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Winter Fun

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Dylan Eaton, 6, of Alexandria and his brother Dominik, 7, at the McLean-Old Firehouse Winter Block Party.

'Tragic, Senseless And Cold-Blooded'

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Win for Supportive Housing in Fairfax City

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The market is MOVING with JD and Ed!

Winter Block Party by Old Firehouse at MCC

First big event for the new executive director of MCC.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On Saturday, Jan. 7, hundreds of families from McLean and beyond attended the second annual Old Firehouse Winter Block Party held at the McLean Community Center.

"We're delighted to be able to host this event for the McLean community and to be able to see all ages and all types of people come together to enjoy themselves and connect with each other," said Betsy May-Salazar, the new executive director of the center.

Nothing could be sweeter than watching the children and adults roast 2-inch-tall, silver-dollar-sized marshmallows for s'mores over the numerous propane fire pits.

Ryan Duan, 5, of McLean, said he learned how to make the sticky treats while camping. Nearby, Autumn Reece, 7, of Falls Church, and her father, Adam, roasted a few more. "I love the chocolate



Ryan Duan, 5, of McLean, bites into his gooey s'more, loving the toasted marshmallow and layer of chocolate sandwiched between two pieces of graham cracker while his dad roasts another marshmallow.



Dylan Eaton, 6, of Alexandria and his brother Dominik, 7, at the McLean-Old Firehouse Winter Block Party.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

SEE FIRST BIG, PAGE 14

Fairfax Delegation Hears Residents' Concerns

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Funding for serious mental health issues, affordable and low-income housing, gun measures, \$1 million in funding dedicated to English language learning that is disappearing, and the tragic pedestrian deaths of students making their way to and from Fairfax County Public Schools are just some the concerns brought forward by county individuals and groups to the Fairfax County Delegation to the Virginia General Assembly recently. They highlight and represent the need for action at the Commonwealth level to support making communities safer, healthier, and more economically secure with equitable education for all families and individuals who call Fairfax County home.

The 2023 regular Legislative Session of the Virginia General Assembly begins on Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023 in Richmond. On Saturday, Jan. 7, nearly 45 Fairfax County residents testified at a public hearing before the county's delegation to the General Assembly, held at the County Government Center.

Senate Majority Leader Richard L. Saslaw (D-35) chaired the public hearing. "This is the first time in three years that we've held an in-person meeting of this type, ...and



The Fairfax Delegation to the General Assembly

quite frankly, it's good to be back here again," Saslaw said. He introduced guest speakers Jeffrey C. McKay, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and Rachna Sizemore Heizer, chair of the Fairfax County School Board.

Highlights of Testimony to the Fairfax County

Delegation to the Virginia General Assembly

Chairman McKay focused on three issues. The first was Gov. Youngkin's proposed 1

percent retention bonus for teachers. The proposal would provide state funding of approximately \$4.3 million in FY 2024 while requiring \$15.5 million in local Fairfax County funding.

SEE FAIRFAX DELEGATION, PAGE 15

SCREENSHOT

'Tragic, Senseless and Cold-Blooded'

Glyer murder case in Fairfax sent to grand jury.

By BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Not only did Joshua Danehower pump 10 bullets into Gret Glyer while he slept, said the prosecution last week, but he'd made a written blueprint in advance, outlining exactly how he planned to murder the Fairfax City man.

"Police found the gun that Danehower used, in his apartment in Arlington – and then discovered something even more chilling," said Fairfax County Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Eric Clingan. "Under his desk, in a red binder, was a document containing a step-by-step plan of how he was going to kill Mr. Glyer. He'd originally planned to do it at Glyer's office, a few miles away."

Clingan was presenting his opening statement during Danehower's preliminary hearing, last Wednesday, Jan. 4, in Fairfax County General District Court. Glyer, 32, was killed June 24, 2022. Four days later, police arrested Danehower, 33, charging him with second-degree murder and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony.

Glyer lived on Bolton Village Court with his wife and two young children and was head and founder of nonprofit DonorSee, which raises money for the world's poorest people. But his life was cut short, said Clingan, around 2:50 a.m., "in the deep dark of night. His wife awoke to the sounds of him being shot. This was a tragic, senseless and cold-blooded killing."

During the course of the two-hour court hearing, Clingan called several witnesses whose testimony provided various pieces of the prosecution's case against Danehower. Clingan noted, as well, that Danehower had obtained a concealed-carry permit for his gun two months before the murder.

The prosecutor also entered several items into evidence, including the 9 mm Glock pistol alleged to be the murder weapon, bullet casings from it, Danehower's fingerprints and written plan, Glyer's autopsy photo and



The victim: Gret Glyer

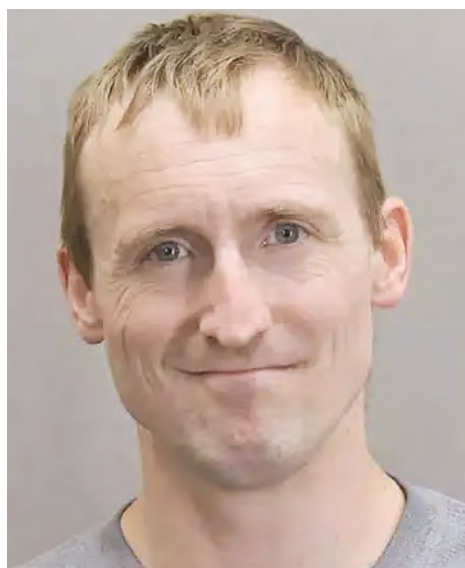
report, and a certificate of analysis stating that the bullets fired into the victim, and their casings that were found, all came from Danehower's gun. At the end, Judge Susan Stoney found probable cause that he did, indeed, commit this crime and sent his case to the next grand jury for possible indictment.

Defense attorney Bryan Kennedy declined to make an opening statement. Then Clingan played the 911 call Glyer's wife made after the incident. Distraught, she said, "I woke up, and my husband has blood coming from his head." The shooting occurred in the Glyers' master bedroom on the first floor, while their children were asleep upstairs.

Fairfax City Police Officer Larry Luna testified that officers arrived at the home around 3 a.m. and discovered the rear door "wide open" but not damaged. Entering the bedroom, he saw Glyer's body with "four, visible, facial gunshot wounds and no breathing" and said the victim didn't respond when he said, "Sir, sir." He then photographed Glyer and observed what he believed were 9 mm cartridge casings but didn't touch anything.

Det. Albert Leightley with the Fairfax City Police Department's Criminal Investigations Division then processed the crime scene and collected evidence from it. He photographed, collected and packaged all 10 cartridge casings and later brought them to the Virginia Department of Forensic Science (DFS) in Manassas for examination.

Leightley also attended Glyer's autopsy, and Clingan later had Glyer's father identify



The suspect: Joshua Danehower

in court an autopsy photo as that of his son. The detective said Danehower became a suspect when "a pastor/friend of Glyer's wife contacted police about him in the investigation's early stages."

He said Arlington police assisted in executing the resulting search warrant at Danehower's apartment. "We found a 9 mm Glock pistol in a dresser drawer," said Leightley. And in court, he opened the box containing the weapon and identified it as the one police had seized during their search.

He also identified the document found in the red binder underneath Danehower's desk. "It's a computer printout, with a map of Fairfax City with some stars on it, and writing saying, 'The Plan,'" testified Leightley.

He didn't go into further detail about what it said; but he noted that he took it to the Department of Forensic Science for testing to discover possible latent fingerprints on it. He also obtained Danehower's fingerprints to be compared against any found on that document, as well as on the weapon and bullet casings.

During Kennedy's cross examination, Leightley said police looked for signs of forced entry, both inside and outside the Glyer home, but found none. "We also found no signs of a struggle," he said. In Danehower's apartment, said Leightley, "We recovered two [firearm-loading] magazines, plus a box of 9 mm ammunition."

Fairfax City Police Det. Joseph Pittman

testified that, after checking with Virginia State Police, they learned that, in April 2022, Danehower bought a 9 mm Glock from Sharpshooters Indoor Range & Pro Shop in Lorton. Pittman and another detective went there, June 27, 2022 – three days after the murder – and obtained records of Danehower's gun purchase, plus the shooting-practice time he'd logged at that range.

The manager then told them Danehower was scheduled to arrive soon for a shooting lesson that day at noon. So, explained Pittman, "I spoke to the instructor, prior to it, and had him place Danehower at the far right end of the range where no one else had been practicing. And I had his photo so I could identify him when he arrived."

After pointing him out in court, Pittman continued. "From the manager's office, I watched Danehower practice with a Glock and then pick up his shell casings and place them on a table," said the detective. "I collected nine of them after he left and gave them to Det. Leightley."

Testifying next was Bronwyn McMaster of the DFS's Firearm and Toolmark section. She'd examined two of the cartridge casings from the crime scene, plus one from the shooting range, and said casings are what's left after an automatic weapon, such as a Glock, is fired.

"Marks transfer from the firearm to the ammunition during the firing process," she said. "They're individual and can be distinguished from one another. I identified these marks and determined that all three casings [I examined] were fired from the same firearm." McMaster further stated that these three casings were all fired from the 9 mm Glock police had given her to examine, as well.

Last, Anneliese Deitz, a forensic scientist with the DFS's Latent Prints section, said she used special lights, cameras and chemicals to capture latent fingerprints on the document from the binder. Then, comparing them to Danehower's fingerprints, she said three of the prints on the document matched his prints.

Judge Stoney then gave her own conclusion. "This court finds the commonwealth has proved probable cause that both crimes were committed by this defendant," she said. "I will certify both of them to the grand jury." If indicted, Danehower will then be tried in Circuit Court.

NEWS BRIEFS

Check Land Use Changes

A series of community meetings for proposed site-specific land use changes in Fairfax County will be hosted this month through early February, as part of the countywide Site-Specific Plan Amendment (SSPA) process. The SSPA process allows anyone to propose a land use change to the Comprehensive Plan, Fairfax County's guiding document for land use and development decisions.

