

CONNECTION

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'Big Fish' Larger Than Life

PAGE 8

Ensemble member Sharon Petersen promotes "Big Fish" during Fairfax City's Fourth of July parade.

Arts Master Plan For Fairfax County

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Rescuing Trees

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JULY 13-19, 2023

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

OPINION

Centreville Immigration Head Sends Open Letter to Governor

\$3.1 million is the estimated cost of sending 100 Virginia national guard troops to the U.S. border in this month of July 2023, according to Governor Glan Youngkin's press secretary, Macaulay Porter.

Without offering any proof of fact, Virginia's governor claimed the sending of Virginia troops was to "fight the flow of criminals, contraband, and deadly drugs into communities across the nation," as he wrote in his directive authorizing a 30-day deployment.

On behalf of the immigrant community in Centreville and Northern Virginia, and as Chair of the Centreville Immigration Forum board of Directors, I condemn this costly, misguided, ineffective, seemingly hateful, and essentially political action of Virginia's governor.

I urge the governor to rescind

his directive and assist marginalized people in need of housing, medical care, and good education to strengthen the quality of the lives of our residents. Virginia depends on the deeply talented and broadly diverse immigration population for our production, services, and economic strength.

The governor's directive and statement only serve to feed the chronic sentiment of racism and anti-immigration prejudice of a small minority of our Virginia citizens and threatens the sense of wellbeing so deserving of our immigrants who are investing their lives in this Commonwealth.

Peace,

Jerry Foltz
Rev. Dr. Jerrold L. Foltz
 Chair,
 Centreville Immigration Forum



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

DEPRESSION AND BIPOLAR SUPPORT ALLIANCE OF VIRGINIA

The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Virginia has been a continuous support for people living with mental health challenges. DBSAVA's mission is to provide hope, help, and support to improve the lives of people with mental health challenges. Mental health challenges meaning illnesses or disorders like Depression, Bipolar, Anxiety, Post-traumatic Stress, Schizophrenia, Borderline Personality, etc. The support services are free to all and offered by Peer Specialists, which includes individuals, family members and friends affected by these challenges. Visit the website: dbsava.org.

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Families and individuals from the Washington, D.C.-metro region are being sought to become hosts for international students for 12 weeks, a semester, or an academic year. Exchange students represent nearly 80 countries and cultures, including Kenya, Ukraine, Egypt, Turkey, Italy, Germany, Chile, Thailand and more. AFS-USA, a leader in international high school student exchange for 75 years, is focused on providing opportunities for intercultural exchange that can help lead to a more just and peaceful world. Those interested in hosting an AFS Exchange Student are encouraged to contact 1-800-AFS-IN-

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 4

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Phase 1, Fairfax County's Master Arts Plan, Facilities

Supervisors unanimously accept the plan.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On July 11, a watershed moment occurred that will help define the arts in Fairfax County through a living document over the next two decades or so. It will ensure geographic diversity and critical access to the arts.

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to accept the Fairfax County Master Arts Plan: Facilities.

The County Arts Committee will use the tool to support the Board of Supervisors and county staff. According to board meeting materials, the plan connects the aspirations of the County's Comprehensive Plan Policy, the goals and objectives of the Countywide Strategic Plan and One Fairfax, and the practical opportunities that present themselves over the next 20 years of development in Fairfax County.

The plan is not a policy to be adopted, implemented in the near term, or set in stone.

"I want to thank the community members, ArtsFairfax, and County staff who dedicated so much time and effort to developing the County's first Master Arts Plan. This provides a blueprint for Fairfax County to continue to grow our creative ecosystem and create attractive spaces for all to enjoy." Chairman Jeff McKay (D) said before the meeting.

The plan was achieved through collaborative efforts of the 2009-2023 Master Arts Plan Task Force, Fairfax County Senior Management Team 2023, and the Geographic Information Team and others. These groups paved the way for a deliberately equitable path for the siting of arts facilities throughout the county.

Are there performing and visual arts opportunities in all nine Fairfax County districts? Yes. Districts are approximately equal in population, yet Sully has 4 percent of the total, and Braddock and Hunter Mill each have 18 percent of the total.

In 2010, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted the Visual and Performing Arts Comprehensive Plan Policy Amendment. The 2017 Edition of the Policy Plan - Visual and Performing Arts identified objectives and related policy goals for arts venues.

In May 2019, key results from the consultant team at AMS Planning & Research Corporation provided expertise on how to move toward developing new venues for arts audiences and content providers.

The team unveiled a series of ten noteworthy observations. These observations

CURRENT STATE OF ARTS VENUES

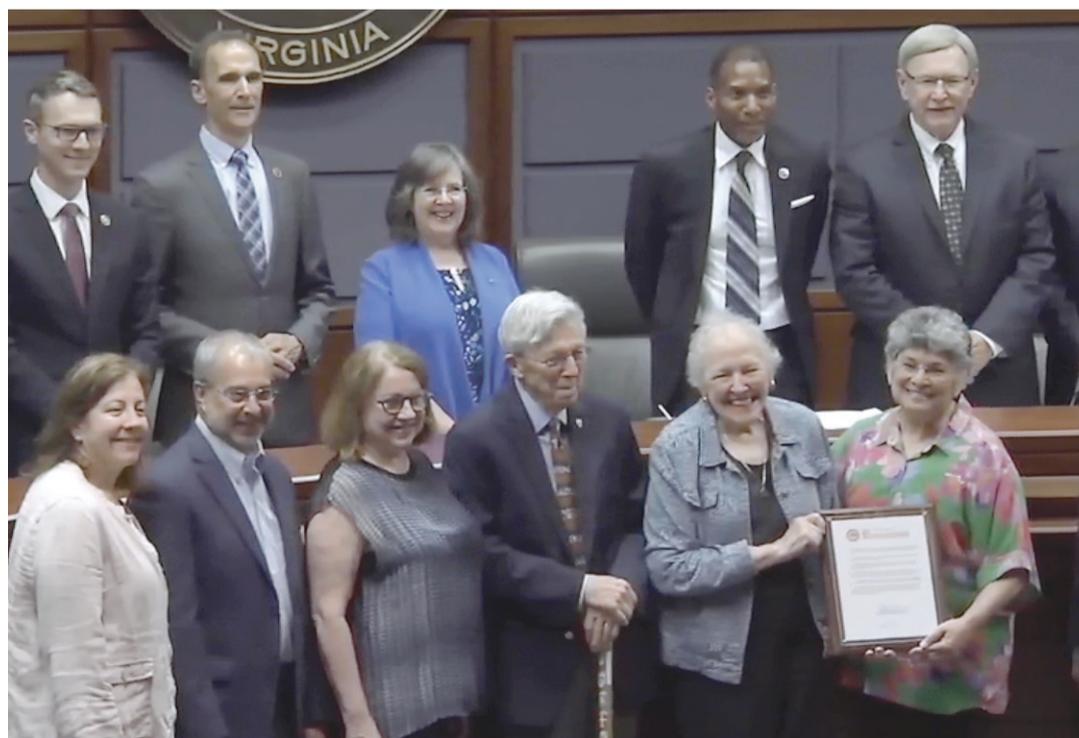
- 6** Venues in the City of Fairfax
- 2** Venues in the Town of Herndon
- 2** Venues in the City of Falls Church
- 3** Venues in the Town of Vienna

INCORPORATED CITIES/TOWNS: Based on data collected from venue operators in 2014 and subsequently updated in 2019

Plans include possible collaboration with George Mason University and expansion of City of Fairfax support for arts purposes, building maintenance and expanded outdoor events.

