

CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station ♦ Lorton ♦ Clifton

PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION
OPINION, PAGE 6 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 9 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10

Preparing For Women's Equality Day

IN THE NEW NATION

...nation's founding documents, English common law, in which state matters. A married woman's identity. Married women had no s: the right to property, to their own wages, and to vote.



A gathering of citizens in the new nation.

...tution gave control of voting rights to the states. Most states followed the exclusively to white men who owned property.

AND THE LEGACY OF SLAVERY

...history, slavery and its legacy played a critical central issue in the drive for women's voting southern states feared woman suffrage would



Enslaved people engaged in all types of labor such as washing clothes.

New Lawman in Town

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Fairfax City Residents Concerned Over Townhouse Proposal

PAGE 4

Filling Gaps for Hungry Children

PAGE 7



Lisa Sales, President, Virginia NOW, said, "We need people to know that this fight rages on and that women and the men allied with them need to shout for equal rights for all from the rooftops." Women's Equality Day is Aug. 26.

Peace of Mind in Retirement Workshops @ the Workhouse

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Food For Neighbors serves more than 5,800 students
at 41 middle and high schools in Fairfax, Loudoun
and Arlington counties.

NEWS

Hotel Provides 'Elevated Experiences for Visitors'

Fairfax City Residence Inn celebrates its renovations.

By BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

The Residence Inn by Marriott has been part of the Fairfax City community since May 2011. So when it recently marked its renovation with a special event, City officials were happy to participate.

The festivities included a ribbon cutting in the hotel's main lobby, followed by food, drinks, live music and a local artist from George Mason University. Residence Inn employees also gave tours of the hotel to show off the new changes.

"We're here to celebrate this renovation of the Residence Inn, here at the entrance to our City," said Economic Development Authority (EDA) Commissioner Dawn McGruder. "The Marriott brand provides elevated experiences for visitors. And this Marriott in our Northfax neighborhood is at Fairfax's front door."

Just two miles from GMU, the Residence Inn is mainly an extended-stay hotel, but short stays are also welcome. Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read even noted that "It's a great place to put your family or other visitors" at Christmastime, as well as out-of-town guests who come to the City for weddings, graduations and other events.

"It's a lovely hotel in this City, and it's located where we're doing redevelopment," she continued. "And Marriott is a brand that people know and can count on. This is a custom Residence Inn, so I'm delighted to have it here in Fairfax."

In response, General Manager Kristin Feenstra said, "It's a pleasure to be part of the City and community." She then thanked Fairfax Economic Development Director Chris Bruno, plus Tara Borway and Matthew Easley with the Economic Development Office, "for their help in figuring out how to promote us."

One of the Marriott owners, Lou Paladeau, also addressed everyone attending the ceremony. "We feel great about being here and investing in Fairfax," he said. "And we hope you like the new product."

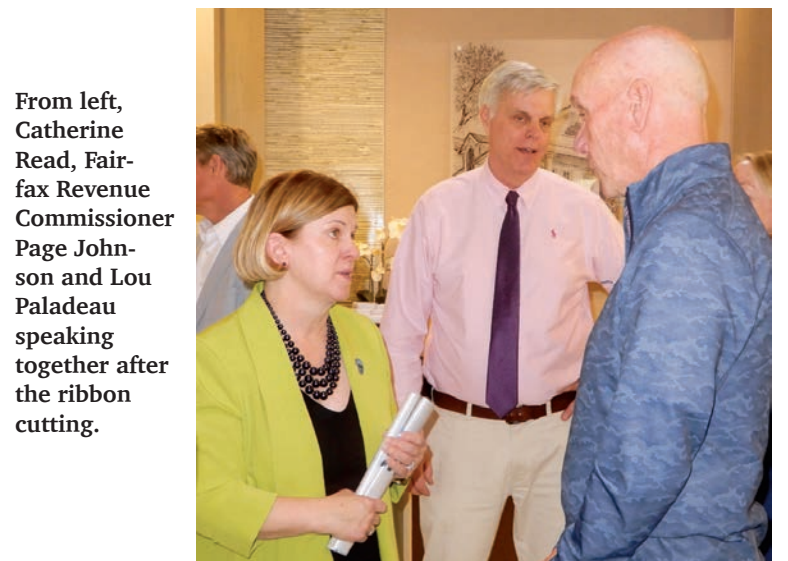
Stressing the partnership between the Residence Inn and GMU, Feenstra said student artwork is featured on the hotel walls and that current GMU students and alumni are hired for front-desk and sales positions. In fact, senior Brianna Camp worked on a painting in the lobby during the event.