Examples of the types of proposed changes include new residential development, including multifamily, townhouses, single-family detached, and age-restricted housing types, as well as proposals for mixed use, office, and retail where previously only a different kind of development was allowed.

In the fall of 2022, Fairfax County received a total of 75 SSPA proposals, called "nominations," to amend the Comprehensive Plan as part of the 2022-2023 SSPA nomination period. In December 2022, the Board of Supervisors accepted 70 nominations into the

Screening Phase of the SSPA process to allow for community engagement and initial staff review.

Proposed SSPA Nominations by Location

The 70 nominations are located throughout the county's supervisor districts:

Braddock District (3)
Dranesville District (6)
Franconia District (9)
Hunter Mill District (13)
Mason District (5)
Mount Vernon District (9)
Providence District (9)

Springfield District (6)
Sully District (10)

Get Involved

A combination of virtual and in-person community meetings will be held from now through early February. During each meeting, community members will have the opportunity to learn more about the proposed land use changes, provide comments and ask questions. To learn more about the process and participate, Fairfax

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, PAGE 12

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Budgeting Is a Careful Balancing Act

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL

In December, Gov. Glenn Youngkin proposed amendments to the state's two-year budget. While he did include some laudable proposals, he also continued to promote some unacceptable strategies.

Virginia's revenue picture continues to be very positive, but many of our advisors have indicated that our revenue gains could be ephemeral. First, inflation continues to be up and when things cost more, people spend more and employers give raises to keep up with inflation. Since Virginia's General Fund is largely funded by sales and income taxes, our revenues are up compared to some past years.

Support Teachers and Police Officers

The Governor proposed another \$50 million for his "lab school" experiment, an approach that is actually another attempt to divert funds away from our public schools. He also proposed teacher retention bonuses. I believe these funds should be structured as raises that permanently increase teacher pay instead of one-time raises for one year only.

My caucus will try to focus more funding on secondary and post-secondary education, as they try to address the pandemic's adverse impacts and expand educational opportunities for all students. Unfortunately, we have not adequately funded raises for teachers, police or other public employees to keep up with inflation or private sector salary rates. The state

government currently has a record-high 17 percent staff vacancy rate, in part because of non-competitive salaries and the Governor's directive prohibiting any of the state's 106,000 employees from working from home without the personal approval of his chief of staff. Law enforcement staff across the Commonwealth continue to have 10-20 percent vacancy rates. We must pay our public employees better or we will continue to see attrition which erodes services that taxpayers expect.

Most disturbing is the Governor's proposed expenditure of \$50,000 to apparently cover costs associated with some type of new abortion ban. Longstanding Virginia law requires all new felonies or bills that expand existing felonious conduct to be contingent upon appropriating \$50,000 for new prisoner costs and it appears the Governor included this in his budget in anticipation of new abortion restrictions. No legislation restricting women's healthcare decision-making will pass the Virginia Senate. A ban is unacceptable.

No to Corporate Tax Cuts

The Governor proposed \$1 billion in new tax cuts by putting corporate tax rate at 5 percent, a rate that is lower than the 5.75 percent rate paid by individuals. Unlike individuals, most businesses already benefit from deductions, depreciation and other policies that lower the actual amount they pay in taxes. In addition, our economic advisors have cautioned us against making significant changes to how we fund the

state government because some predict a likely recession in the next year. I will fight unsound tax cuts for corporations.

More for Mental Health

The Governor did propose \$230 million of major new spending on behavioral or mental health. The Senate Democratic Caucus proposed a similar measure last session, but it was sacrificed due to the Governor's demand for \$2 billion in tax cuts. I am sure we can find common ground on this important priority as the shortage of mental health services continues to be a crisis. He also proposed \$100 million for Richmond's massive raw sewage problem, a worthwhile proposal that I support. The city needs state help to end this pollution.

Last year's sales tax cut also created a \$700 million hole in our six-year plan for transportation projects that we need to fill.

State budgeting should also recognize potential impacts of the Federal Reserve's actions. Home sales are declining – which fund grantors' taxes - and the economy could begin to slow down as interest rates reduce borrowing and consumer spending. We must prepare and not set ourselves up for shortfalls by baking long-term tax cuts into our budget.

The legislature will convene on Jan. 11 in Richmond. In the coming weeks, I will report on proposals that I will carry this session. Please share your views and suggestions with me at scott@scottsuovell.org

General Assembly Convenes

Abortion, voting rights, gun safety: 2023 session is expected to be extremely busy.

DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM

The General Assembly will convene for its annual session at noon on Wednesday Jan. 11 at the State Capitol in Richmond. General Assembly sessions in the odd-numbered years, like 2023, are scheduled to meet as provided for in the State Constitution for 30 days making it the "short session" that can be extended by the General Assembly for half its scheduled time. The session this year is expected to be extended for 15 days as has every short session been extended since the constitutional provision was enacted in 1971. Even-numbered year sessions, or long sessions, go for 60 days with an extension possible. Most sessions have been extended for a few days.

The intention behind the sessions of different length was to accommodate the biennial budgeting process. A full two-year budget, or biennial budget, was

to be approved in a longer session while the length of the session was to provide time for regular legislation as well. The theory that only amendments to the budget would be considered for the short session has not proven accurate in practice. Both sessions draw thousands of proposed new laws as well as significant amendments to the budget.

The most recent regular or long sessions for the past several years have seen substantial numbers of bills and resolutions passed. In the 2020 regular session 3,911 bills and resolutions were introduced and 2,154 passed; for 2022 the number introduced was 3,143 with 1,735 passed. In the short regular session and special sessions in 2021, 3,201 bills and resolutions were introduced with 1,206 passed.

The 2023 session is likewise expected to be extremely busy. Just divide the number of bills introduced in past years by the number

of legislative days to see the pace at which the legislature acts. There are likely to be dozens of bills related to abortion, from expansion of rights to denial of any right to an abortion. Bills have already been introduced to repeal some of the more progressive measures that were passed in recent years

to make voting easier and to make our communities safer with common sense gun safety laws. Environmental issues will be heavily debated. With all 140 seats in the General Assembly up for election this year there will be many "poster or brochure" campaign efforts including dozens of proposals likely to reduce taxes with no support-

SEE PLUM, PAGE 19

Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

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OPINION

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HARMONIE TADDEO



From left are WFCM staff members: Food Pantry Manager Kristine Hurt, Director of Client Operations & Programs Pamela Montesinos, Food & Volunteer Program Manager Debbie Culbertson, Warehouse Supervisor Tom Needham, Food Pantry Assistant Manager Patrick Mason, Client Services Specialist & Program Manager Dolly Bonta Reavis, and Executive Director Harmonie Taddeo.

WFCM Thanks Community for Donating Food over the Holidays

To the Editor:

As we start 2023, Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM) would like to thank all the partners that supported our Thanksgiving and December holiday food distributions. Together, we were able to provide Thanksgiving groceries for 850 families and December holiday groceries for 550 families.

The groceries included milk, eggs, butter, chicken/turkey, potatoes, carrots, celery, onions, apples, oranges, rolls and boxes of cooking essentials such as vegetable oil, sugar, flour, cake/brownie mix, along with juice and canned vegetables. The December boxes also included some extra "School's Out" food items such as tuna, pasta, and pasta sauce.

The families served included some of the 2,733 individuals that use our client-choice food pantry each month, as well as those referred by local schools, plus Meals on Wheels clients in western Fairfax County. (Nonprofit WFCM is based in Chantilly).

During both distributions, the Fairfax County Health Department provided COVID boosters, vaccinating nearly 40 individuals. In December, Supervisor Kathy Smith (D-Sully) and her team provided over 400 coats purchased through Operation Warm, with donations from Pohanka Automotive, the American Turkish Friendship Assn. and others in the community.

Thank you to all the donors who made our Holiday Food Distributions possible:

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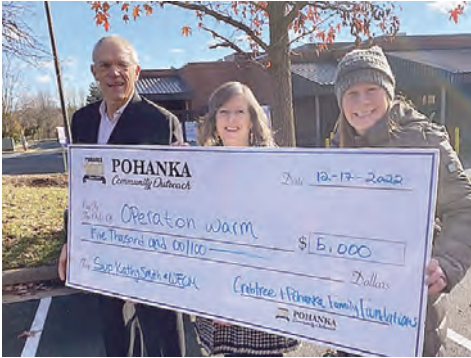
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Lord of Life Lutheran Church
Ox Hill Baptist Church
Pender United Methodist Church (Mary Martha Circle)
Premium Distributors
Pleasant Valley United Methodist Church

St. Andrew Lutheran Church
St. John's Episcopal Church
Sorah Family
Sully District Supervisor's Office (nearly 400 coats via Operation Warm, in partnership with Pohanka Automotive, ATFA and other donors)
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Union Mill Elementary
Westfields Business Owners Assn.
Westfields Marriott
Western Fairfax County Woman's Club
Zion Worship Center.

Sincerely,

Harmonie Taddeo,
WFCM Executive Director



From left are Scott Crabtree, president of Pohanka Automotive Group, Harmonie Taddeo and Kathy Smith.

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Voters Turn Out for Special Election

Voters share what motivated them to cast their ballots in Virginia's 35th House of Delegates.



PHOTO VIA VPAP.ORG
HD35 Democratic nominee Holly Seibold (D)



PHOTO VIA VPAP.ORG
Monique Baroudi (R)

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Voters of Virginia House District 35, Dunn Loring, Oakton, Tysons, and Vienna cast their ballots for delegate in a special election on Tuesday, Jan. 10. Nominees Holly Seibold (D) and Monique Baroudi (R) faced off for the HD35 special election to fill the district's unexpired two-year term ending on Jan. 9, 2024.