SCREENSHOT VIA FAIRFAX COUNTY ECONOMIC INITIATIVES

The 2019 arts venues located in incorporated cities and towns within Fairfax County are in the City of Fairfax, the Town of Herndon, the City of Falls Church, and the Town of Vienna, totaling 13.



SCREENSHOT

Fairfax County Arts Committee Chair, Leila Gordon, accepts the resolution from Vice-chair Penny Gross (D-Mason)

shed light on various areas of concern, including gaps in information, gaps within the arts sector, and venue gaps.

Elected officials may need more information on the positive impact of arts and cul-

ture. Arts attendees need more information on where and how to find arts activities in the County. A significant portion of county residents felt underserved as the quality, quantity and diversity of arts and cultural

vibrant and lasting artistic expression requires commitment on the part of communities, both to fostering artistic curiosity and to providing hospitable settings for the expression of creativity," Gordon said.

events were not what they expected. Gaps exist within the art sectors. While certain organizations have extensive programming, can promote their work and have the financial means to develop and manage facilities, most arts content creators and providers in the county operate under constrained resources and limited budgets.

Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) thanked the task force for the "hundreds of thousands of hours" that had gone into the Master Arts Plan.

Supervisor Walter Alcorn looked to the future, saying, "As we get this plan in place, now we get to think about implementation and financing different projects ... some commitment at the board level to make these things happen in order to get there."

Fairfax County Arts Committee Chair Leila Gordon said that all human beings are creative. It is the most universally shared attribute.

"In every era, culture, language, geography, or historical context, the arts tell our individual and collective stories ... Being able to convey the complexity of our humanity through

Vienna Teen Intends to Plead Guilty

Cruz Colindres accused in Fairfax man's death.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

When Fairfax County General District Court Judge Vanessa Jordan came to court last Thursday morning, July 6, she expected to preside over a two-hour preliminary hearing for Darren Cruz Colindres. Instead, the Vienna teen charged with killing a 20-year-old Fairfax man waived his right to that hearing.

Usually, that would mean his case would be certified to a grand jury for possible indictment. But because the defendant has indicated he intends to enter a plea in connection with this fatality, the case will go directly to Circuit Court.

The tragedy occurred Saturday, March 25, in the Fairfax Village Apartments. That day, at 7:47 a.m., police were called to an apartment in the 10400 block of Viera Lane in Fairfax for a report of a man who'd been shot. Officers found Javier Gomez in the living room suffering from an apparent gunshot wound to his upper body. They rendered aid until fire and rescue personnel arrived. But after being taken to an area hospital, Gomez succumbed to his injuries.

Detectives learned that Gomez and Cruz Colindres, 18, knew each other and both had reportedly been in that apartment, Friday night, March 24, into the



Cruz Colindres

next morning. According to police, "A family member was asleep in a bedroom when they heard a gunshot. They came out to the living room, found Gomez lying on the floor and [allegedly] saw Cruz Colindres run from the apartment."

Within hours after the shooting, officers and detectives from the Fugitive Track and Apprehension Unit tracked Cruz Colindres to a home in McLean and took him into custody. They charged him with second-degree murder and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony. Since then, he's been held without bond in the Adult Detention Center.

He was in court last Thursday with Public Defender Dawn Butorac. And after Judge Jordan made sure Cruz Colindres had made the decision of his own free will to waive his right to a preliminary hearing, Chief Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Eric Clingan dropped the firearm charge against him.

The prosecutor also amended the charge of second-degree murder to the lesser offense of involuntary manslaughter – which is still a felony. If convicted, Cruz Colindres could receive a sentence of as much as 10 years in prison. He's currently scheduled to appear Aug. 14 in Circuit Court where, at that time, said Clingan, "He will enter a guilty plea."

Suspect in Fairfax Murder Case Is Arrested

On June 10, at 9:21 a.m., City of Fairfax police responded to the Kitchen & Bath Shop at 9715 Fairfax Blvd. for a report of a dead body. There, officers found an adult male who was deceased. He was later identified as Luis Barahona Reyes, 50, of Fairfax. According to police, he had sustained blunt force trauma to the upper body, and an autopsy determined his death to be a homicide.

Now, following an investigation, police have arrested the man they believe is responsible for the crime and charged him with second-degree murder. He

is Aaron James Anthony Robertson, 30, of no fixed address.

Last Thursday, July 6, with the assistance of Fairfax County police, he was arrested and taken to the Adult Detention Center. He was arraigned Friday, July 7, and is being held without bond, pending his Sept. 18 preliminary hearing in General District Court.

Anyone who has further information regarding this case, or who has had previous contact with Robertson, is asked to contact Det. Joe Pittman at 703-385-7907 or Joe.Pittman@fairfaxva.gov.

— BONNIE HOBBS

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 2

FO or visit www.afsusa.org for more information. You can also get involved as an AFS-USA Volunteer. Visit www.afsusa.org/volunteer to get started or learn more about opportunities to make a difference.

MARRIOTT AC HOTEL & RESIDENCE INN COMING TO RESTON TOWN CENTER

The Donohoe Companies, Inc. has announced \$74.7 million in construction financing with Artemis Real Estate Partners to build a first-of-its-kind dual-branded Marriott AC Hotel and Residence Inn at Reston Town Center. Donohoe was represented by Jamie Leachman and Chris Hew of JLL. This new 120-key extended-stay Residence Inn and 147-key upscale boutique AC Hotel will be the premier lodging in the Reston submarket. Located within Reston Town Center's latest expansion, the hotel site is walkable to 4.6M square feet of premier workplace and 450k square feet of retail and restaurants and adjacent to 1.1M square feet of premier workplace developed by BXP that is 90% committed. The project will enjoy a direct pedestrian entrance to the new Reston Town Center Silver Line Metro, providing easy access to Dulles Airport and the greater DC area.

The project's 34,000 square feet of street-level retail and restaurant space will be the central gathering place for local offices and residents. The upscale rooftop bar and lounge will be a unique draw with spectacular views of Northern Virginia.

LOOKING FOR SOFTBALL PLAYERS

The Golden Girls of Northern Virginia, a senior women's softball league, is looking for players. Any woman over the age of 40 is encouraged to join. All skill levels are welcome. They play most Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in Vienna from May-July and September-October. For more information, visit the web site www.goldengirls.org.

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 or 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 or 703-821-6838.

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, www.havenofnova.org or 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, or visit www.alnv.org. Operation Paws for Homes, a Virginia based 501(c)(3) organization seeks volunteers, especially to foster dogs. See www.ophrescue.org for information and all volunteer opportunities.