Cutting the ribbon are (from left) Chris Bruno, City Councilmember Tom Ross, Catherine Read, Kristin Feenstra, Jerry Cooper (a Marriott owner), Page Johnson and Dawn McGruder.



GMU senior Brianna Camp working on a painting to be displayed in the Residence Inn in Fairfax City.



From left, Catherine Read, Fairfax Revenue Commissioner Page Johnson and Lou Paladeau speaking together after the ribbon cutting.

Feenstra said the Residence Inn is pleased to provide its guests with spacious suites, as well as a place to conduct business meetings while still enjoying the small-town feel of Fairfax City's shops, parks and restaurants.

"We renovated 155 rooms with

new furniture, carpet and wallpaper," she said. "We redid the lobby and meeting rooms, too, and updated the patio." A GMU grad, herself, Feenstra added, "I'm a local girl who grew up here and am proud to be general manager of what I consider the best hotel in Fairfax County."

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

New Lorton Police Station Commander Named

Station nears opening in Fall.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

There's a new lawman in town. The 1865 term "lawman" is not used often in modern policing; now we usually say police officer or law-enforcement officer, or even policeman, harking back to the days before women filled the role. The shorter term cop applies to both sexes.

Neither is the South County area of Fairfax the lawless area of the western territories of the United States in the 1860s. But the eight district police stations scattered throughout the county have not included a station in close proximity to the fast growing southern parts of the county. Calls for police in the areas of Clifton, Lorton, Mason Neck and Springfield are covered by officers from the nearest stations: Franconia, Sully, and West Springfield. Once opened and staffed, the new south county station located on Lorton road, now in final stages of completion, will have officers who can be dispatched from a base much closer to those areas.

The new lawman coming to the territory is experienced Captain Richard Morvillo, who has been selected to command the south county station. When the station opens, permanent assignment of officers to the new facility is not expected to be complete. Instead, coverage by officers from the stations currently providing patrol and response will continue. Over time, a mix of officers who desire to serve in that area, and those with a variety of needed experience and tenure, will make up Morvillo's duty complement. The impacts on duty selection of new county collective bargaining for police officers, expected to begin in December, is not yet known. The station's proximity to I-95 is seen as an enticement to officers, as many travel to work from outside the county.

The graceful looking new police station building with covered archways and bountiful landscaping has been dubbed the "ghost town" by some locals, as it appears completed but not staffed. After multiple police academy classes have turned out new officers, and the department's redistricting staffing effort is nearing completion, the new building may need a new nick-



Capt. Richard Morvillo will have assistance from Shirley Ginwright on community outreach.



Captains Richard Morvillo and Eric Ivancic, Commanders of law enforcement divisions assigned to the new Lorton district in south county



The new Lorton District Police Station and Animal Shelter near completion is expected to open in the Fall.

name. Building equipment parts and office furniture on order but not yet received are more valid impacts to the opening.

Joining officers under Morvillo's command at the new facility, a contingent of Captain Eric Ivancic's Ani-

mal Protection Police Division has space allocated, allowing those specialized officers a closer base for response as well. A significant amount of the facility's space is dedicated to providing an additional animal shelter with kennels and outdoor runs to complement the main animal shelter on West Ox Road.

Does Morvillo see a particular



The new police station coming to Lorton will bring a new lawman and perhaps renewed attention to area nuisances.

focus needed for law enforcement in this neighborhood? He says that this area has the same everyday annoyances that all of Fairfax County experiences. He terms annoyances as those things that are disturbing to residents and impact the enjoyment of life here that law enforcement is asked to address. "All are vitally important", he says, "and none are exclusive to the Lorton area."

Morvillo notes that panhandling, shoplifting, assault and domestic abuse are common problems throughout the county. The department initiates various focuses at all stations: in June, a summer crimes

initiative; July, DUIs; and August, vehicle trespassing and larceny. The department's county-wide Road Shark initiative, concentrating on aggressive driving, issued over 15,000 citations and warnings since March 2023.

While Morvillo, says the same level of vigilance continues for the area, some have observed noticeably fast action which suggests he has begun his focus on area complaints. For example, a car recently abandoned in the nearby park was tagged and ticketed within a day of reporting.