The election was called after Del. Mark Keam, D-Fairfax, resigned his House of Delegates seat for District 35 on Sept. 6, 2022, to take a job with the International Trade Administration in the U.S. Department of Commerce as a political appointee by President Joe Biden. The Speaker of the House of Delegates called the special election.

House District 35's boundaries and num-

ber were changed in 2021. It will be known as the 12th District. Both the old and new districts lean Democratic. Elections for next year's General Assembly will be held in November using the new state house and senate districts established by redistricting. Whoever wins this week's special election would have to run again in November to represent the new District 12.

Chief Election Officer Rick Richardson reported at 10 a.m. that 75 voters had cast their ballots at Precinct 214 Vienna #2 at the polling place Vienna Community Center within the first 3 hours the poll was open. Virginia legislators take office on the second Wednesday of January, that is Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Having marked her paper ballot, voter Judee Ann Williams of Vienna helps her four-year-old twin daughters, Vivian (left) and Georgia place her ballot in the optical scan machine. The machine electronically scans the ballot, records the vote, and informs the voter that the ballot has been cast.

VIEWPOINTS

Voters at Precinct 214 Vienna #2 shared what issue or motivation prompted them to vote in the special election for the Virginia House of Delegates, 35th District.

Kayleen Oblack of Vienna: "I think, as a society, I have an opportunity to exercise my right to vote. I take the opportunity seriously."

It's a priority we have to remember to exercise, and I want my girls to make sure my girls know how important it is.

— Judee Ann Williams of Vienna with her four-year-old twin daughters, Vivian and Georgia

Amy Allen of Vienna: "It's important to cast your vote regardless if it is a general, primary or special election because these are the people that would be making decisions for us and our children." (No photo)

"It is important to pay attention to the politics in general (affecting) Vienna."



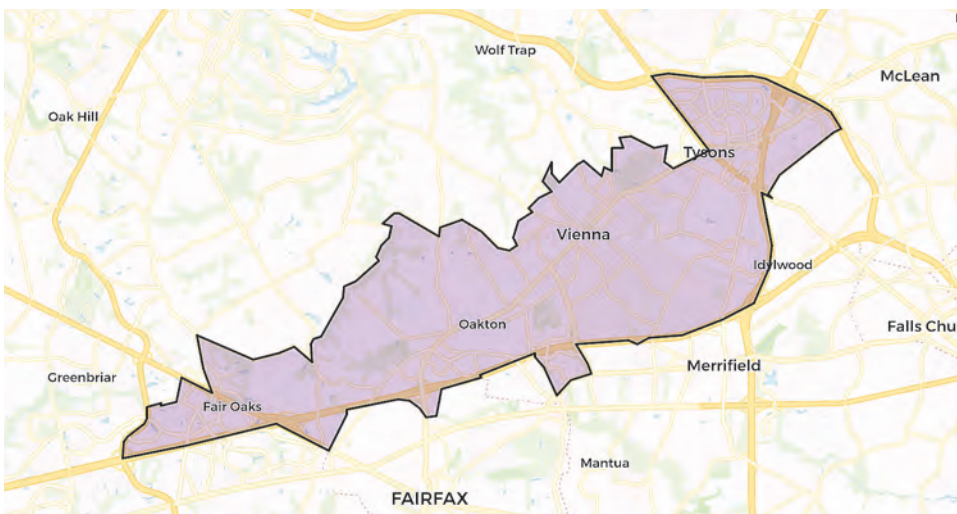
MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION
Kayleen Oblack of Vienna

The Connection Newspapers went to press before the polls closed at 7 p.m. Visit Elections at Connection Newspapers for updates.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Voters prepare to place their ballots in the machine at Precinct 213 Vienna #2



VIA VPAP.ORG

The map shows the voting locations for the HD35 Special Election and the boundary of the district before the 2021 redistricting. Only voters in the 35th House District could vote in the Special Election for Virginia House of Delegates, 35th District.

NEWS

Grant for Blake Lane Park

The Fairfax County Park Foundation has received a \$20,000 grant to support the removal of invasive plants and replace them with new seedlings at Blake Lane Park in Oakton, Virginia. The funding is provided by the Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation's Environmental Education and Stewardship program. The small suburban park – with its forested trail, dog park and fields – was chosen for this program due to the high density of *Ailanthus altissima*, and strong community volunteer support for the Fairfax County Park Authority's (FCPA) Invasive Management Area program (IMA).

Ailanthus, also known as the "Tree-of-Heaven," is a host tree for the spotted lanternfly, a rapidly spreading forest pest, a threat to both forests and agriculture in Virginia. To bolster the efforts to eliminate it from Blake Lane Park, FCPA will expand *Ailanthus* removal to encompass another 1.2 acres in the coming year. Grant funds will go toward purchasing seedlings and replanting this area with shrubs and native trees at a ratio of 100 stems per acre. Community volunteers, through the IMA program, have committed to remove invasive plants, replant native seedlings and work to support the long-term health of the forest restoration. Additionally, a FCPA funding match will provide long-term maintenance and community engagement at the site.

"At Dominion Energy, we're proud to support the Fairfax County Park Foundation with an education and stewardship grant to enhance our local parks," said Peggy Fox, Dominion Energy, media and community relations manager.

The IMA program has been conducting invasive removal and replanting in park land primarily through the work of organized volunteer community members for nearly 17 years. Since the program began, some 16,441 volunteers have donated 111,236 hours to remove invasive plants from 65 park sites.

"The conservation and restoration of our parks and woodlands requires a community wide effort and our Invasive Management Area program is a shining example of a community-forward approach to achieving those aims," said Laura Grape, director of Resource Management with the FCPA.

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Artist's rendition of the new, affordable apartment building to serve the homeless.



A rendering showing the building's southeast perspective.

‘Housing Gets People’s Lives Back on Track’

Fairfax City OKs affordable apartment building for homeless.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

It was a long, hard-fought battle; but ultimately, Fairfax City Council approved the construction of permanent, supportive housing to provide 54 homeless people with a place to live. A project of The Lamb Center (TLC) and Wesley Housing, it'll replace the ancient, dilapidated Hy-Way Motel on Fairfax Boulevard with a modern, environmentally friendly, five-story apartment building that's 100-percent affordable.

The Dec. 13 approval followed community meetings, two Council work sessions and a public hearing stretching across two Council meetings. And while many residents remain focused on the problems they say homeless people can cause, proponents say the benefits will be significant.

“It's challenging to get a job if you're sleeping in a tent in the woods,” said Tom Barnett with Fairfax County's Office to Prevent and End Homelessness. “Giving someone a roof over their head is life changing. This project targets people with very little income or options. It means they won't return to homelessness, and it'll help them build long-time stability.”

It'll be a block from TLC's daytime, drop-in shelter on Campbell Drive. Wesley Housing is the project developer and – with TLC's guidance – will manage the property. There'll be 42 350-square-foot efficiency units; 10 one-bedroom; and two two-bedroom for residents needing caregivers. And 15-percent will be ADA-compliant.

Since they're permanent, residents will have their own rental leases with no time limits. Supportive means a variety of services will help residents stay in and maintain their homes, find employment/income and address their physical- and behavior-

al-health needs. And this housing will be affordable – no more than 30 percent of a resident's income, or a minimum of \$50/month.

The second floor will feature a community room for the residents, plus space for Lamb Center case managers to assist residents with living independently and make sure they take medication and obtain the services they need. Property-management staff will be there, too, as will a rooftop terrace with solar farm to help power the building.

The first floor will include a 1,400-square-foot employment center to help residents find entry-level jobs. The front door will be controlled access, and there'll be security cameras, plus a 24/7 staffed front desk.

City staff worried this project lacked enough parking, but Wesley Housing President and CEO Shelley Murphy said 16 spaces for residents plus two for short-term visitors would be plenty. “We'll have a 12-person shuttle operating on an on-call basis and have three offsite parking agreements for 36 more spaces,” she said. “And we'd return to Council to discuss the parking every six months.”

But the main reason more parking isn't needed, explained Murphy, is that “The average income for these folks is from 0-15 percent AMI [average median income] – \$24,000/year or less – so they can't afford to maintain a car.” A bus stop will be right outside the building, and racks for 26 bikes will be provided.

TLC Executive Director Tara Ruszkowski said this project will serve “the people most vulnerable, marginalized and at-risk, including the elderly and those with disabilities.” Apartments will be fully furnished, including washers and dryers. She estimated construction to begin in spring 2024 and take some 14-16 months, with an anticipated building opening in 2025.

Murphy stressed that residents not abiding by the house rules and the terms of their leases can be evicted. For example, they can't engage in criminal activities, damage

their units or add unauthorized occupants. And since they'll have an indoor gathering place with amenities, they won't have to loiter outdoors.

Murphy also knows from experience with such projects how successful they can be. “The services they'll receive will help them build a sustainable, useful life,” she said. “Statistics show that, when we get unhoused people off the streets, 90 percent stay housed after one year. And public, homeless-related crimes decrease by 50 percent when they're housed.”

During the Nov. 29 public hearing, 31 speakers voiced their opinions – and both sides were equally passionate. Dan Farley, of the Farrish car dealership, said a Lamb Center guest recently vandalized their vehicles, causing \$50,000 damage. And Katherine Martell of Revolution Billiards said homeless people have subjected that business to daily issues, requiring police and fire personnel to respond.

Alex Kang of nearby Okonomi restaurant, said, “Multiple homeless people have solicited and threatened my customers.” Joe Lothrop of the Fairfax Boulevard Center said 26 local business owners and tenants signed a petition against this project because of the “crime, vandalism and intimidation” by people experiencing homelessness. And other business owners also spoke of similar problems, saying they worried about the safety of their customers and staff.

Meanwhile, Douglas Stewart of Fairfax City Citizens for Smarter Growth said this project will provide quality housing with supportive services, and the improved appearance there will make that area of the City more walkable. Fairfax resident Leslie Hatch said permanent, supportive housing lowers the costs of healthcare and police services, and Lauren Hillman asked why the homeless shouldn't have a safe place to live.