NSA Naples Holds Change of Command

Naval Support Activity Naples hosted a change of command and retirement ceremony July 7, 2023, onboard Capodichino.

Capt. John Randazzo of Springfield, Va. relieved Capt. James Stewart as the commanding officer of NSA Naples.

The ceremony featured guest speaker Rear Adm. Brad Collins, Commander, Navy Region Europe, Africa, Central.

Collins credited Stewart with leading the base through the COVID-19 Pandemic while managing Capodichino, Support Site, Gaeta, Carney Park and supporting Joint Forces Command Naples.

"For any other commander this might have seemed like an overwhelming task, but the NSA Naples team is the most professional installation in the region," Collins added.

Following Collins' speech, Stewart gave his final remarks as NSA Naples' commanding officer.

"It has been an honor to serve in the Navy and here at NSA Naples," said Stewart. "The diversity amongst our staff and partners presents a new culture



Capt. John Randazzo

and philosophy ... From a personal development standpoint, it is unrivaled compared to anything else I have done in the military and it has changed me for the better as a leader," Stewart added.

Stewart and his team also assisted in the transition of 43 hundred Afghan civilians and partners during Operation Allies Refuge in July - August 2021.

Randazzo arrived in Naples after serving in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV) in Washington, DC. He served as the Executive Assistant from March 2022 to February 2023 and previously as the Aviation Manpower Branch Head from July 2020 to March 2022.

Randazzo is a native of Spring-

field, Virginia. He joined the Navy in June of 1995, attending the United States Naval Academy Preparatory School and United States Naval Academy before receiving his commission in May of 2000 with a Bachelor of Science in Systems Engineering. He also holds a Master of Arts Degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the United States Naval War College.

"I am honored to join Team Naples and to have the privilege of leading this incredible group of professionals," said Randazzo. "I appreciate the warm welcome I've received from the installation staff and our Italian host nation. My passion is to support service members and their families. We will build on all the great work by Capt. Stewart and continue to enhance our command's services to better serve our warfighters and maintain our excellent bilateral relationship with our Italian counterparts."

AALIYAH ESSEX
NAPLES, ITALY



All activities at the lake were suspended temporarily.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

Sewage Spill Temporarily Closes Lake Accotink

Summertime lake activities halted for a short time.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Lake Accotink in Springfield is once again in the cross-hairs as contaminated water was detected upstream from the lake causing the lake to be closed temporarily while offi-

cialists worked to clear the source of the problem.

On Friday, June 30, the Fairfax County Wastewater Management Program identified a sewage spill upstream of Lake Accotink. Out of an abundance of caution, immediate closure of lake activities is recommended for activities involving

contact with the lake as the water may be contaminated, the DPWES said.

Lake Accotink Park remained open. The Park Authority suspended its lake-based programs and activities (boating and fishing). The park, trails and park amenities remained open for guests to use



One of the signs that were at the lake.

throughout the day on Friday and Saturday. The signs posted by DPWES instructed residents to simply avoid contact with the water.

The cause was a sewage spill which was cleaned up immediately after the initial spill. The following day, bacterial testing began on the

water in Lake Accotink showing the bacteria levels were not elevated. This indicates the cleanup effort was done in time to prevent downstream contamination from reaching Lake Accotink, Fairfax County said. The cautionary signs at the lake were removed at that time.

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To the Rescue! Help save trees from alien killers.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Be on the alert — killer aliens are invading! There is no need to look to the sky for unidentified craft — they won't be using spaceships. As in a scary Hollywood movie, their spores travel on the wind, or arrive by animal or bird dropping; perhaps even by human hand or foot. These killer aliens are invasive non-native vines which, left unchecked, will kill our trees.

The non-profit group, Plant NOVA Natives, wants you to spot alien vine species in your yard and your neighborhood, to be alert and put others on the alert, to the damage non-native vines inflict.

Plant NOVA Natives' effort is part of their Tree Rescuer and Plant NOVA Trees campaigns.

In Fall 2021, Plant NOVA Natives launched their focus on planting native trees to increase the native tree canopy in Northern Virginia. The goal: to plant 600,000 trees by 2025. Native trees are known to provide a myriad of benefits to the ecosystem, including as host plants for early stages of pollinators, and are important to reducing climate change by capturing carbon, cleaning air and clearing pollutants from stormwater. This is especially important here in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Virginia is one of five states in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, tasked by the federal government with taking actions to offset damage to the Bay created by polluted runoff from roofs, roads, and lawns, causing damage downstream.

Despite tree planting efforts, the tree campaign reports, "Northern Virginia is gradually losing tree canopy. Multiple factors contribute to tree death. Some are hard to change on a local level, such as the stress on trees from climate change. Others are within human control, such as poor planting and mulching practices or the sacrifice of trees for more roads, buildings, and park amenities." Consider the number of trees coming down along the Beltway for expanding express lanes.

One year after the tree planting campaign launch, residents self-reported 7,850 trees and shrubs planted, on the group's website. During the same timeframe, Tree Rescuers sampling survey of about 4,000 residential acres found an average of one mature tree at risk per acre. The number of at-risk trees on commercial acreage was higher; 6.5 per acre on about 6,000 acres surveyed. That's over



Supervisor Dan Storck, Mount Vernon District, shows interest in doing more to eliminate invasive vines attacking area trees.



This mature tree likely succumbed to the weight of English ivy stealing nutrients and to Porcelainberry in its canopy denying sunlight to its leaves.



Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck, head of the Board's Environmental Committee, meets with Plant NOVA Natives Outreach Chair Margaret Fisher to discuss the scope of the number of trees at risk in Fairfax County.



Margaret Fisher, Plant NOVA Natives, shares the Tree Rescuer campaign's door hanger brochure for home owners with Supervisor Dan Storck.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Recognizing Trees at Risk

- ❖ English Ivy reaches more than 1/4 of tree trunk
- ❖ Vine cover in tree canopy
- ❖ Vine twisted around tree trunk
- ❖ Vine weight causing broken branches

40,000 mature trees at risk, just in the surveyed areas of the county.

It soon becomes obvious that planting small tree seedlings, even in large numbers, cannot make up for losing thousands or millions of large, mature trees. Saving one mature native tree provides huge environmental benefits.

Yet millions of large trees are at risk of being smothered to death. Vines typically attack trees in the sun along wood edges, but may also be present in open gardens, or almost anywhere. Vines leaves

block air and light from the tree bark and canopy, and the vine's roots compete with the tree for nutrients in the soil beneath. When vines get big and spread, they suffocate the tree. Often trees are unable to recover during vine dormancy.