A pull off used for semi-truck parking for years on a road to the I-95 landfill with significant littering occurrence now has new no parking signs posted. Morvillo already is out meeting members of the community, including attending National Night Out events, such as held in Newington Forest. He will have assistance with community outreach from Shirley Ginwright, whose focus is building strong community relationships and civic engagement. A past pres-

ident of Fairfax County NAACP and Chair of the Communities of Trust committee, Ginwright, is now assisting police stations with events to educate the public about police responsibilities.

Morvillo, who says he, "is honored to be selected to serve," is a 34 year veteran of the Fairfax County Police Department, starting as a patrol officer in Franconia District, part of the area under his new responsibility. He served in the retail theft and neighborhood patrol units unit his promotion to sergeant in 1995.

He served in Fair Oaks and McLean Districts, with later promotions to Second, then First Lieutenant; then to his present rank of Captain. He worked in Internal Affairs, Inspection Division, the Crime Scene section, Intelligence Division, Cyber and Forensics Division, and as a Duty Officer. He holds a bachelor's degree from George Mason University, earned after his education at Burke Secondary School on Burke Lake Road in Burke.

‘Inconsistent with the Neighborhood’

Infill townhouse proposal raises residents’ concerns.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

During a recent Fairfax City Council work session, councilmembers received a presentation about a proposal to build new townhouses at 11006 Park Road. The applicant, Caglayan Investment Group, would like to erect 13, three-story townhomes fronting along both Park Road and a private street.

The homes would have two parking spaces each, with three visitor spaces in the development. A playground is also planned, and the project is estimated to generate 58 vehicle trips/day.

Before the presentation, however, two City residents expressed their feelings about this proposal during citizen-comment time in the Council’s regular meeting, prior to the work session. Speaking first was Lindsey Collins, who lives in the Westmore community in a house that backs up to the proposed townhome site.

“My husband and I looked forward to this development and continued improvement and beautification of our neighborhood,” she said. “We were excited about it until the latest iteration of the plans was released. The changes proposed shocked us. First, having a single access point for entry and

exit off of Park Road – with only walking access off Lee Highway – would bring a tremendous amount of traffic to a neighborhood struggling to sustain the traffic we already have.”

“We have serious concerns about safety, as well,” said Collins. “So many nonresidents fly through our streets to cut through – right by a playground where neighborhood children walk.” Lastly, she added, “The current design is quite a departure from the previous [one]. These townhouses are hideous structures that’ll look absolutely out of place in a neighborhood full of both modest, Cape Cod and Colonial-style homes.”

Next, Russ Landis said he lives about half a block away, around the corner from the proposed site. “The development would sit in the middle of an established neighborhood of single-family homes – the majority of which are one story,” he explained. “These 13, multi-story townhomes are completely inconsistent with the size, scale and character of the surrounding neighborhood. Single-family homes or a number of low-impact, commercial uses would be more appropriate.”

Later, during the work session, City Planner Supriya Chewle told Council the property is 1.16 acres to the north of the Park Road/Holly Street intersection. “It’s zoned commercial retail and would need a rezoning to residential townhouse,” she said. Chewle also noted that one house, some small businesses and a vacant commercial building are currently on that site.

Representing the applicant,



Artist’s rendition of the proposed Park Road townhouses in Fairfax City.

attorney Keith Martin said the changed zoning classification would be “an appropriate transition between the commercial and residential uses” in that area.” In addition, since the land is in the Kamp Washington section of the City, Councilmember Billy Bates noted that the townhomes’ height would be in keeping with Fairfax’s Small Area Plan for Kamp Washington, which recommends three- to five-story buildings along Park Road.

Councilmember Tom Ross said he’d heard from a resident who was concerned only three guest parking spaces were provided. But, replied Martin, “Most of the townhomes have two-car garages, and most of the driveways would be 18

feet long – large enough for two or three cars.”

Still, said Ross, “Most of the single-family homes there were built in the 1940s and ’50s. That site does need to be redeveloped, but please consider how to make the design fit in better.”

Councilmember Jeff Greenfield asked, “Will you place covenants requiring people to use their garages as garages, to keep them from parking on the outside streets? It would protect property values and allow people in the other neighborhood to park in front of their own homes.” Martin said the applicant would do that.