“They're already here, anyway, and having a job and access to services will help them have a stable life,” said Hillman. “And it shows us the meaning of compassion and community in Fairfax City.”

Mary McDaniel also wants the homeless to move forward in a positive direction. “Don't underestimate the value of hope for a safe and dignified life,” she said. “This is a great project, at the right time and in an appropriate location.”

Kate Brady said TLC placed her in permanent housing after she was homeless for 10 years. “Because of it, I'm on the course to wellness and success,” she said. “Support this project.”

Jamie Ergas, who's worked in homeless services for 15 years, said, “Everyone in the community thrives when people have the stability a home provides. This innovative project will reduce the draw on public services and help provide affordable housing for the homeless.”

Brian Collins called it “54 lifeboats for people in need.” And Judy Fisher said approval would show Fairfax City cares for all its residents.

City Council then held a Dec. 6 work session on the proposal and continued the public hearing to Dec. 13. At the latter meeting, another two-dozen people spoke, voicing opinions similar to those expressed previously.

This time, however, Laura Stokes read a letter from herself and 61 other City residents, supporting the project. “Bring together the City stakeholders for a larger discussion on homelessness,” she told the Council. “[But now], we need to find ways to help people, rather than discarding them when they're in crisis.”

Laura Gerber said none of the homeless would be helped if Council voted no. And Amini Bonane urged Councilmembers to “continue the legacy of progress in Fairfax City – because it's how you treat the most vulnerable that counts.”

Councilmember Jon Stehle then moved for approval, and the project was okayed unanimously.

Proud that Wesley Housing is partnering on it with TLC, Murphy said, “Housing is the fundamental piece that allows people to get their lives back on track. And for them, it's transformative.”

COMMUNITY



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY SARAH KIRK

New windows are installed in the garage at Turner Farmhouse. (Aug. 2022)



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY SARAH KIRK

Volunteers from St. Luke High and Middle Schools clean the garage's exterior surface before painting. (File photo)



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Volunteers cook pancakes for the open house breakfast on Dec. 3, 2022.

Open House at Turner Farmhouse

Look at what the foundation has been doing.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

As president of Turner Farmhouse Foundation, Sarah C. Kirk of Great Falls invited the public to 10609 Georgetown Pike in Great Falls on Saturday, Dec. 3, for the nonprofit's third annual open house, pancake breakfast and fundraiser. Kirk serves as the Resident Curator for the property, which includes a 1905 Queen Anne-style farmhouse and outbuildings on approximately 5-acres, under a lease dated Nov. 1, 2018.

Kirk lives there with her family and a caretaker. The lease is between the Board of Supervisors of Fairfax County and the Turner Farmhouse Foundation. Kirk provided the open house opportunity for the farmhouse following the lease's public access clause.

Visitors at the open house saw Kirk's progress toward fulfilling the curator program duties and lease requirements. Kirk has worked on rehabilitating the Turner Farmhouse as a residence, finishing improvements to the Pony Farm field, and raising funds to renovate the existing two-story garage into the retreat center.

Rehabilitation on the farmhouse is nearing completion, and improvements to the garage have begun. New windows are installed, and stud work, wiring, and other construction tasks are underway.

Kirk said they started in 2019 and have received between 2,000 and 3,000 volunteer hours per

year. For three years, Eagle Scout projects and high school and middle school work camps boosted efforts. She described "lots of military support, especially during COVID." Fifty lieutenants from Marine Corps Base Quantico came several times.

The lease estimated the cost of program requirements at \$672,000 and the adjusted fair market rental value for the 20-year lease term at \$672,000, equaling an average monthly rent of \$2,880. The rent does not include taxes or utilities. The structures on the Turner Farmhouse property reflect the rural history of the type that dominated the community in the early 1900s. The parcel remains under the ownership of the Fairfax County Park Authority.

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors appointed Lynne Garvey-Hodge vice-chair of the History Commission. She attended the open house and explained that a committee on the commission oversees the Resident Curatorship Program.

"I've watched RCP grow from nothing to what it is today," Garvey-Hodge said. Having owned a historical home on Main Street in Clifton for many years, Garvey said she "knew way too much about them, leaky ceilings, and things like. I always like to follow success stories, and it appears that Sarah's story has been just an amazing success."

On July 27, 2021, the Board of Supervisors approved Special Exception Application SE 2020-DR-022 for hosting retreats and/or meetings for grief and bereavement support due to the death of a parent, sibling, or others at Turner Farm.

The foundation needs community support in donated time, materi-

als and funds to make the project a success. It partners with the Home Depot Foundation, the Diocese of Arlington's WorkCamp program, Marines, scouts, Cooper Middle School students, and many more volunteers.

"I hope to open in spring 2023," said Kirk. "We need another \$100k

to finish, including the deck and a lift to the 2nd floor."

Visit the Turner Farmhouse Foundation website to follow progress updates, volunteer, and donate. <https://www.turnerfarmhouse.org/>

The Resident Curator Program allows an approved applicant to

occupy a historic property owned by Fairfax County listed on its historical site inventory. Individuals, nonprofits, and for-profit organizations can use the program to secure long-term lease agreements for historic properties, many of which are in beautiful public park settings.

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‘Other Families May Have to Walk in our Shoes Someday’

State budget includes Virginia Mass Violence Care Fund.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

A 2006 Westfield High grad Reema Samaha was just 18 and a college freshman when she was killed in the April 16, 2007, mass shooting at Virginia Tech. Shortly afterward, her mother called her “our flower picked too soon, our star to wish upon and our angel to guide us.”

And in the years since then, Reema continued guiding her father, Joe Samaha, as he and the other victims’ family members established the Virginia Tech Victims Family Outreach Foundation (VTV). Its goal was to address campus safety and security issues in the tragedy in which 32 people were killed; 17, injured; and many more traumatized.

Samaha was the nonprofit’s president; and, over the years, VTV helped get new laws passed and became the nation’s leading independent advocacy group for campus safety. Later, as VTV’s vice president of Development and Victim-Survivor Advocacy, Samaha helped spearhead the idea of a Virginia Mass Violence Care Fund (VMVCF) to benefit all victims of mass violence in Virginia.

Further underscoring its need was the May 31, 2019, shooting in Virginia Beach. And in January 2022 – at the urging of Samaha, one of his constituents – Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34th) of Fairfax submitted a \$10 million budget request to create this fund in the commonwealth.

Ultimately, it wasn’t included in Virginia’s budget, but Samaha, Petersen and VTV kept pushing for it. And last month, their tireless efforts to make the care fund a reality finally paid off when Gov. Glenn Youngkin included the money for it in his new, state budget.

“We [VTV] are grateful to Gov. Youngkin, Atty. Gen. Jason Miyares and Sen. Petersen for the creation of the Mass Violence Care Fund,” said Samaha. “We thank them for listening and understanding and for their empathy. The concept to create such a budget for the VMVCF fund was complex and bipartisan, and it will assist other families and victim-survivors impacted by mass violence in Virginia.”

Samaha hopes the other 49 states will



Reema Samaha

“follow the lead the governor has initiated.” He said those directly injured or traumatized by mass-violence events in Virginia will benefit from the fund, and he explained how it came about.

“As families and survivors of the Virginia Tech shooting began to meet and respond to our 2007 tragedy, we asked two questions,” said Samaha. “We wondered, ‘How do we make our college campuses safer, and how do we assist other families that may have to walk in our shoes someday?’”

“Almost 16 years later, we are proud that our advocacy work at VTV Family Outreach Foundation, plus our VTVCare program [our own precursor of the new fund], were able to help breathe life into a Virginia Mass Violence Care Fund – the first of its kind in the nation.”

What they learned from their own experiences after the Virginia Tech massacre, said Samaha, is that “The first two years after a tragedy, people are donating to help the victims and grants come into the various municipalities to establish resiliency centers.

“But typically, in year three, there are no funds left to help people on their lifetime journey. Their ongoing needs include physical injuries and mental trauma, like PTSD, that may arise years later. They need therapy, but their insurance doesn’t cover all of it – and that’s where this new fund comes in.”



Joe Samaha

Indeed, VTV Co-Presidents Jody McQuade and Jennifer Herbstritt stressed that “Many of us are still seeing therapists and seeking medical treatment for conditions related to the events of April 16, 2007.” Pleased that the care fund was created to be proactive and perpetual, they also expressed their gratitude to the state’s political leaders for “understanding that grief, pain, and trauma are not linear, and most likely will last a lifetime for those that have been impacted by mass shootings and mass violence.”

Now that it’s funded in Virginia’s budget, the VMVCF will kick in three years after a mass-violence event here and pay for victims’ out-of-pocket expenses not covered by insurance. Expenditures and disbursements from the fund will be made by the state treasurer.

The first year’s appropriation will be \$10 million taken from the commonwealth’s General Fund and deposited into the Virginia Mass Violence Care Fund. There, it will gain interest – potentially, \$400,000 a year – to help with victims’ ongoing needs.

Meanwhile, Samaha never forgets the Virginia Tech victims who were the catalyst for this critical achievement. “It’s the 32 that were killed, and 17, injured, that inspired this work, not just Reema,” he said. “What’s gotten me through is having a purpose – to keep honoring and remembering those who



Sen. Chap Petersen

were killed and to do this work in their name.”

As for Petersen, he couldn’t be prouder of all Samaha and his VTV partners have accomplished. “Last year, Joe approached me with the idea of establishing a revolving fund to benefit families whose members were killed or wounded in an incident in which multiple people died,” explained Petersen. “The event at issue at that time was the 2019 shootings in Virginia Beach in which 12 people were killed and many more wounded. Many of these families have been unable to pay bills once their insurance has run out.”

And although his January 2022 budget amendment to create the care fund didn’t succeed, he knew it would have a better chance if either the governor or the House proposed it. And that’s when Samaha’s passion and determination rose to the fore.