The amount of time it takes to do serious damage depends on the tree and the type of vine. One of the fastest growing vines, Kudzu grows out of control quickly. It is able to spread through runners, rhizomes, and by vines that root at the nodes to form new plants. Once established, kudzu can grow at a rate of one foot per day with mature vines as long as 100 feet, according to Virginia's Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Nicknamed the "plant that ate the South," Kudzu can form a continuous blanket of foliage which chokes out competing na-

SEE HELP SAVE, PAGE 7

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Help Save Trees from Alien Killers

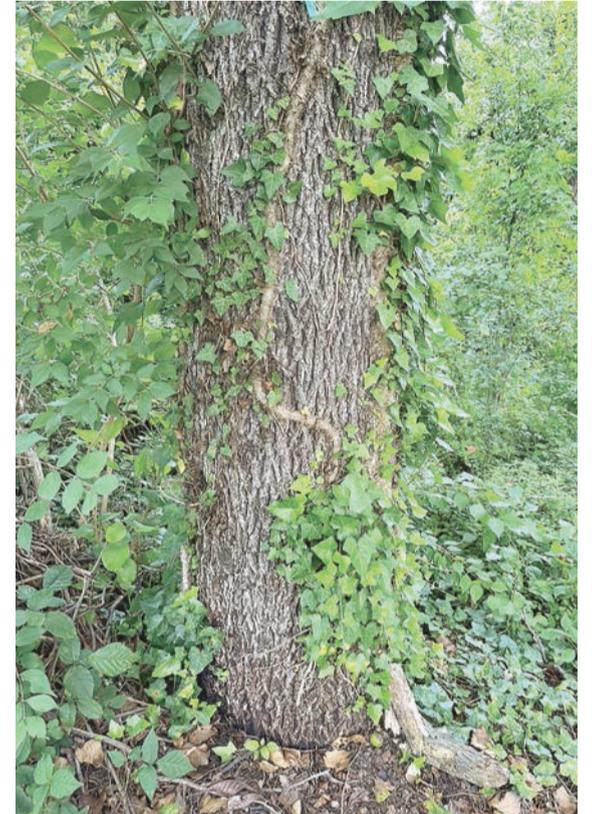
PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



Kudzu, 'the plant that ate the South,' can form vast blankets of vines crossing meadows pushing out any other native plants and climbing into and suffocating trees. Shown here in Laurel Hill Park before chemical treatment killed the Kudzu and allowed planting native trees to restore the area to forest.



Not all vines are tree killers, such as this native Virginia Creeper, whose lighter weight and compact habit are not as great a strain on its host, and in turn is a host to other native wildlife.



Last Fall volunteers cut invasive English Ivy vines at ground level and in a window pane pattern to help save this tree at serious risk with vines covering about 80 percent of the trunk. This season, though fewer shoots, the ivy is adding growth, trying to come back. Without use of chemical sprays, cutting must be repeated to weaken the unwanted plants over time.

FROM PAGE 5

tive trees and vegetation.

Another vine, Mile-a-minute weed is a fast-growing, barbed vine native to Asia. It gets its name from its ability to grow up to 6 inches per day, or 25 feet in six to eight weeks. It also forms large mats of plant material that choke out native plants, leaving no space for tree seedlings to sprout. Other prolific invasive vines in our area include: English Ivy, Japanese Honeysuckle, Oriental Bittersweet, Porcelainberry and Asian Wisteria.

Invasive vines are a problem on all types of land, not only on private lawns and public parks, but also on commercial properties, home owner association (HOA) common areas, the grounds of houses of worship, military bases, Virginia Department of Transportation easements, and railroad and other rights of way.

To some, eliminating invasive vines and other invasive plants seems an impossible task, hard to change on the local level given the size of the problem. But Margaret Fisher, Chair, Plant NOVA Natives Community Outreach Committee, says, "I'm not ready to concede that it's impossible." She does know that it will take a concerted effort; one that will need to involve action beyond what volunteer groups do now in area parks.

Fisher sets a scene that would chill a Hollywood sci-fi script writer. She warns, "The problem is growing every year, with nothing so far to stop it. The work that is being done is on such a tiny scale

compared to the need, that one can easily predict that by the end of the century, if not sooner, Fairfax County's remnant natural areas will be almost entirely destroyed. When the trees fall, it is game over, since once the light gets in, the invasive shrubs and perennials explode."

According to the Arbor Day Foundation, in one year a mature tree will absorb more than 48 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and release oxygen in exchange. This makes trees a very important part of our climate change response. When a tree dies, the carbon it had captured is released back into the environment. The Environmental Protection Agency says, "the buildup of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gases like methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O), and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) is causing the Earth's atmosphere to warm, resulting in changes to the climate we are already seeing today."

What Can Be Done on a Large Scale Locally?

The first part of the locally focused effort has been to help northern Virginians recognize the vines and their danger. Tree Rescuer volunteers look for vines in communities and leave informational door hangers. Their work adds to volunteer groups who have worked

in conjunction with the county's Invasive Management Area (IMA) group to attack invasive vines and other plants in area parks.

Recently, Fisher has begun asking for county supervisors' help, to use the county's many communication vehicles to include more tree saving information, as a service to residents, adding to the Tree Rescuers and park volunteer effort. In addition, her group advocates for county leadership in including tree saving efforts when contracting for its own landscaping services, and creation of public-private partnerships with businesses, both for trees on their properties and by adopting nearby parks. Plant NOVA Natives encourages engaging the many landscaping and lawn service companies operating in the county to learn about invasive vines and do more to eliminate them. For example, instead of mowing only to a customer's wood-line or property edge, or to a tree's mulch ring, contractors could cut invasive vines. Their regular visits for service would be useful in weakening the vines without need for use of chemical treatment. Even clipping back a vine once per season, even if it doesn't kill it, saves the attacked tree for a period, perhaps years, until the vine regrows to tree-lethal level.

Fisher reports that county supervisors to whom she's talked so far have been receptive.

The Board of Supervisors environmental committee chair, Dan Storck, expressed interest in "reviewing county efforts to address invasive plants broadly and to move actions forward to create more awareness." While Storck acknowledges he wants to speak with board members and other groups in the community, he has a long standing interest in environmental improvements and draws some parallels with work he and other board members have accomplished recently with the running bamboo problem. His Environmental Committee meets in July and again in October.

What Can Be Done Now by Residents?

Homeowners with invasive vines are urged to tackle them early each season for easiest control. Two types of attack plans may be used: mechanical and chemical. Mechanical means include pulling up by the roots, either by hand or using tools like weed wrenches or root jacks; by suffocating, using

double or triple layers of plastic to deny the plants nutrients from the sun; or cutting or mowing. Cutting thick mature vines may include cutting the vines as close to the ground as possible to deprive them of nutrients.

For English Ivy, adding a 'window pane' cut of six to twelve inches around the tree also cuts off nutrients to the vine, risking less damage to the tree bark than pulling the vines off the tree.

Chemical applications may involve foliar application or cut stem treatments for woody stemmed vines. The Virginia Department of Forestry recommends using only state certified chemical spraying professionals. Homeowners can spur interest in this kind of work by asking their landscape and mowing service providers about this kind of service.

For help in identifying invasive vines, or to volunteer as a Tree Rescuer, see <https://www.plantnovatrees.org/tree-rescuers-volunteer-program>.