Greenfield, too, said the townhomes’ architecture “missed the mark” and should, instead, “be

more traditional and not so modern-looking.” Martin said the City’s Board of Architectural Review – which already saw the plan – agreed with Greenfield and recommended the architect add more brick to the building and do a better job of breaking up the façade.

Councilmember Kate Doyle Feingold asked what would happen if landscaping was added to the streets, and Martin answered, “We’d lose half the townhouses.” The work-session presentation was made just to give information to Council about this project, so no official action was taken then. However, Ross advised Martin to consult with the neighbors about it because “they’re the ones who’ll have to live with it.”

BULLETIN BOARD

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

ST. MARK’S ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAM FALL 2023 TERM

English classes for all levels of English learners are offered in person at St. Mark Catholic Church, 9970 Vale Rd., Vienna, from 8-9:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning Sept. 26 through Dec. 5, 2023. Extra classes in Conversation, Writing, and Citizenship are offered 7-7:45 p.m. the same evenings.

Registration in person for the Fall 2023 term is Tuesday, Sept. 19, and Thursday, Sept. 21 at St. Mark. English Classes, offered at all levels, are \$25

per term. Conversation, Writing, and Citizenship classes are \$10 per term. Cost of the textbook is extra. Call Monica at 703-980-9380, or visit www.stmarkesl.org or email stmarkesl@gmail.com

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.

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@aln.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

Volunteer Adult Mentors Need-

ed. Help assist the Department of Family Services’ BeFriend-A-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil at Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-4547.

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

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 5

Detectives Investigating in-Custody Death of Inmate Latasha Dove

On Aug. 1, inmate Latasha Dove, 53, was found unresponsive in her single cell at the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center. Deputies immediately began performing life-saving measures. Fire and Rescue personnel

responded and transported Dove to the hospital, where she was pronounced deceased.

On Aug. 1, a medical emergency was called at 2:27 p.m. and rescue was summoned when the post deputy found the inmate unresponsive in her cell. The deputy

immediately rendered aid until relieved by ADC medical personnel. Rescue arrived and transported the inmate to the hospital. She was pronounced deceased by hospital personnel at 3:13 p.m.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will conduct an autopsy. Pre-

liminarily, foul play is not suspected.

Dove had been in the custody of the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office and incarcerated at the ADC since Jul. 26. She was arrested for simple assault and destruction of property and was being held on bond. FCPD detectives are coor-

dinating with the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office to gather the facts and circumstances surrounding this death.

Fairfax County Sheriff's Office policy dictates that an in-custody death must be investigated by the Fairfax County Police Department.

Scholarships Awarded to Affordable Housing Residents

The Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (FCRHA) awarded 10 affordable housing residents scholarships for post-secondary education. Recipients were recognized during the FCRHA's meeting on July 20, 2023.

"We are truly inspired by our scholarship awardees.

They plan to study teaching, medicine, criminology, IT and other professions. We are hopeful they will consider making a positive impact here in Fairfax County after they

complete their studies," said Melissa McKenna, Chairman, Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

Awardees include*:

- Hanaa Azzouzi, Alexandria
- Yolanda Marie Castillo, Alexandria
- Ashlee Forbes, Herndon
- Cherron Johnson, Alexandria
- Israa Al Mashhadani, Burke
- Phuong Anh Quach, Falls Church
- Lerman Abdoulakder Waiss, Centreville

*not all awardees chose to be listed.

About the Scholarships

The Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority established the scholarship program to promote higher learning among individuals and families receiving housing assistance. \$50,000 in scholarships were awarded at \$5,000 per recipient.

Scholarships are designed to promote postsecondary education and technical training for Fairfax County residents who

live in affordable housing supported by the FCRHA. Scholarships were awarded based on academic achievements and other factors. To qualify, scholarship awardees must have been a member of a household currently receiving housing assistance through the FCRHA; a resident of Fairfax County for at least six months prior to application deadline; and accepted into an accredited post-secondary education institution.

All scholarships are funded with federal dollars.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 4

opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubic-

ki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403- 5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.

Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean continues to have an urgent need for new volunteers to help area senior citizens get to and from their medical and therapy

appointments. To find out more about the Shepherd's Center and how you can volunteer to provide transportation and other services, call the Center at 703-506-2199 or e-mail the Center at info@scmafc.org. The Center's website is www.scmafc.org.

Master Gardener Training. The Fairfax County Master Gardener Association offers plant clinics,

home turf training or speakers for homeowner's meetings. Fees vary. Visit fairfaxgardening.org or call MG Help Desk at 703-324-8556 for more.

