and Sounds of Early Herndon. At Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. The Herndon

Historical Society, in collaboration with Arts Herndon, is pleased to announce a unique exhibition that will include many never seen before unique photos of the town of Herndon from the 1880-1930 time period. The exhibit will also include artifacts from Herndon's past. Exhibition visitors will experience a special view of early Herndon life, how our forefathers and families lived and worked. Visitors are invited to attend a free reception at Arts Herndon on October 14 at 6:30 p.m.

[atrecompany.org](http://atrecompany.org)

## SATURDAY/OCT 22

Food Drive for LINK Against Hunger. 10 a.m. to noon. At ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Sponsored by the Herndon-Reston Rotary. Drive up and they will unload your car and take the items to the food pantry and shelter. Needed Items: Diapers in all sizes, especially size 6; Shelf Stable Food (canned soups, rice, legumes, pasta, pasta sauce, canned fruits and vegetables (except green beans); Shelf stable veggies and fruits such as apples, onions, potatoes, etc.; Sanitary napkins, disposable razors, shampoo, deodorant, soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes, toilet paper, cleaning products. Cash and gifts cards (Giant, Target) always accepted.

## SATURDAY/OCT. 22

Harvest Time. 12-3 p.m. At Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Spend a day in the 1800s and explore how local crops were turned into food. Once the farmers harvested their crops, they sold their grain to the miller. Run the sheller and help remove the corn from the cobs. Then, watch as the 20-foot water wheel powers the historic Colvin Run Mill, grinding corn into grits and cornmeal. See the Colvin Run still and learn how corn was also made into whiskey. Call 703-759-2771.

## SUNDAY/OCT. 23

The Peking Acrobats. 2 p.m. At The Alden at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. For the last 32 years, The Peking Acrobats have redefined audience perceptions of Chinese acrobatics. They perform daring maneuvers atop a precarious pagoda of chairs and display their technical prowess at such arts as trick-cycling, precision tumbling, juggling, somersaulting and gymnastics. They push the limits of human ability, defying gravity with amazing displays of contortion, flexibility and control.

## SATURDAY MORNINGS

Summer Programming for Kids. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Reston Museum, 1639

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 9

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# CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 8

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](http://www.restonartgallery.com)

## BULLETIN BOARD

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

## FREE HALLOWEEN WEEKEND LYFT RIDES

Free safe rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area during this Halloween weekend. Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) the, 2022 Halloween SoberRide program will be in operation from 4 p.m. on Saturday, October 29th and operate until 4 a.m. on Sunday, October 30th as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk period.

During this 12-hour period, area residents age 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones, then enter the SoberRide code in the app's "Payment" tab (under the "Add Lyft Pass" option) to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home.

WRAP's 2022 Halloween SoberRide promo code will be posted at 3 p.m. on Saturday, October 29 on [www.SoberRide.com](http://www.SoberRide.com).

## SUNDAY/NOV. 6

"The Oldest Hatred; Fighting Back." 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Via Zoom. The Generations After, an organization primarily comprised of children of Holocaust survivors, as well as survivors, and grandchildren of survivors, will present a program on antisemitism. "The Oldest Hatred; Fighting Back" will feature guest speakers Mark Weitzman and Jonah Cohen. Mark Weitzman is Chief Operation Officer of the World Jewish Restitution Organization. He previously served as Director of Government Affairs for the Simon Wiesenthal Center. Weitzman spearheaded the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) 2016 adoption of the Working Definition of Antisemitism. Cohen is the director of communications for the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting and Analysis (CAMERA). His articles on Jews, Israel, and human rights have appeared in numerous publications. Following the program, The Generations after will hold their annual meeting and elections, at approximately 12:15 PM. To register for the program and/or the annual meeting, copy this link:

The Oldest Hatred; Fighting Back, Nov [www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

## SATURDAYS UNTIL DECEMBER

The Reston Farmers Market (sponsored by the Fairfax Co. Park Authority) will take place at Lake Anne Village in Reston 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 Nov. 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 pro-

duced 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 Saturdays, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., 778 Walker Road, Great Falls. For vendors and weekly highlights see <https://www.greatfallsfarmersmarket.org/>

6, 11 AM ET + Annual Meeting/Elections, 12:15 PM | Cognito Forms

## SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax) or [www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html](http://www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html).

The Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia Caregivers' Support Group takes place the first and third Tuesdays of each month, 10-11:30 a.m. via Zoom. This group is for caregivers of family members with dementia. Meetings are gently facilitated. For more information and to get the Zoom link, contact Jack Tarr at [jtarr5@verizon.net](mailto:jtarr5@verizon.net) or 703-821-6838.

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, [www.havenofnova.org](http://www.havenofnova.org) or [havenofnova@verizon.net](mailto:havenofnova@verizon.net).

Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group Meets from 1:30-3 p.m. the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW. 703-532-4892.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email [info@alnv.org](mailto:info@alnv.org), or visit [www.alnv.org](http://www.alnv.org).

Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed. Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriendA-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil at [Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov) or 703-324-4547.

Operation Paws for Homes, a Virginia based 501(c)(3) organization seeks

volunteers, especially to foster dogs. See [www.ophrescue.org](http://www.ophrescue.org) for information and all volunteer opportunities.

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at [chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org) or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit [www.rsvpnova.org](http://www.rsvpnova.org).

Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean continues to have an urgent need for new volunteers to help area senior citizens get to and from their medical and therapy appointments. To find out more about the Shepherd's Center and how you can volunteer to provide transportation and other services, call the Center at 703-506-2199 or e-mail the Center at [info@scmafc.org](mailto:info@scmafc.org). The Center's website is [www.scmafc.org](http://www.scmafc.org).