Plant NOVA Natives/Plant NOVA Trees is a partnership made up of representatives from state and local agencies, not-for-profit and for-profit organizations, and numerous concerned residents, pooling their resources to work toward this common goal.

CFTC Presents Musical 'Big Fish'

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Based on both the Tim Burton movie and the Broadway show, "Big Fish" is the upcoming production of City of Fairfax Theatre Co. (CFTC). Featuring a cast and crew of 60, it'll be presented at Katherine Johnson Middle School, 3801 Jermantown Road in Fairfax City.

"A father is telling his son about his life through larger-than-life stories, as the son goes from age 10 until his 30s, when he's an expectant father, himself," said Director Amanda Snellings. "The dad, Edward Bloom, was a traveling salesman; and as he becomes very ill, son Will tries to find out which of his dad's stories were real."

For example, she said, "Edward said he was friends with a giant, met a witch who told him how he was going to die, and worked for a circus run by a werewolf. And throughout this musical, we see those stories come to life via flashbacks. But there are also current-day scenes as father and son struggle to reconnect before the father passes."

Show times are Friday, July 21, at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, July 22, at 2 and 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, July 23, at 3 p.m.; Thursday-Friday, July 27-28, at 7:30 p.m.; and Saturday, July 29, at 2 and 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25, adults; \$15, children 12 and under; at fairfaxcitytheatre.org. Prices are the same at the door, while seats are available.

"The play has heartfelt, dramatic and emotional moments of the family coming to terms with the end of Edward's life," said Snellings. "But since it's a dramedy, we also see exciting and spectacular visions of Edward's life stories, from teenager to present day. Edward's life is full-on comedy, with big, fun, musical numbers and colorful characters."

Describing the cast's acting as "really wonderful and incredible," Snellings said the audience will also love the "fantastic choreography, music and singing. The cast really clicked into the emotional depth and arc of these characters. And the ensemble members portray everything from townspeople to WWII USO dancers, circus performers and witches."

"We have a really exciting set and projections, plus tons of colorful costumes and lighting effects. The projections bring to life the fantasy scenes, and the set pieces will move to illustrate various locations. This is my fourth year directing CFTC, and every year, I

appreciate more and more the opportunity to tell these stories and work with so many members of the community."

Fairfax's Peter Marsh plays Edward. "We see Edward from his son's and wife Sandra's points of view, and then the real Edward from his point of view," said Marsh. "Will's is like a child remembers their parent and the sum of the stories he's been told. Sandra's is more romantic, and the real Edward is a 50-plus-year-old-man with all the frustrations of that age and more grounded in reality."

"But he's still fanciful and has a vivid imagination – which is central to his relationship with Will. His stories always have a kernel of truth in them, but his imagination takes them to mythic proportions. Edward's also fiercely loyal and creative, and his story arc is built on the idea of reconciliation with the most important people in his life."

Marsh said he's wanted to play this part since he portrayed another character in it, five years ago. "Since then, some people close to me have died, so it gives me a different perspective on the whole story and Edward and what I want to bring to this role," he explained. "I have a deeper understanding of his character."

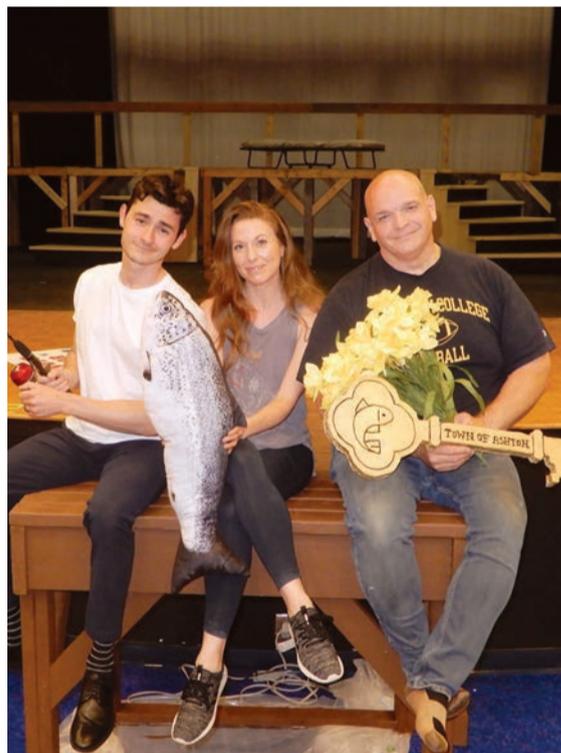
As for this show, he said, "This cast's talent level is off the charts and the choreography is outstanding. CFTC also has great talent behind the scenes. Many of these people are theater directors putting on their own shows, all year long, plus college students. So across the board, everyone's so professional. It's like watching a superhero team come together for Northern Virginia community theater."

Portraying Will is Noah Mutterperl. "He's book-smart, analytic and doesn't have much patience for fantasy and make believe," said Mutterperl. "Will's a reporter, used to focusing on facts. He feels like he barely knows his father, who's gone a lot. And when he's around, he tells Will things that, as he grows up, he's not sure he can believe."

Mutterperl said playing Will is an "interesting challenge. This show has lots of cheerful production numbers, so Will's a stick in the mud. But he's also the everyman conduit for the audience because he's the character most based in reality. Personally, I'd like to join in the singing and dancing; although there are some emotional moments that I'm glad I get to portray. Will learns family is more



Cast members strike a pose after singing a song during rehearsal.



From left are Noah Mutterperl, Maura Lacy and Peter Marsh as the Bloom family, fishing at the dock.



Ensemble member Sharon Petersen promotes "Big Fish" during Fairfax City's Fourth of July parade.

important than the stories we tell, and that his dad was a good man. He also learns to appreciate what he has and to look for those moments of fantasy."

"This is a really beautiful story that'll take the audience to the highest of highs and lowest of lows," continued Mutterperl. "I hope they'll laugh, cry and want to dance along, too. It's definitely a full spectrum of emotions. They'll love the huge fantasy numbers filled with joy, happiness and magic, but also other elements that feel very real."

Springfield's Andy Shaw, a theater director at Chantilly High,

plays the owner/operator of the Calloway Circus. "He's always looking for ways to take advantage of other people to get what he wants for his own success," said Shaw. "He's an unscrupulous and secretive person who uses the information he has against other people. But he's also outgoing and can be likeable and enjoyable."

Calling his role "lots of fun," Shaw said, "I get to sing a big song, 'Closer to Her,' with the other characters in the circus as they're figuring out what they're all about. Meanwhile, Amos is trying to get Edward to perform for free because he knows the person in the

circus that Edward likes."

Shaw said the audience will be amazed by "the breadth of things happening onstage – ranging from crazy, over-the-top, production numbers to heartfelt, intimate, small songs and scenes. And there are universal elements of the story about parents and children that will remind people of their own experiences with them."