Volunteers Needed. PRS is looking for empathetic and caring volunteers to make phone calls to older adults who may be feeling socially isolated. The commitment is one 3-hour shift per week for one year.

Located in Arlington. Ages 21 & up. Intensive training provided. Learn more and apply: prsinc.org/caring-volunteering/. Questions? Email lpadgett@prsinc.org.

Volunteers for Change. A program for adults which offers more than 50 weekend and evening volunteer opportunities per month. www.volunteerfairfax.org.

Be a part of our:

Wellbeing pages, the first week of every month.

Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

Senior Living, fourth week of every month.

Questions?

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Burden of Housing on Family Budgets

BY DEL. VIVIAN WATTS

This historic chart confirms just how severe the burden of housing is on household budgets. It was always an essential, significant expense, but it now takes more than double the chunk out of our budgets that it once did.

The major cause is lack of housing supply driving costs up through the domino effect of competition from higher income buyers/renters inflating the price of all housing but especially the limited stock of affordable housing. Reversing the escalating domino effect on housing affordability is many-faceted. However, it's important to be aware of public policies that can have the result of adding to housing costs. Two current issues center on the Federal Reserve's effort to control inflation and on the push to cut Virginia state taxes rather than fund local schools.

Last summer, the price of gasoline was hovering around \$5 a gallon pushed by world politics. That hit on household budgets faded as has the general impact of inflation which, as of June, has slowed to only 3% compared to its 1981 record-tying high of 9.1% a year ago.

All good, except for the fact that the Fed's effort to control market basket inflation by raising interest rates has a long-term impact on housing affordability. Last year, you could get a long-term fixed rate mortgage at 5% – now you

OPINION/LETTER

There Is No Budget Surplus

Letter to Del. Barry Knight, Chairman, House of Delegates Appropriations Committee; Sen. Janet D. Howell, Co-Chair, Senate Finance Committee; Sen. George Baker, Co-Chair, Senate Finance Committee is shared with the Connection.

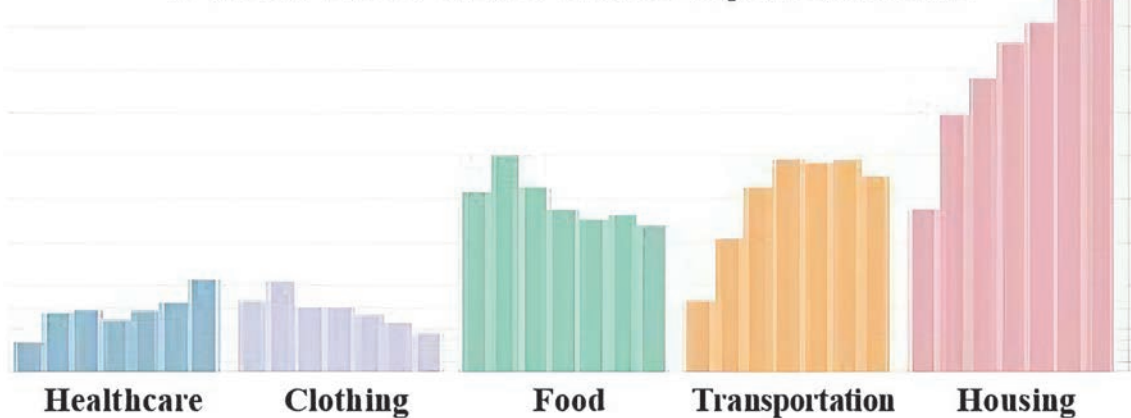
Dear Del. Knight, Sen. Howell, and Sen. Barker:

On behalf of the Northern Virginia Regional Commission, I am writing to you with respect to the recently released JLARC report on state funding of the public-school divisions in the Commonwealth. The Commission is a Council of 13 local governments representing more than 2.5 million residents.

As you are aware, the JLARC report surfaces issues that local governments not only in Northern Virginia, but throughout the Commonwealth have raised for decades related to the underfunding of our public-school divisions by the Commonwealth. As you know

75 Years of How Americans Spend Their Money

1941-2014 Bureau of Labor Statistics <https://howmuch.net>



A good chart is worth a thousand words.

must cope with paying 7% over 30 years. Rents are equally impacted due to the business model of routinely re-financing commercial properties to cover the cost of running the property.