Master Gardener Training. The Fairfax County Master Gardener Association offers plant clinics, home turf training or speakers for homeowner's meetings. Fees vary. Visit [fairfaxgardening.org](http://fairfaxgardening.org) or call MG Help Desk at 703-324-8556 for more.

Volunteers Needed. PRS is looking for empathetic and caring volunteers to make phone calls to older adults who may be feeling socially isolated. The commitment is one 3-hour shift per week for one year. Located in Arlington. Ages 21 & up. Intensive training provided. Learn more and apply: [prsinc.org/caring-volunteering/](mailto:prsinc.org/caring-volunteering/). Questions? Email [lpadgett@prsinc.org](mailto:lpadgett@prsinc.org).

The Northern Virginia Long Term Care Ombudsman Program needs volunteer advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Contact Lisa Callahan at 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email [Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov). Also visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/ltcombudsman/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/ltcombudsman/).

Fairfax County needs volunteers to drive older adults to medical appointments and wellness programs. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults) and click on Volunteer Solutions.

# Here's What's Happening at MCC!



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OCT  
23

MCC Governing Board  
Wednesday, Oct. 26, 6:30 p.m.

All Governing Board meetings  
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OCT  
26

Performing Arts Documentary  
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OCT  
27

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Saturday, Oct. 29, 5-10 p.m.

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OCT  
29

Old Firehouse Teacher Workday Trip

OFC Thrills & Chills Day  
Monday, Oct. 31, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.

\$60/\$50 MCC district residents

OCT  
31



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[www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org)

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# Don't Move Wood: Limit the Spread of Invasive Pests

**A**s the days turn cooler and shorter, many Virginians are using firewood to keep warm and spend quality time with friends and family.

While seemingly harmless, moving firewood can enable the easy movement of destructive forest and agricultural pests. When firewood is moved from one area to another, the invasive emerald ash borer, spongy moth, Asian longhorned beetle, and spotted lanternfly often "hitchhike" to destroy crops, infect more trees and sometimes even entire forests.

Since it's difficult to determine if firewood is infested, the best option to keep Virginia's forests and crops safe is to buy firewood where you plan to burn it. A general rule is to get firewood that's at least local to the county where it'll be used. If you heat your home with firewood, harvest it locally or purchase it from a reputable dealer in compliance with state and regional firewood regulations.

"Invasive insects and disease are a critical threat to our forests," said Virginia State Forester Rob Farrell. "When you buy firewood near where you'll burn it, you help protect Virginia's forests while supporting local economies. Simple choices and a little planning can make a big difference in ensuring Virginians will have forests to enjoy for gen-

erations to come."

"Invasive insects and diseases can lurk both inside and on the surface of firewood, so transporting firewood can allow potentially destructive and non-native organisms to move hundreds of miles and start infestations in new places," said Joseph Guthrie, Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. "When traveling from one location to another, never transport firewood to your destination unless it is heat-treated and certified."

Going camping? Make plans to buy firewood when you get there or gather it on-site (if permitted). If you have leftover firewood, leave it behind when you go. Packaged heat-treated (not kiln-dried) firewood, which will have a seal of certification from the U.S. Department of Agriculture or a state agency is also a safe option. Certified heat-treated firewood may be moved as long as it remains sealed. Once the packaging has been opened, it will attract insects and should not be moved.

To find local firewood dealers across Virginia, visit Firewoodscout.org. For more information on invasive insects in Virginia, visit the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services website. For more information about protecting trees from tree-killing insects, visit <https://www.dontmovefirewood.org>

## Future of Aging

**A**ttend Town Hall Meetings on SHAPE the Future of Aging – Oct. 31, Nov. 1, 4 and 10

Fairfax County, together with the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church, is collecting input to learn more about the aging experience in our area to plan for a more aging-friendly community. Input will be collected during town hall meetings to inform the SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan, a strategic plan for aging services. Town hall meetings will be held Oct. 31, Nov. 1, Nov. 4 and Nov. 10. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/older-adult-survey>

### Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults

Fairfax County, together with the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church, continues to collect input to learn more about the aging experience in our area to plan for a more aging-friendly community.

The Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults (CASOA) was sent to a scientifically random sample of adults ages 50 and older in early 2022.

### SHAPE the Future of Aging Town Halls

The plan includes collecting additional

input from the community. If you would like to attend an upcoming town hall meeting, please register:

Monday, Oct. 31, 2022 - Register 10 to 11:30 a.m.  
Reston Community Center - Rooms 1, 2, 3 & 4

2310 Colts Neck Road  
Reston, VA 20191  
Tuesday, Nov. 1, 2022 - Register 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Hybla Valley Community Center - Gymnasium  
7950 Audubon Avenue  
Alexandria, VA, 22306

Friday, Nov. 4, 2022 - Register 1:30 to 3 p.m.  
Fairfax County Government Center - Room 120-C

12000 Government Center Pkwy  
Fairfax, VA 22035  
Thursday, Nov. 10, 2022 - Register 1:30 to 3 p.m.

Annandale Heritage Center – Rooms A & B  
7611 Little River Turnpike  
Annandale, VA 22003

Your input from the town hall meetings will be used to help inform the SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan, a strategic plan for aging services.

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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 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 of 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us 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.

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 has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

Visit [connectionnewspapers.com](http://connectionnewspapers.com) or <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-keep-your-newspaper-printing>

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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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