Portraying Edward's wife is Maura Lacy. "Sandra's a Southern woman with sweet, Southern charm but a backbone of steel," said Lacy. "She holds the family together and grounds Edward back

SEE 'BIG FISH', PAGE 10

ENTERTAINMENT

JULY AND AUGUST

Pups in the Pavilion. Wednesdays from 5-7:30 p.m. At Reston Town Center, 11900 Market Street, Reston. Reston Town Center Kicks Off "Pups in the Pavilion" this Summer; Pavilion transforms into a leash-free play area during the dog days of summer. Enjoy treats, toys, areas to cool off, pet-friendly giveaways, and more. Visit <https://www.restontowncenter.com/>

JULY 10-31

Summer Arts Exhibit. 9-5 p.m. At Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Pathway Homes' 11th Annual Summer of the Arts Exhibit showcases the art, poetry and crafts of Pathway clients who have mental health challenges. Art will be available for sale by Pathway clients. Visit the website: www.pathwayhomes.org

JULY 13-23

Logan Festival of Solo Performance. At 1st Stage in Tysons. This innovative festival will gather celebrated solo performers from across the country for two-weeks of performances, workshops, discussions, and events.

Schedule:

Not My First Pandemic: Thursday, July 13 at 7:30pm, Friday, July 14 at 7:30pm, Saturday, July 15 at 2:00pm, Sunday, July 16 at 6:00pm, Saturday, July 22 at 2:00pm, and Sunday, July 23 at 2:00pm

Mr. Yunioshi: Saturday, July 15 at 7:30pm, Sunday, July 16 at 2:00pm, Thursday, July 20 at 7:30pm, Friday, July 21 at 7:30pm, Saturday, July 22 at 7:30pm, Sunday, July 23 at 6:00pm

Email the box office at boxoffice@1st-stage.org for reservations.

General admission tickets are \$20 per show and \$10 per show for Students with valid ID. Individual tickets and Festival Passes can be purchased online at www.1stStage.org or by calling the 1st Stage box office at 703-854-1856.

THURSDAY/JULY 13

Hot Lanes Jazz Orchestra. 7 p.m. At Cherry Hill Park (City of Falls Church Summer Concert Series), Falls Church. (Free, Outdoors). The Hot Lanes makes its debut appearance at Cherry Hill Park as part of the City of Falls Church's Concerts in the Park series. Originals, original arrangements and standards for all! Bring a lawn chair and blanket to enjoy free jazz!

SATURDAY/JULY 15

Artist Talk Workhouse. 2-4 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Join the Workhouse for an Artist Talk featuring Alonzo Davis and Chee Keong Kung discussing the artistic process as a form of exploration and discovery as well as the importance of travel to the development of their work. Admission is free; donations are welcome. Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/open-latitudes>

SATURDAY/JULY 15

Vienna Multicultural Festival. 3-8:30 p.m. At Vienna Town Green, Vienna. Join in a packed day of celebrating the diverse cultures and communities represented across Northern Virginia and the D.C.

Metro Area and close out the third annual Liberty Amendments Month. The festival will feature:

- 'What is your story?' Workshop
- Kids Performer: Anansegro of Ghana (African Drumming and Dance)
- 7 Mouthwatering Food Trucks
- Craft Vendors and Artisans
- Kids Activities and Games
- 'I Belong!' Essay Contest Winners
- Voter Registration and Resources

Entertainment Schedule

- 3:30 p.m. - Pan Masters Caribbean Steel Drum Orchestra
- 5 p.m. - "What's Your Story?" Workshop
- 6 p.m. - Anansegro of Ghana (African Drumming and Dance)
- 7 p.m. - Quimboa Latin Band

SUNDAY/JULY 16

NTRAK Model Train Show.

1-4 p.m. At 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Northern Virginia NTRAK members will hold a N gauge Train Display at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. Admission: museum members, free; adults 13 and over, \$5; children 5-12, \$3; under 4, free. Seniors (65+ and military (active & retired), \$4. For more information on the museum and show events phone 703.425.9225.

www.fairfax-station.org www.facebook.com/FFXSRR

MONDAY/JULY 17

The Appraisal Road Show – Lunch N Life Event. At Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 2589 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna. Hosted by Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia. The price is \$20 per ticket and this includes admission and lunch. Call 703-281-0538 or visit www.scnova.org > Events > Special Events to register today. Attendees are encouraged to bring one personal item such as jewelry, coins, timepieces, porcelain, and other heirlooms. Appraisal expert Steve Gouterman will educate the audience with interesting facts and information about what the item is, what it's worth, and what you can do with the treasure.

JULY 10-31

Summer of the Arts Exhibit. 9-5 p.m. weekdays. At Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Pkwy., Fairfax. Reception: July 12, 2023, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Meet the artists at the kick-off reception for Pathway Homes, Inc. 11th Annual Summer of the Arts Exhibit, where Pathway Homes' residents who have mental health challenges showcase and sell their own art, poetry, and crafts. For more than 43 years, Pathway Homes has enabled tens of thousands of people in Northern Virginia with serious mental illnesses and other co-occurring disabilities to get housing and supportive services to help them recover their lives. The event supports the unique talents of Pathway Homes' residents and enables them to express their journeys to recovery through their unique and personal artwork.



The Vienna Multicultural Festival will take place on Saturday, July 15, 2023 in Vienna.

RESTON COMMUNITY CENTER 2023 SUMMER

ENTERTAINMENT LINEUP

Saturdays, June 17 – August 5

10:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

At Reston Town Square Park, Reston Bring the kids for magic, comedy, puppets, music and lots of laughs. Shows include Rocknoceros, Lohr Family Antics, The Uncle Devin Show and Turley the Magician. See the full schedule here: Family Fun Entertainment Series. Family Fun Entertainment is presented by RCC and Reston Town Center Association in cooperation with MSE Productions, Inc. Reston Town Center garages offer free parking on Saturdays.

Sunday Art in the Park with the

Shenandoah Conservatory

Sundays, thru August 27

7 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Reston Town Square Park

Wind down your weekend with classical, jazz and cabaret-style music provided by faculty and students from Shenandoah University's acclaimed music conservatory. This series will run through August 27. Visit Sunday Art in the Park for the complete schedule. Reston Town Center garage parking is free on Sundays. Sunday Art in the Park is presented by RCC and Reston Town Center Association in cooperation with Shenandoah University.

JULY 15 & AUGUST 19

Summer Concert Series: Genres.

7-9 p.m. At Tysons Corner Center, The Plaza, McLean. Join the Summer Concert Series featuring performance artists Keeton on July 15 for a Pop throwback and Delta Spur with Country & Classic Rock on August 19. Enjoy takeout and cocktails from our restaurants while dancing and singing along to your favorite tunes!

FREE SUMMER CONCERTS AT MCLEAN CENTRAL PARK

The Alden in McLean presents its annual Summer Sunday Concerts in the Park at McLean Central Park. This free outdoor concert series runs now through Sunday, July 30. Performances start at 3 p.m., and the June concerts are designed to be family friendly. McLean Central Park is located at 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd.

Schedule

Sunday, July 16, 3 p.m. – Six Pack

Rodeo

Sunday, July 23, 3 p.m. – Justin

Trawick

Sunday, July 30, 3 p.m. – Philip Bowen

For more information, call 703-790-

0123, TTY: 711 or visit The Alden

website: aldentheatre.org.