The second impact on the cost of housing is how the Virginia General Assembly will resolve cutting state taxes versus addressing under-funded schools. What does state school spending have to do with the cost of housing? The major item in local budgets is funding schools – the major source for local funding is the real estate tax. The major item in the state budget is funding schools – the major source for state funding is the individual income tax. This makes it a given that a permanent cut in

Virginia's top income tax rate will translate directly into less state funding being available for local schools and the difference will directly impact the local real estate tax rate.

For those who think state school funding can take some paring back based on hearing an often-repeated political declaration that a given year's state budget included the most ever for public schools, the facts tell otherwise. The fact is each year's spending has to cover more students, as well as cover inflation. The fact is our state funding not having adequately covered these factors has resulted in Virginia spending less per student adjusted for inflation than we did in 2008, while other states are now spend-

ing more – on average 8% more.

Equally concerning is Virginia also has fallen behind its own adopted standards of education to support such basics as competitive salaries to attract and hold qualified teachers, smaller class sizes, and essential enhancements not just for students with learning difficulties but for mental health. On July 10, Virginia's non-partisan Joint Legislation Audit and Review Commission released a two-year, detailed study confirming the state's under-funding by as much as \$3.5 billion a year. Not beginning to address this significant shortfall in the state budget and putting more pressure on real estate tax rates and on household housing budgets is not the answer.

the report states, "School divisions in other states receive 14 percent more per student than school divisions in Virginia, on average, after normalizing for differences in cost of labor among states. This equates to about \$1,900 more per student than Virginia." Northern Virginia this past school year had 409,999 full time enrolled students as such that equates to a shortfall in state funding of \$778,998,110 in our region alone. And, as the report highlights, the shortfall in state funding for our public-school divisions burdens all local governments in the Commonwealth.

The report highlights what our local governments have been raising:

1. State SOQ formula yields substantially less funding than actual division spending and benchmarks.
2. Total statewide staffing needs calculated by SOQ formula are less than actual employment levels and workgroup estimates.
3. SOQ formula systematically underestimates division compensation costs.

4. Formula still uses Great Recession-era cost reduction measures.

5. Formula does not adequately account for higher needs students; methodology for at-risk students undercounts students in poverty.

6. Formula does not adequately account for local labor costs.

7. Formula does not adequately account for small divisions' inability to gain economies of scale.

We appreciate the ongoing discussions related to FY24 budget amendments. We would respectfully suggest that with so many unfilled needs there is no budget surplus until such time that

the Commonwealth addresses its commitment to invest in our public-school systems to be able not only to compete with our immediate neighbors, but nationally and internationally.

John Chapman

Chaman, Northern Virginia Regional Commission

A regional council composed of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William counties, the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park, and the towns of Dumfries, Herndon, Leesburg, and Vienna

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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Forty-four of the Nation's Highest Poverty Schools in FCPS

These schools serve free breakfast and lunch to all students.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

When Fairfax County Public Schools open on Aug. 21, there will be nearly a 30 percent increase in the number of schools participating in a U.S. Department of Agriculture program called the Community Eligibility Provision compared to last year. The program is a free meal option for schools and districts in low-income areas.

For the 2022-2023 school year, 34 of 198 Fairfax County Public Schools were in the program, being deemed part of the nation's highest-poverty schools. This year, 44 of the 198 Fairfax County Public Schools are in the program.

The upside to the harrowing statistic is that students enrolled at the public school division's 44 schools will be served a nutritious breakfast and lunch at no cost.

These 44 Fairfax County public schools will not collect household applications to qualify students for free or reduced-priced meals. There are no student meal cards that rack up a haunting amount of delinquent debt. No parents or caregivers will be notified directly via the school division's text mes-

sages, phone calls, or U.S. mail that their students have an outstanding debt.

Such is the norm if there is delinquent debt; according to the Meal Charge Policy,

At these 44 schools, no student goes hungry because they don't want to burden their families with a debt that follows them from elementary to middle to high school if unpaid by their families or through donations by organizations. All students at these 44 schools can grab any breakfast as they hurry into the buildings and later enjoy the same lunches everyone else has.

It is food access equity — no stigma, no shame. But what about the other 154 public schools in Fairfax County?

Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines determine eligibility for free or reduced-price meal benefits at all other schools. Applications are available online and at each school location.