“Joe set up countless meetings with the governor’s team and House members, trying to break through,” said Petersen. “And then on Dec. 15, the governor announced that he was establishing the VMVCF, just like Joe had asked, with an initial allocation of \$10 million – again, just as we asked. There are a lot of areas in the budget that will be disputed; but this item presented a perfect success for a hardworking, Fairfax County man. Way to go, Joe!”

NEWS BRIEFS

FROM PAGE 4

County residents are encouraged to:

Visit the SSPA Track a Nomination web page, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/plan-amendments/sspa/countywide/2022-2023/track-nomination>

Navigate to the interactive map of nominations, <https://fairfaxcountygis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2aa40e7f3f444ea299dfc1cd4f817635>

Join one or more community meetings to learn more about the proposed site-specific land use changes in their

neighborhood; and

Submit a comment on any nomination to DPDSSPA@FairfaxCounty.gov.

Details about the upcoming community meetings are available on the SSPA Track a Nomination web page under the Community Meeting Info tab on the Fairfax County Website.

What’s Next

The Planning Commission will review all the SSPA nominations in public workshops scheduled for February and March to determine which nominations they recommend for formal study on the Comprehensive Plan Amendment Work Program. Board action on the Work Pro-

gram is anticipated in Spring 2023.

More information about the 2022-2023 Countywide SSPA process is available online: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/plan-amendments/sspa/countywide/2022-2023>.

Problem Gambling Treatment

Del. Paul Krizek (D-Mount Vernon) and Sen. Bryce Reeves (R-Spotsylvania) are introducing bills to create a Problem Gambling Treatment and Support Advisory Commit-

tee within the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. This proposed committee would enable collaboration among prevention and treatment providers and operators of legal gaming in the Commonwealth on efforts to reduce the adverse effects of problem gambling. Krizek and Reeves said the committee would be made up of stakeholders and chaired by the Problem Gambling Prevention Coordinator at DBHDS.

Krizek said, “In just the last few years, we have considerably expanded gam-

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, PAGE 19

Herndon Town Council Sworn In

**Clark Hedrick
elected vice
mayor.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Following their successful bid at the Nov. 8, 2022 election to secure seats on the seven-member Herndon Town Council, the new council took the oath of office on Jan. 3. During a public ceremony at the Herndon Council Chambers Building, each raised their right hand and repeated the oath administered by Gerarda Culipher of the Fairfax County Circuit Court Clerk's Office. They swore to discharge the duties incumbent "faithfully and impartially" upon them to the best of their abilities.

Freshman councilmembers Clark A. Hedrick, Keven LeBlanc, and Donielle M. Scherff joined senior councilmembers Cesar del Aguila, Pradip Dhakal, and Naila Alam, along with mayor Sheila Olem to become the final authority on the town's policy decisions.

"Everyone comes from a different place and has different backgrounds. We're here to represent the community," Olem said. She thanked town staff for what it does to deliver services that the community "holds dear" and lauded the council's collaboration with staff to make them possible.

Under the town's council-manager plan, the mayor and councilmembers have no administrative duties. Instead, the town manager, William B. Ashton Jr., is responsible for directing the workforce and programs according to the council's ordinances, rules, and regulations.

Highlights of Town Council Plans Shared for 2023-2024

Third-term councilmember del Aguila said he was interested in following up on strategic initiatives from 2020-2022. Safety and security including increased police presence; traffic calming such as stop signs, speed signals, street closures, and new configurations for improved traffic flow, del Aguila said. He added follow-up action to consider a Historic District revamp, Saturday Farmers Market, food truck parking and festivals.

Dhakal, also serving his third term, said the council must ensure making services "more equitable and having more events that cater to the town's diversity...We have to cater to everybody because ev-

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First term Town of Herndon councilmembers (from left)- Vice mayor Clark A. Hedrick, Keven LeBlanc and Donielle M. Scherff.

everybody is equal," Dhakal said.

Alam discussed seeing herself as "much more involved during her second term." Alam said her focus would be on pedestrian and cycling safety. "People who use wheelchairs have difficulty, and people who use strollers (do too)." She noted that some individuals cross mid-street, usually as a convenience rather than walking to the nearest corner, endangering themselves and others.

Two freshman councilmembers provided their insights and proposed plans. LeBlanc said he'd be interested in learning more about how earlier decisions related to the downtown redevelopment and the Herndon Station Metro development had unfolded. "But of course, we're now on the path, and the path has been for several years. So, we're going to make the best of it and just see what we can continue to do," LeBlanc said.

Scherff shared the importance of the Bible she brought to take the oath of office. "This is my grandfather's Bible ... He's why I wanted to do this and why it is important to me," Scherff said.

Responding to how she expected to feel when she placed her hand on it, Scherff said, "I will feel elated for the opportunity to



Royer Hedrick, 5, carries his father's Bible back to his seat with one of his sisters, Colette, 3, beside him. (Not pictured, Reyne, 1) Royer is the son of Town of Herndon Councilmember Clark Hedrick, elected vice mayor.

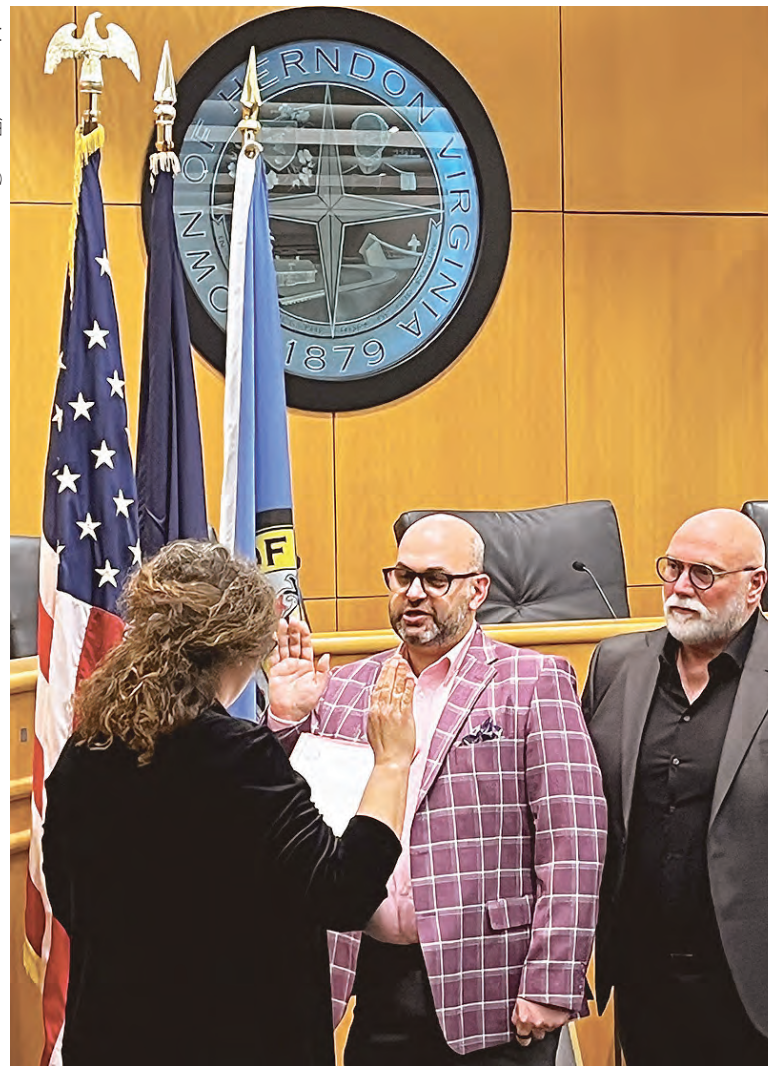
serve this town. I felt that from the drive from my house to here and every person I saw, I wanted to be committed to doing the work they want," Scherff added tearfully. "I hope that the spirit of goodwill that starts here will carry over into the council session afterward."

Hedrick Elected Vice Mayor

Within an hour of the swearing-in ceremony, the newly elect-



Gerarda Culipher of the Fairfax County Circuit Court Clerk's Office administers the oath of office to Clark Hedrick surrounded by his family. Hedrick's wife, Elizabeth, holds the Bible and Reyne, 1, with Colette, 3, and Royer, 5, standing close by.



Keven LeBlanc repeats the oath of office joined by his husband, Scott Mayhugh.

ed Herndon Town Council held its first organizational meeting and work session for 2023. The council approved a resolution electing Hedrick as vice mayor for the 2023-2024 term. Five members voted yes, Hedrick abstained, and Alam was absent. Traditionally, the councilmember who receives the most votes during the gener-

al town elections is elected to the post. Hedrick received the highest number of votes during the election on Nov. 8.

"I appreciated it," Vice mayor Hedrick said afterward. Hedrick has served on the town's Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) and is an attorney for the federal government.

First Big Event for the New Executive Director of MCC

FROM PAGE 3

and marshmallow,” Autumn said. Logan Bechini, 8, of McLean, apparently agreed, thoroughly enjoying the sugary treat.

The cool weather proved perfect that afternoon for hitting the temporary skating rink — roller skating, that is. Zoey Shi, 4, of Great Falls, glided across the smooth plastic surface, transferring her newly learned ice skating skills to the rolling wheels.

“Zoey started ice skating just two months ago,” said dad Weidong, who let her go solo.

Axe throwing drew Viking wannabes Dylan Eaton, 6, of Alexandria, and his brother Dominik, 7. After aligning the shoulder of their throwing arm with the target, the children hurled the axes with one hand. More often than not, the Velcro-wrapped foam axes adhered to the bull’s eye.

“Our goal at McLean Community Center is to be a place of connection and a place for people to relax, learn, play, and just get together and be with their neighbors,” said May-Salazar. The event marked May-Salazar’s fourth day in her new position as executive director.

PHOTOS BY
MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION



Weidong Shi of Great Falls helps his daughter Zoey, 4, regain her balance.



Down the giant inflatable slide.