LAKE ANNE'S PLAZA

CONCERT SERIES

Lake Anne Live! brings Thursday evening concerts to the plaza from now through July 27. The free concerts will feature music and dance from local musicians and dance instructors. The plaza is located at 1609 Washington Plaza North. All concerts are free.

Schedule:

July 13 (7-9 p.m.): To be announced on Lake Anne Plaza's social media pages

July 20 (7-9 p.m.): Concert with the

Reston Community Orchestra

July 27 (6-9 p.m.): Salsa and Bachata

Instruction and Dance with David

Norton

FREE CONCERT SERIES AT

BURKE LAKE PARK

Every Wednesday night from June 28th through August 23rd at 7p.m., Supervisor Pat Herry (Springfield District) along with the Fairfax County Park Authority will be hosting the fifth annual

Free Concerts in the Park series at Burke Lake Park. The series has expanded to nine shows with pop, rock and R&B music. Peterson's Ice Cream, 2 Silos beer and food trucks will be on site at all concerts. Attendees are encouraged to bring blankets and/or a lawn chair.

JULY

12 SoHo Down

19 Speidel, Goodrich, Goggin & Lille

26 The Skip Castro Band

AUGUST

2 The English Channel

9 The Road Ducks

16 The Colin Thompson Band

23 Rip tide

SATURDAY CONCERTS AT

WORKHOUSE ARTS CENTER

9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton •

7:30 p.m.

JULY

July 15 Project Locrea (World Music)

July 22 Bachelor Boys Band (High

Energy Cover Music)

July 29 Bobby Blackhat Band (Tradition/Contemporary Blues)

AUGUST

5 Workhouse Musical Event (Ticketed event. For details visit www.workhousearts.org)

12 Quin Tango (Classical Argentinian

Tango Music)

19 Karl Stoll & The Danger Zone

(Rock, Blues)

26 The United States Army Field Band

Six-String Soldiers (Country)

CONCERTS AT

FRYING PAN FARM

Thursday Evenings 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.

At Park Lawn Near Farmyard

JULY

13 Natyabhoomi School of Dance

(Indian Dance and Music)

20 Stacy Brooks Band (Blues)

27 Frank Solivan & Dirty Kitchen

(Bluegrass)

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 11

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NEWS

Musical 'Big Fish'

FROM PAGE 8

into reality, because he's in the clouds and living in fantasy. She's also super-friendly and a devoted wife and mom who has a solid relationship with her son."

Loving her role, Lacy said, "It lets people see Sandra at different ages and multiple phases in her life - from young and bubbly through becoming a wife and mother. You watch her taking on more responsibility and, later, grappling with some really, emotional moments, walking through her husband's pending death."

Lacy has two favorite songs in this show. One, "Little Lamb from Alabama," is sung by the young, exuberant Sandra. The other, "I Don't Need a Roof," is sung by Sandra to Edward toward the end of his life. "It shows her vulnerability and love for him and has some really raw moments," said Lacy. Overall, she said audiences will "love this musical's fantasy and whimsy, as well as the emotional connections you find in any family drama. They should bring tissues."

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ENTERTAINMENT



Join the Artist Talk Workshop with Alonzo Davis and Chee Kung Kung on Saturday, July 15, 2023 at Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton.

FROM PAGE 9

AUGUST

- 3 Patsy Cline Tribute Band (Country)
- 10 City of Fairfax Band Alte Kameraden German Band (Music of Germany)
- 17 The United States Army Blues Band Swamp Romp (Jazz)

ARTS IN THE PARKS

Experience free, fun, family-oriented alternatives to cartoons and video games with performances in parks this summer. Part of the Park Authority's Summer Entertainment Series, Arts in the Parks entertains children, teaches the importance of protecting our natural resources, introduces them to live entertainment in an informal, kid-friendly atmosphere, and forges a connection between kids and parks.

Don't miss memorable shows starring The Great Zucchini, Marsha and the Positrons, Mr. Lilo Gonzalez, 123 Andres, Groovy Nate, Uncle Devin and Geoff Marsh! Free performances featuring comedy, children's songs, magic, puppets and juggling are hosted at the following locations:

- Burke Lake Park Amphitheater (7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station), Saturdays at 10 a.m.
 - Frying Pan Park Visitor Center Pavilion (2739 West Ox Road, Herndon), Wednesdays at 10 a.m.
 - E.C. Lawrence Park Amphitheater (5040 Walney Road, Chantilly), Saturdays at 10 a.m.
 - Mason District Park Amphitheater (6621 Columbia Pike, Annandale), Saturdays at 10 a.m.
 - Trinity Centre (5860 Trinity Parkway, Centreville), Saturdays in August at 7 p.m. (followed by outdoor movies)
 - Wakefield Park, in front of the Rec Center, (8100 Braddock Road, Annandale), Saturdays at 10 a.m.
- For a complete calendar of summer performances for Arts in the Parks, visit the Summer Entertainment Series Arts in the Parks webpage.

JULY 21-23

South Asian Music Festival. The DC South Asian Arts Council Inc, a non-profit arts organization, unveils the 1st ever DC South Asian Music Festival from July 21-23. From the soul-stirring classical vocal and instrumental masterpieces to the mesmerizing Sufi, Ghazal, and Evergreen Bollywood, it promises to be an unforgettable musical journey. Sarod Maestro Amjad Ali Khan and sons Amaan Ali Bangash and Ayaan Ali Bangash, open the festival with their enchanting classical traditions on Friday, July 21. Saturday, July 22 starts with a Singing Competition, a showcase of exceptional local South Asian talent, taking the stage. On Saturday July 22 and Sunday July

23, the exceptional performances continue. Wheaton High School, 12401 Dalewood Dr, Silver Spring, MD 20906 For full schedule, passes and tickets, visit <https://www.dcsaaci.org>

FAIRFAX GOLF TOURNAMENTS

Get ready for a lineup of golf tournaments hosted by Golf Fairfax at Fairfax County Park Authority golf courses throughout the month of July.

Junior Club Championship at Oak Marr Golf Center on July 15. Junior golfers age 17 and under compete in a 9-hole stroke play tournament. Players will be divided into two age divisions, 12 and under, and 13-17. Cost \$35. Prizes for first, second and third place teams, as well as closest to the pin in each division. The golfer with the lowest overall score will be crowned the Junior Club Champion. Tee times will be assigned two days before the event. Rain date July 22. Oak Marr Golf Center, 3136 Jermantown Road in Oakton. For more <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/golf/oak-marr> or call 703-255-5390.

On July 15, show your skills at the Modified Stableford Tournament at Jefferson Golf Course. Open to golfers age 18 and up, this event features a 9-hole stroke play competition using the Modified Stableford scoring system. Golfers earn points for achieving scores better than par, such as double eagles, eagles and birdies; and they will get deductions for scores worse than par, bogeys and double bogeys. The golfer with the most points at the end of the tournament wins. Cost \$35. Rain date July 22.