Concerns regarding federal meal program eligibility include that some families need help understanding the application process, others are humiliated to apply, and

others have their applications denied. Fairfax County Public Schools does provide a review procedure. "Under the provisions of the free and reduced-price meal policy, Greg Rupert, Coordinator of Administration, will review applications and determine eligibility, states the Aug. 4 FCPS News Release.

Another concern is that the eligibility requirements for free and reduced-price meals are identical across the country. They do not account for the cost of living here. Households with four members and a maximum income of \$39,000 are eligible for free student meals. Four-person households earning between \$32,318.01 and \$45,991 are eligible for reduced-price meals, which are also no charge.

The breakfast meal price for grades K-12 students is \$1.75; qualifying students for reduced-price breakfast pay no charge. Lunch for elementary students is \$3.25 and \$3.50 for middle, secondary, and high school students; reduced-price lunch for qualifying students is free.

Foster children, who are the

SEE FREE BREAKFAST, PAGE 8

Teacher Works to Erase Student Meal Debt

This is not the first rodeo for Fairfax County Public School teacher Gabe Segal as he attempts to stay on top of student meal debt. This time, it is for his high school students. On Thursday, Aug. 17, Segal is holding a fundraiser at a local tavern and inviting guest bartenders at the

legislative level: Delegates Irene Shin and Danica Roem (running for a State Senate seat) and Kyle McDaniel, candidate at-large for the Fairfax County School Board.

"Creating a partnership between educators and legislators is one of the few solutions. Together, we can

SEE STUDENT MEAL, PAGE 10



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON

Jimmy Cirrito, owner of Jimmy's Old Town Tavern greets Fairfax County Public School teacher Gabe Segal who is holding Cheers for Children at the tavern on Aug. 17 to raise funds to pay FCPS student meal debt.



Langston Hughes Middle School on opening day 2021.

Bandaid Approaches to Food Insecurity

School system extends summer food program at public school sites.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Part of an ongoing Series on hunger and housing instability in Fairfax County

On Aug. 4, it appeared hungry students who were depending on two meals a day from Fairfax County Public Schools, would be out of luck until school starts for the new school year Aug. 21.

Questioning the availability of free breakfast and lunch options for children and adolescents from

food-insecure households, the school system made an end-date adjustment to its summer meals program at "public school" sites for Camp Fairfax.

"After reviewing our staffing and current operations, we have been able to adjust our summer meals program and will extend our service through Aug. 18 while ensuring compliance with U.S. Department of Agriculture and Virginia Department of Education regulations. Food and Nutritional Services is committed to providing equitable opportunities for our students through open meal sites throughout the county," the school division responded in an email shortly after 9 p.m. on Aug. 4.

Nearly 60,000 children qualify for free and reduced meals in Fairfax County Public Schools.

"Prior to the pandemic, while Fairfax County has traditionally had a low food-insecurity 'rate' compared to other counties in the nation, it had the high-

SEE BANDAID, PAGE 12

BURKE / FAIRFAX / FAIRFAX STATION/CLIFTON/LORTON / SPRINGFIELD



FILE PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Children at Fairfax County Public Schools dig into a salad bar.

Cinder Bed Road Sees Signs of Redevelopment

Addition to industrial area of Newington may open the door for more.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Ground clearing has begun at a parcel along Cinder Bed Road where the United Community of Muslims of the United States of America are building a mosque. This mosque was approved by the Fairfax County Department of Zoning in March 2019 on the west side of Cinder Bed Road in an area dominated by industrial businesses, abandoned houses and truck parking, revealing a section of the Mount Vernon and Franconia districts that is out of character with the rest of the area.

For years, weeds enveloped this two-story white house that was occupied at one time. In recent weeks, the ground has been cleared, Dumpsters are positioned to make way for demolition equipment. This white house is not the only place that was once home to a family along this stretch of this industrial road. There is another house standing back from the road at 7819 Cinder Bed Road that



One of the last one lane underpasses around causes a rush hour backup on Cinder Bed Road.

hasn't been occupied for years. The blue house is barely visible, and has an old "7819" address sign covered with weeds, but county records show it is owned by Bam Properties in Lorton, and calls to the office went unanswered.

At one time, the "cinder" in Cinder Bed Road was a material they used to put down on railroad beds.