Betsy May-Salazar, the new executive director of the McLean Community Center.



Children try out the temporary roller skating rink at the MCC-Old Firehouse Winter Block Party. Look at what the parents wear on their feet.

Fairfax Delegation Hears Residents' Concerns

FROM PAGE 3

"This can be extremely confusing to our public when raises require approximately 82 percent local funding and only provide 18 percent state funding," McKay said.

Behavioral health funding is critically important, McKay said. "The state's behavioral health system has been unable to provide sufficient support to meet its own mandated requirements," he said.

Third, McKay wants to restore the total amount of the county's lost \$102 million to help fund Metro. "Right now, we're at \$63.5 million," he said.

Chair of the Fairfax County School Board, Sizemore Heizer, urged the delegation to strengthen information sharing so FCPS students are safe, particularly related to school employees arrested for child endangerment or sex-related crimes. She highlighted the need for additional resources focused on youth and adolescent mental health and substance abuse, community and inpatient programs, and improvements in the workforce pipeline for mental health professionals.

"This is a critical need for our students; please help us," Sizemore Heizer said.

In light of the recent tragic deaths of FCPS students walking to and from school, Sizemore Heizer urged the delegation to grant localities and school boards greater flexibility in setting schools' safety limits for pedestrian safety.

Sizemore Heizer voiced concern about amendments to the Virginia Education Account Program. The current proposal, House Bill 1508, by patrons Davis, Durant, Fowler, Greenhalgh, and La Rock, allows parents to set up a savings account funded with state funds "intended for the child's education for any qualified expense that best meet the child's needs," according to Virginia's Legislative System.

FCPS has a policy against using public money for non-public education, Sizemore Heizer said. "We must do all we can and partner together to protect public education. It is the bedrock of our society, and it is how people improve their lives," she said.

Dr. George Cody of Alexandria supported House Bill 1383, prohibiting the non-therapeutic declawing of cats. "Declawing involves amputating the last part of a cat's front toes. For example, a comparison is if you involuntarily had the last joint of your fingers cut off against your will," Cody said.



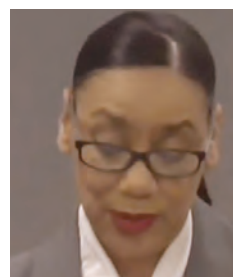
Senate Majority Leader Richard L. Saslaw (D-District 35) chairs the public hearing.



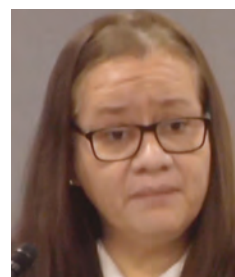
Jeffrey C. McKay, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors



Rachna Sizemore Heizer, chair of the Fairfax County School Board



Michelle Jefferson of Springfield and chair of the Fairfax County Community Action Advisory Board



Maria Isabel Leiva Alfonso, a Falls Church resident and member of CAAB



Susan Laume of Springfield represents the VA Dog Army.



Paul Berry of Reston



Arthur Purves, FXCO Taxpayers Alliance



David Broder, SEIU Virginia 512



Natalia Nguyen-Woodruff of Fairfax, union member of SEIU Virginia 512



Jennifer Tidd, Neurodivergent Liberation Coalition

Paul Berry of Reston, who formerly served in the office of Governor Northam, is an educator and a Mexican American who grew up in a dual-language household. Berry worked with English language learners and special needs students, he said. "They're still struggling to catch up and recover at the same rate as their classmates. 'Unfortunately, \$1 million in ARPA funding that was dedicated to English language learners is disappearing this year,' Berry said. "Governor Youngkin ... is currently supporting further reductions in public school funding," Berry added. He requested assistance from the Fairfax delegation. "I ask that you continue to advocate for these measures and call out any attempts to harm our environment or our education system," Berry said.

Michelle Jefferson of Springfield and chair of the Fairfax County Community Action Advisory Board, or CAAB, said that Virginia's TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) remains at or below 32 percent of the Federal Poverty Level for all family households. "CAAB supports the Board of Supervisors' position on the continued increase in the TANF reimbursement rate," Jefferson said.

Maria Isabel Leiva Alfonso, a Falls Church resident and member of CAAB, testified about the difficulties that many community members, particularly those earning less than \$25,000 per year, face when looking for quality, affordable childcare in the coun-

ty. "The average cost of full-time childcare for a preschooler ranges from \$16,000 to \$22,000 per year," Alfonso said. CAAB supports the Board of Supervisors' position that the Commonwealth should support state childcare funding for economically disadvantaged families participating in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in the family initiative for education and work.

According to Alfonso, supporting a waiver from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) that would allow Fairfax County to permanently increase program income eligibility above the current 250 percent of the federal poverty level for the state subsidy would help address challenges experienced due to the high costs of childcare and a high cost of living in Northern Virginia.

Susan Laume of Springfield represented the VA Dog Army. She asked the delegation to support a water bill sponsored by Delegate Kaye Kory (D-38) for dogs and cats that would ban the use of small mammal drip bottles as their water source. According to research, dogs push their tongues into bodies of water, causing a spoon effect with the tongue curling backward and scooping up water. Cats use the tip of their tongue to touch the water's surface, drawing up a column and then biting down on it to drink. The current code requires that water be provided to suit the species. Dogs and cats cannot drink from mammal water bottles in their species-appropriate manner.

Arthur Purves of Vienna, president of the Fairfax County Taxpayers Alliance, urged the delegation to ban public employee union contributions to supervisor election campaigns or require supervisors to disclose public employee campaign contributions they receive when they vote on raises.

David Broder, president of SEIU Virginia 512 and a resident of Vienna, requested that the delegation prioritize working people in the state budget. He advocated funding 10 percent raises and 10 paid sick days for homecare workers; ending the waiver waiting list; providing respite care for families; and funding essential local government services — "all while protecting the progress we have made on voting rights, equity, and criminal justice reform."

Natalia Nguyen-Woodruff of Fairfax, union member of SEIU Virginia 512 serving as the Fairfax County Chapter vice president, spoke in support of funding quality public services and good union jobs for all Virginians "to advance economic, racial and Immigrant justice in our county." She and her colleagues have worked on the front lines and provided essential health care, childcare, transportation, sanitation, mental health services, and more.

"Despite doing essential work, too many hard-working Virginia families are struggling. The high cost of living, low wages ... anti-worker rights, and more have created a crisis for working people

... Virginia healthcare workers, who are my union siblings, are still denied the right to collectively bargain. That's why we must continue to take bold action to support working families, create good union jobs and strengthen our economy," Nguyen-Woodruff said.

Marissa Brown of Vienna pushed for a campaign to help people with developmental disabilities get jobs. She noted that Virginia needs to drop the "antiquated and denigrating term handicap" throughout the Virginia Code.

Jennifer Tidd of Reston, representing the Neurodivergent Liberation Coalition, argued against House Bill 1461. It requires the Virginia Department of Education to establish a uniform discipline system for disruptive behavior. Tidd said it is legal in Virginia to remove children from the classroom and put them in seclusion cells. She told the delegation that her autistic son had been removed a documented 745 times and locked in a seclusion cell. He would later come home with self-inflicted lacerations and concussions. "Children like him need to be heard, not discarded. Please kill HB 1461 because if you don't, you will cause unbelievable damage to too many children like my son," she said.

Other issues, including climate, housing, solar energy, and more were presented to the Fairfax County delegation to the General Assembly.

CALENDAR

JAN. 5-21

"White Rabbit Red Rabbit." 7 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Thursday-Saturday, Jan. 5-7, 12-14 and 19-21, 7 p.m. No rehearsals. No director. No set. A different actor reads the script cold for the first time at each performance. Forbidden to leave his country, playwright Nassim Soleimanpour distilled the experience of an entire generation in a wild, utterly original play.

NOW THRU JAN. 23

8th Glass National. 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Oshiro's high-contrast illustrations and paintings depict surrealistic scenes of characters with unique experiences related to identity, be it from race, gender or neurodiversity.

NOW THRU JAN. 23

Off We Go to Paradise. 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Oshiro's high-contrast illustrations and paintings depict surrealistic scenes of characters with unique experiences related to identity, be it from race, gender or neurodiversity. Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/off-to-paradise>

NOW THRU FEB. 5

"Women Playing Hamlet." 8 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. A non-traditional look at one of Shakespeare's most revered works, presented in modern English, Women Playing Hamlet follows a young actress tackling the role of Hamlet in a comedic romp that examines gender norms, actors' egos, and Shakespeare. Women Playing Hamlet, by William Missouri Downs. Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/women-playing-hamlet>

NOW THRU FEB. 12

Winter Lantern Festival will debut a spectacular holiday light adventure at the Lerner Town Square, 8025 Galleria Drive in Tysons starting Dec. 16 through Feb. 12. Winter Lantern Festival will feature over 10,000-LED Chinese-inspired artisan lanterns, along with live performances and on-site food vendors. Guests will wander through a wonderland of light that includes Chinese myths, legends, and zodiacs. In addition, they will view handmade lanterns encompassing a world of ice, including displays of mammoths, polar bears, and penguins. There will also be interactive light swings, see-saws, and tunnels. Be prepared to indulge your friends, family, and yourself in photo opportunities. Hours are Fridays to Sundays from 5-10 p.m. Visit www.winterlanternfestival.com.

THURSDAY/JAN. 12

Learn To Preserve Your Story. 7-8:30 p.m. At Colvin Run Mill Historic Site, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Join local historians for "Preserve Your History," a series of three workshops that will teach you to collect and preserve your story for generations to follow. Session one on Jan. 12, 2023 will cover recording oral histories. Session two on Feb. 16, 2023 will teach how to preserve photos, books, journals and other paper records. During the final session on March 16, 2023, you will learn how to care for other objects, such as quilts, jewelry and household items. For more information, visit Colvin Run Mill or call 703-759-2771.