Jefferson Golf Course, 7900 Lee Highway in Falls Church. For more <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/golf/jefferson> or call 703-573-0444.

To register for upcoming golf events, visit Park Authority Golf's tournament webpage <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/golf/tournaments>.

THRU AUG. 18

Summer Art Camps. Ages 8-18 years. At Great Falls Village Centre Art School, Great Falls. Looking for a summer art camp for your budding artist? The popular art summer camps include: Fun with Watercolor & Acrylic Paints; Paper Maché Sculpture; Classical Drawing; Color Study; Cartooning; 35mm Photography for Middle and High School Students; Animé Style Drawing Morning (9:30-12:30 p.m.) and afternoon (1:30-4:30 p.m.) camp sessions are available. Camps are taught by professional artists with teaching experience in the Great Falls Village Centre art school. Visit <https://artsofgreatfalls.org/summer-camps-2023/>

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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.

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.

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

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

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A Dieter's Delight (This Dieter, Anyway)



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Finally, after a lifetime of being overweight – and of occasionally committing to a weight-loss regimen, I have, at age 69 (Yikes. 69. I can write it. It's hard to say it though) found a not-so-much-a-diet-as-an-alternative to gaining weight. Let me try to explain. First, a little context.

As a mother in the 1950s, my mother was advertised/felt compelled to make sure her two boys (Richard and me) drank eight glasses of milk per day (“to build strong bones” was the tag line), thanks to its calcium content. My mother took this campaign very seriously. But she had a dilemma: how to get her two growing boys to drink a half-gallon of milk every day. Though ours was not a kosher home, we were not allowed to drink milk with our meals (separation of meat and dairy), dessert was another meal, however. And so, my mother's solution: buy us something sweet for which we'd need the milk to wash it all down. In our house then, milk and cookies were a way of life. I mean their consumption (in addition to other related desserts/snack cakes/et cetera) was the order of the day, five times. And since we couldn't (by way of our religious I'd-hardly-call-them-convictions) ever have a glass of milk with our meals, it meant we needed a non-main course incentive to give us the opportunity to drink all that milk. Ergo, dessert, and frequently. It began at breakfast; continued with our bagged lunches for school, then at home after school before dinner (an afternoon snack), then of course dessert after dinner and once more before bedtime. I guess we were short three glasses. Nonetheless, my mother felt she had done her dietary duty for her children.

To say my brother and I simply ate sweets and washed it all down with milk would be an understatement. We consumed sweets morning, 'noon, late afternoon, early evening and finally just before we went to bed. And each time, we drank milk. We were professionals, not exactly connoisseurs or paid for our work, but we were diligent and consistent in our daily routine. Cakes, cookies, snack cakes, donuts, bakery, and pastry items, and as a daily topper: ice cream with jimmies – most often from Brigham's. The dessert brands that were most popular: Hostess, Drakes, Nabisco (Oreos particularly), and Keebler (And if anyone is curious, Tastykakes were not available in Newton, Massachusetts at that time).

Now back in our time, Nabisco only made single stuff Oreos. Now we finally get to the substance of the column. If I do say-so myself, and I do, I was years ahead of my time. My Oreo-cookie-eating technique was neither to twist off one chocolate wafer and lick off the cream or dunk the entire cookie into my glass of milk. Amateurs. My preferred route was to twist or bite off the Oreo cookie wafer from two Oreos leaving two wafers with all the cream. I would then sandwich the two cream-covered wafers together to make my own double stuff cookies – 60 odd years ago. It was heaven. It was as if I had discovered plutonium (as George Costanza once joked on an old Seinfeld episode).

Now, we get to my having-my-cookie-and-eating-it diet. For almost the entirety of my Oreo-eating life; progressing from the original (“single”) Oreos to “Double Stuff” and even to “Megastuff” available now, I have always twisted/bit off one wafer from two cookies and made my heavy-on-the-cream sandwich doubles, quadruples and octuples, if you will?. And previously, until very recently, I would eat the semi-abandoned cream-less chocolate wafers and then eat the Kenny-original cookie bursting with cream. The calm before the storm, you might say.

Now the diet that I've stumbled onto: I am no longer eating the cream-less semi-abandoned chocolate wafers. I am tossing them and just eating the stuffed-with-cream creation, continuing a long-sitting tradition, as explained. As a result, I am reducing my caloric intake by sacrificing/not eating these cream-less chocolate wafers. Multiply this reduction by hundreds, if not thousands of Oreo cookies, and perhaps you can do the math, too. Finally, a diet I can live with, but hopefully not one I will die from.

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

A Very American Tradition

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

The Connection asks, "What does the July 4th holiday mean to you."

What does the July 4th holiday mean to you?



Franklin Perkins, who with Springfield's Newington Forest neighbors, has decorated his yard with American flags every July 4th for 23 years says the July 4th holiday means, "... independence, freedom and love for all Americans."



Julia James, with her husband Scott, a naturalized U.S. citizen born in China, says the July 4th holiday means, "...independence, a national holiday, and taking a first family boat trip to D.C. to watch the national fireworks."



Robert Gilmore, of Springfield, with Dipper, says the July 4th holiday means, "our country's freedom."

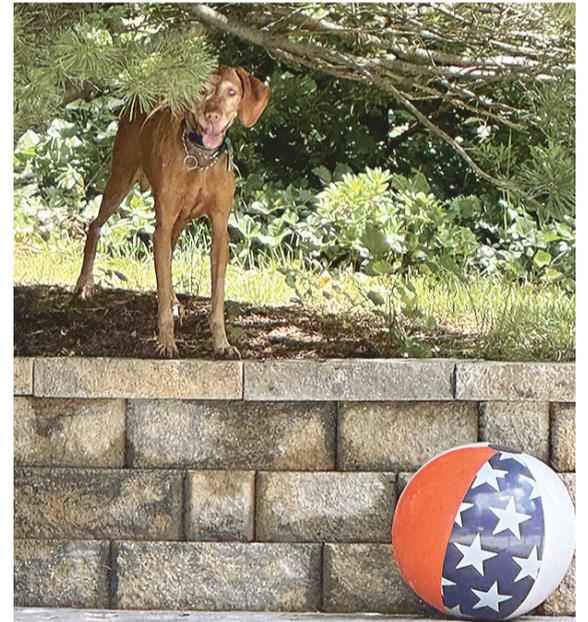


Fireworks in patriotic colors light the sky over Vienna.



PHOTO BY KATHY STEWART

With Evelyn Novins, four month old Rip, of Falls Church (through an interpreter) says, "...when it's your very first Fourth of July and your friends Diamond and Haley alert you to good tasting dog cake, it's best not to wait politely for your share".



A reminder that for many animals who don't have a voice, and many humans who remain silent, the loud noises of July 4th celebratory explosions are difficult to handle.

PHOTO BY
SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION



Ron Green, of Alexandria, says the July 4th holiday means, "hope that our nation can mend itself; if it got through the trials and tribulations of 247 years ago, maybe it can mend itself."