THURSDAY/JAN. 12

How Do They Do That? Behind the Scenes at The Alden. 6:30 p.m. At The Alden, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Did you ever wonder just what it takes to present a show at The Alden or how each season is put together or what all those things on the ceiling are? Join Technical Director Jennifer Garrett, Performing Arts Director Sarah Schallern Treff and Youth Theatre Programs Director Danielle Van Hook for an informal discussion that will take the mystery out of what goes on behind the curtain.



Go behind the scenes at The Alden on Thursday, Jan. 12, 2023.



Reston is holding a Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration on Monday, Jan. 16, 2023.

FRIDAY/JAN. 13

Cars & Careers. 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Virginia Tire & Auto's Tysons Training And Technology Center, 2055 Chain Bridge Road, Tysons. The Training & Technology Center offers both classroom and hands-on technical training for general service and all levels of technicians. Virginia Tire & Auto has 17 locations across Northern Virginia and will be hiring for all locations with hiring bonuses up to \$4,500. The company will be interviewing candidates for a variety of technical and sales positions. All attendees are invited to participate in live demonstrations and hands-on activities before and after the interviews. Call or text 703-785-5153 or email recruiting@vatire.com to set up an interview. For more information on hiring events and career opportunities, visit <https://vatire.com/careers/apply/>.

FRIDAY/JAN. 13

U.S. Navy Concert Band. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. With featured soloists Quatuor Habanera, Robert Young, and Chief

Musician Dana Booher. This event is part of the 43rd International Saxophone Symposium hosted by the U.S. Navy Band, which features over 150 performances, masterclasses and lectures designed for musicians of all ages. First hosted in 1978, the International Saxophone Symposium annually features some of the most renowned saxophonists in the world while highlighting the prominence of the saxophone in both classical and jazz literature. Friday night's concert presents the U.S. Navy Concert Band with a mixture of band pieces and classically oriented saxophone solos, with featured soloists Quatuor Habanera, Robert Young, and Chief Musician Dana Booher.

SATURDAY/JAN. 14

U.S. Navy Band Commodores with special guest Melissa Aldana. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. This event is part of the 43rd International Saxophone Symposium hosted by the U.S. Navy Band, which features over 150 performances, masterclasses and lectures designed for musicians of all ages. First hosted in 1978, the International Saxophone Symposium annually features some of the most renowned saxophonists in the world while highlighting the prominence of the saxophone in both classical and jazz literature. Saturday night's concert presents the Navy Band Commodores jazz ensemble with special guest Melissa Aldana in an evening of big band and jazz music. Past soloists with the Commodores have included Eddie Daniels, Branford Marsalis, Donny McCaslin, Chris Potter, and Grover Washington, Jr.

SATURDAY/JAN. 14

Second Saturday Art Walk. 6-9 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. Come out and visit the Workhouse Monthly Featured Artists. All campus studio buildings will be open from 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. and the talented artists there will be thrilled to chat about their works and processes. Galleries, gift shop and Lucy Burns Museum are open extended hours.

SATURDAY/JAN. 14

Lion Dance Performances. Discover Chinese tradition and celebrate Lunar New Year with Lion Dance performances by Jow Ga Shaolin Institute. Lion dances are traditionally per-

formed to bring good luck for the New Year. Lion Dance is an important part of Southern Style Kung Fu training and part of China's cultural heritage.

Performances will be held on Saturday, January 14 at the following branches:

- Sherwood Regional Library: 11 - 11:30 a.m.
- Thomas Jefferson Library: 11 - 11:30 a.m.
- City of Fairfax Regional Library: 1 - 1:30 p.m.
- Lorton Library: 1 - 1:30 p.m.
- Centreville Regional Library: 3 - 3:30 p.m.
- John Marshall Library: 3 - 3:30 p.m.

Registration required: bit.ly/fcpl-liondance

SATURDAY/JAN. 14

Community Service Projects. 9 a.m. At Cathy Hudgins Community Center at Southgate, 12125 Pinecrest Road, Reston. Join friends and neighbors in honoring Dr. King's legacy by serving your community. As Dr. King said, "Everybody can be great ... because anybody can serve." RCC is partnering with the Cathy Hudgins Community Center at Southgate, Reston Association, Cornerstones and The Closet on community service projects. Indoor projects include sorting and organizing items from The Closet and making bag lunches for the Embury Rucker Community Shelter. There will also be outdoor projects such as cleaning up the natural areas, pathways and hardscapes, weather permitting. To volunteer, contact Ha Brock, Volunteer Reston Manager, at 703-435-7986 or habrock@reston.org.

SATURDAY/JAN. 14

Reston Community Orchestra. Annual Musical Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: Words and Music as Diverse as the World of Which He Dreamed. 4:00 p.m., RCC Hunters Woods Community Room. With music and words specifically chosen for this occasion, RCC joins the Reston community in a weekend commemoration of the contributions made by this celebrated American, and his vision of a society free of prejudice and racial division. The program features Reston vocalist Beverly Cosham, students from Al Fatih Academy and other special guests. There will be songs and spirituals known and loved by Dr. King. Tickets available through the RCC Box Office.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 17

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

CALENDAR



The Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton presents "Women Playing Hamlet" now through Feb. 5, 2023.

FROM PAGE 16

SUNDAY/JAN. 15

Mark G. Meadows: Music and The Movement. 2:00 p.m., RCC Hunters Woods – the CenterStage. Join Mark G. Meadows & The Movement as they pay tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Mark G. Meadows is a man on a mission to create a unifying sound that breaks through social barriers. There's something for everyone in his music, which harmonizes jazz, gospel, R&B, hip-hop and rock. Mark uses his artistry to send a positive message of love, joy and hope to his audiences. Get ready to lift every voice and sing with Mark G. Meadows & The Movement. Tickets sold through the RCC Box Office.

SUNDAY/JAN. 15

G-Scale Train Display. The Washington, Virginia & Maryland Garden Railway Society (WVMGRS) members will have a G-Scale (Garden gauge) train display running at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum from noon to 4 p.m. The Museum is located at 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. WVMGRS will have member owned G Scale trains for sale. The sheer size of these trains is a wonder to behold as their ability to run through a garden all year. Come see these Garden Gauge model trains and speak with experienced people about this facet of the model railroading hobby. Museum members and children 4 and under, free. Children 5-12, \$3. Adults 13 and older \$5 (\$6 for special events). Seniors and military, active and retired, \$4. Information on the Museum and shows, www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, or phone 703-425-9225.

MONDAY/JAN. 16

Reston Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration. Reston Community Center will mark the 38th annual Reston Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration with a lineup of events for community reflection on Dr. King's legacy. Heather McGhee, a renowned expert on the American economy and author of The New York Times bestseller *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Us and How We Can Prosper Together*, will deliver this year's Keynote Address at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, January 16 at RCC Hunters Woods. Although the Keynote Address is sold out, patrons wishing to obtain tickets should come to the CenterStage Box Office window at RCC Hunters Woods to get on a waiting list for released tickets beginning at 10:00 a.m. on January 16. Tickets are \$5 for Reston residents and employees, and \$20 for all others. For more information, contact RCC Offsite and Collaboration Director Maggie Parker at 703-390-9191 or Margaret.Parker@fairfaxcounty.gov. To register for programs, visit www.restoncommunitycenter.com or call 703-476-4500.

MONDAY/JAN. 16

Keynote Address by Heather McGhee. 11 a.m. RCC Hunters Woods: the CenterStage and Community Room. A renowned expert on the American economy, Heather McGhee is one of the most brilliant and influential thinkers exploring inequality today. Both her viral TED talk and her instant New York Times bestseller *The Sum of Us* reveal the devastating true cost of racism – not just for people of color, but for everyone. Deeply stirring, intelligent and compassionate, McGhee's talks offer us

an actionable roadmap during one of the most critical – and most troubled – periods in history. Following the keynote address, a family-style lunch will be provided in the RCC Community Room.

TUESDAY/JAN. 17

American Red Cross Blood Drive. RCC Hunters Woods. 1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Reston Community Center partners with the American Red Cross and Fairfax County NAACP to offer a blood drive. People with minority roots are especially encouraged to participate to increase the blood supply for vulnerable populations. Make your appointment here.

THURSDAY/JAN. 19

Lunch & Learn on Senior Housing Options. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Trinity UMC Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. Seniors Real Estate Specialist Karen Briscoe HBC Principal, and HBC partner Lizzy Conroy are hosting this important discussion for seniors in the northern Virginia area. Also participating in the Lunch & Learn event is Jeanina DiVittorio, a Senior Living Expert.

Subjects to be discussed include:

- In-home care vs. retirement community living
- Senior community programs
- Retirement community options and their costs
- How to decide when to downsize and move
- Selling your home to help pay your long-term needs
- Resources to help organize and declutter for your next move

Lunch will be served to all attending. RSVP by January 12 to # 703-734-0192 or Homes@HBCGroupKW.com.

JAN. 20-FEB. 5

Monty Python's Edukational Show. Vienna Theatre Company and Vienna Dept. of Parks and Recreation present Monty Python's Edukational Show, a collection of sketches, songs and animation from "Monty Python's Flying Circus." 8 p.m. on Jan. 20, 21, 27, 28, Feb. 3, 4; 2 p.m. on Jan. 29 and Feb. 5. Visit www.viennatheatre-company.org.

FRIDAY/JAN. 20

Snowball Dance. 7-9:30 p.m. At the Old Firehouse, McLean. Parties are also open to 7th and 8th graders. Old Firehouse 5th & 6th grader parties are themed and decorated accordingly. Free catered food and beverages will be distributed to participants. Parties feature a DJ, open dance floor and a variety of activities.

SATURDAY/JAN. 21

Dinos Roar in Puppet Show. At Hidden Oaks Nature Center, 7701 Royce Street, Annandale. Naturalists at Hidden Oaks Nature Center will ignite the imaginations of young audiences with an interactive experience to introduce children to the legacy left by dinosaurs. Have a look at real fossils and learn interesting and fun facts about dinosaurs through a puppet show and crafts. The program is open to children ages 4 to 8 years old with two hour-long sessions available on Saturday, Jan. 21, 2023. Register for the 1 p.m. or 3 p.m. Enrollment fee is \$10 per child. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Call 703-941-1065 or visit Hidden Oaks Nature Center.

Here's What's Happening at MCC!

Presented by The Alden

**JAN
12**

**How Do They Do That?
Behind the Scenes at The Alden**
Thursday, Jan. 12, 6:30 p.m.

Free admission

Old Firehouse Center

Laser Tag Trip
Friday, Jan. 13, 4:30–10 p.m.

\$50/\$40 MCC district residents

**JAN
13**

5th & 6th Grader Parties

Snowball Dance
Friday, Jan. 20, 7-9:30 p.m.

\$35/\$25 MCC district residents
\$20 OFC members

**JAN
20**



MCC MLK Day Celebration

"Black Music Excellence through the Ages"
with Richelle Claiborne
Sunday, Jan. 22, 2 p.m.

\$20/\$15 students and seniors
\$10 MCC district residents

**JAN
22**

Governing Board

**January Meeting
Convened All-Virtual***
Wednesday, Jan. 25, 6:30 p.m.

*Microsoft Teams Meeting ID:
286 705 772 50
Passcode: ZueV3Q

**JAN
25**

Closing Notice

Martin Luther King Day, Center Closed
Monday, Jan. 16



The McLean
Community Center
www.mcleancenter.org

Home of The Alden Theatre
www.aldentheatre.org

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Legals

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The New Brogue LLC trading as The Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760 Walker Road, Suite C, Great Falls, Fairfax, VA 22066-2645. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Mixed Beverage Restaurant license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Colin Malone, President. Date notice posted at establishment: 1/11/2023. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or (800) 552-3200.

Employment

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Employment

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THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS



PHOTOS COURTESY VIRGINIA STATE POLICE

At 1:06 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 8, 2023, Virginia State Police responded to a single-vehicle crash involving a tractor-trailer. The tractor-trailer was traveling south on I-495 when it crashed near Exit 44 at Georgetown Pike in Fairfax County. The impact of the crash caused the vehicle to catch fire. The driver was transported to a nearby hospital for treatment of non-life threatening injuries. The crash remains under investigation. As cleanup at the scene continues, motorists are advised to follow Virginia Department of Transportation's 511 for the latest updates on detours and traffic advisories.

News Briefs

FROM PAGE 12

ing in the Commonwealth, with the recent opening of temporary casinos, sports betting, historical horse racing machines, online Lottery, and much more. ... People who begin gambling in their teens are at a higher risk of developing a problem with gambling and that one of the fastest growing groups to have gambling problems are young adults."

According to the 2021 VA Youth Survey, over 21% of high school students say that they had gambled or placed a bet in the past year and 64% of young adults aged 18-25 have gambled in the past 30 days.

January Is Stalking Awareness Month

Stalking:

- ❖ is repeated and unwanted contact that makes you feel afraid or harassed.
- ❖ is serious, often violent, and can escalate over time.
- ❖ is common. About 1 in 6 women and 1 in 17 men have experienced stalking in their lifetime.
- ❖ is pervasive. 81% of women who were stalked by a current or former husband or cohabitating partner were physically assaulted by that partner; 31% of these women were sexually assaulted.
- ❖ is a crime in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.
- ❖ is a crime that happens across all ages and genders, though people aged 18 to 24 have the highest rate of stalking victimization.
- ❖ is a crime with financial repercussions. 1 in 8 stalking victims has reported losing work because of the stalking. More than half of these victims reported losing five or more work days.

❖ starts early. Nearly 54% of female victims and 41% of male victims experienced stalking before the age of 25.

Stalking happens in many types of relationships:

- ❖ A current or former romantic partner
- ❖ A friend
- ❖ A stranger
- ❖ A family member
- ❖ A community member
- ❖ A boss or coworker

Stalking can look like:

- ❖ calling, texting, social media messages, or leaving voicemails even after you've asked them to stop.
- ❖ constantly checking in on you at home, work, or school.
- ❖ vandalizing your car or other property.
- ❖ controlling your phone, internet or social media.
- ❖ showing up where you are, even when you haven't shared your location with them.
- ❖ asking friends, family or co-workers for information about you.

Prevention is possible.

- Everyone can work together to know, name, and stop stalking.
- ❖ Help educate others to define and recognize stalking behaviors.
- ❖ Engage men and boys as allies in prevention efforts.
- ❖ Create and support safe environments within relationships, schools, and communities through programs and policies that promote healthy relationships.
- ❖ Have questions or need help?
- ❖ Domestic and Sexual Violence 24-Hour Hotline 703-360-7273
- ❖ Domestic Violence Action Center 703-246-4573
- ❖ Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Main Office 703-324-5730

If the threat is immediate, call 911.

addresses of all delegates and senators can be found at House of Delegates Member Listing <https://virginiageneralassembly.gov/house/members/members.php> and Senate Member Listing <https://apps.senate.virginia.gov/Senator/index.php>.

You can follow the legislative action at [Legiscan.com/VA](https://legiscan.com/VA) and /or subscribe to my legislative newsletter at kenplum.com. Your testimony and advocacy are important to the legislature getting its work right!

Plum

FROM PAGE 6

ing documentation to replace lost revenue to essential services.

Plan to participate in the session by sending your opinions and suggestions to your representatives who can be found at Who's My Legislator?. <https://whosmy.virginiageneralassembly.gov/> Names and

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CENTREVIEW

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 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.

Please, help save these historical papers. All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk. The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Connection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

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.

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 or <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-keep-your-newspaper-printing>

Connection Newspapers... Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette, Centre View, Potomac Almanac

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Loss for Words



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

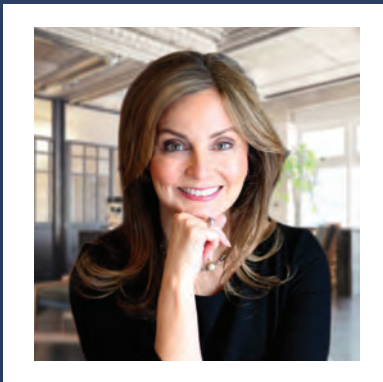
I never wanted to write this column. Although for much of the summer, the idea of my brother pre-deceasing me was as real as it could get: 15 days in S.I.C.U. being tended to round the clock after he was admitted with sepsis; still, every day that he survived gave us hope. And then actually he began to get better and after 10 weeks was transferred to the adjacent rehabilitation hospital to assist in his recovery from the septic shock. And likewise, he made progress there. So much so that they scheduled the Colo-rectal surgery for the following week. Which occurred without too much fuss or complication. After continued improvement, he was finally released. The sepsis seemed to be in the rear-view mirror as Richard continued to make progress at home. He was driving, shopping at Costco, eating foods he hadn't enjoyed for almost two years (thinking he was exacerbating his IBS by doing so, which as it turned out, he didn't have). We even had a surprise birthday dinner for Richard in his home on Fri., Oct. 28. When the dining room table was set, Vanessa (his wife) called upstairs for Richard to come down and have dinner. He got on the inclinator and then smoothly reached the bottom of the stairwell, where he saw the three of us (Vanessa, Dina and I) all sitting at the table waiting for his arrival. When the inclinator stopped at the bottom of the staircase, Richard looked over on our direction. He broke out in a big smile, and graciously thanked Vanessa for her efforts in arranging the dinner and our participation in it. It was by all accounts, Richard's recovery notwithstanding (and it was mostly mobility issues at this point), a completely normal occasion. As it so happened, though I spoke to him daily in the following weeks; this date, his birthday, Oct. 28, was the last time I saw him I saw him alive. My brother Richard died at his home in the early morning hours on Dec. 3.

He had recently started an every-three-week chemotherapy infusion to knock out the few remaining cancer cells which a fancy DNA-driven blood test indicated were present. I understand, as a cancer patient, the need, instinct almost, to do all you can to rid yourself of the cancer. But on balance, he was not in any kind of distress. In fact, he was thriving, almost. His oncologist suggested a three-month infusion to eradicate any remaining cancer cells. It all seemed routine, so Richard began the protocol. Immediately, experienced problems. He was exhausted, weak, not eating and rarely getting out of his bed. He was so tired, he could barely speak on the phone. The last conversation we had, after he picked up the phone, he said, "KB, I'm too tired to speak. I'll call you tomorrow." Those were my brother's last words to me. A day and a half later, Vanessa called me at 8:15 in the morning, after having found Richard on the floor at the foot of his bed in his dressing room where he had been sleeping to low-impact Vanessa, crying: "KB, he's gone. He was alive at 4 am when I visited, and I just went to check on him. I have to call you back; the police are here."

It was not a shock, but it was a surprise. We all thought, his many doctors included, that he had survived the sepsis and was on track to a reasonably normal recovery. A recovery where he's likely to have deficits/challenges, but nothing insurmountable.

His passing is a real problem for me. Not that I actually made the calls every day, but had I, he would have been the first call I made in the morning and the last call I made at night. We were as close as two brothers could get. And even though he was almost five years older than me, we maintained an extremely healthy relationship (sports, politics, sense of humor, The Three Stooges) for the entirety of his life. Moreover, once I was diagnosed with "terminal cancer" in 2009, he became my champion, attending any medical appointments I had with my oncologist and/or endocrinologist and always being available to talk. Once I received this diagnosis, I figured I would predecease him. And now, for him to die before me, it throws my whole system of checks and balances out of whack. It will be much harder for me to "stay between the navigational beacons" to invoke an Alan Jackson song, stay on course, and fight my own cancer battles. I will not descend into the abyss or anything, but I am much worse off not having my brother alive. He was always in my corner, always reachable. Not anymore. That's the end of an era – for me. My go-to is gone. Next week: more of the same.

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



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