This was the case in 1872, when there was a railroad through this area with "whistlestop" stations along this stretch of Cinder Bed Road. Now there is a school bus lot, a Fairfax Water office and several industrial-type offices in operation alongside the vacant lots. The owner of a lawn business tried to sell but did not get an offer that



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

United Community of Muslims plan to build a mosque here.

met his needs.

The Virginia Department of Transportation has a project on the books designed to fix the intersection of Cinder Bed Road and Newington Road but construction on this \$630,000 project doesn't begin until fall 2024. Possibly Cinder Bed Road could get some improvements as part of this project.

In between, litter and old tires on the roadside are a reminder that there is no one watching out for this place.

Cinder Bed Bikeway

At the north end of Cinder Bed Road, a bike trail that leads off into the woods adjacent to Long Branch

creek. The bike trail stops at about a mile into the woods on the east side of Long Branch but there are plans to continue it across the creek, linking up with a trail that goes to the Springfield-Franconia Metro station. This is called the "Cinder Bed Bikeway" and is designated to link to Fort Belvoir, according to a Fairfax County presentation dated May 10, 2021.

The bikeway project has gotten some opposition from local environmental groups but the \$14 million project is still being considered with a possible opening date of May 2024, according to the presentation.

Free Breakfast and Lunch

FROM PAGE 7

legal responsibility of a welfare agency or court, are eligible for free meals regardless of the household income with whom they reside. Children in the district who are members of households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or who are homeless, migrants, or runaways may also be automatically eligible for free meals. WIC participants may qualify for free or reduced-price meals depending on the household's income.

Free meals for all students and no application- Schools with Community Eligibility Provision

- Annandale High
- Annandale Terrace Elementary
- Bailey's Elementary
- Bailey's Upper Elementary
- Beech Tree Elementary
- Braddock Elementary
- Bren Mar Park Elementary
- Brookfield Elementary
- Bucknell Elementary
- Cameron Elementary

- Centre Ridge Elementary
- Crestwood Elementary
- Dogwood Elementary
- Forest Edge Elementary
- Forestdale Elementary
- Garfield Elementary
- Glasgow Middle
- Glen Forest Elementary
- Graham Road Elementary
- Groveton Elementary
- Herndon Elementary
- Herndon Middle
- Hollin Meadows Elementary
- Holmes Middle
- Hutchison Elementary
- Hybla Valley Elementary
- Justice High
- Key Middle
- Lewis High
- London Towne Elementary
- Lorton Station Elementary
- Lynbrook Elementary
- Mount Eagle Elementary
- Mount Vernon Woods Elementary
- Parklawn Elementary
- Pine Spring Elementary
- Poe Middle
- Riverside Elementary
- Sleepy Hollow Elementary
- Washington Mill Elementary
- Westlawn Elementary
- Weyanoke Elementary
- Woodlawn Elementary
- Woodley Hills Elementary

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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 31 – AUGUST 28

FUNDAY MONDAY in the heart of Fairfax City! 10:30-11:15 a.m. Enjoy free family programming that's perfect for the preschool set, but is open to children of all ages! On any given Monday there will be music, movement, storytelling, crafts and more. All performances and programs are held inside Old Town Hall located at 3999 University Drive, in the heart of Fairfax City. Visit: <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts> for more information. Sponsored by the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts.

August 14: Storytime with the Fairfax Regional Library

August 21: Miss Mollie's Bubble Party (held outside)

August 28: My Gym

JULY 29 – AUGUST 26

KIDZ KORNER in Old Town Square in Fairfax City! 10:30-11:15 a.m. Join us outside for a morning of Free Family Fun on Saturdays in Old Town Square (near the Splash Pad!) located at 10415 North Street in historic Fairfax City. Visit: <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts> for more information. Sponsored by the City of Fairfax Department of Parks and Recreation.

August 12: My Gym

August 19: Superhero Training with Captain America!

August 26: Miss Mollie's Musical Fun

THURSDAYS THRU OCT. 19

Weekly Farmers Markets. Thursdays 12 p.m. to 7 p.m. At The PARC at Tysons, 8508 Leesburg Pike, Tysons. Celebrate Fairfax, a nonprofit organization dedicated to building community in Fairfax County, is excited to announce the launch of a weekly farmers market at The PARC at Tysons. The market is run by Potomac Farm Market, which has over 20 years of experience connecting communities to local farmers and artisanal food producers. Each week, residents can expect to find seasonal fruits and vegetables, fresh cut flowers, and other locally sourced specialties.

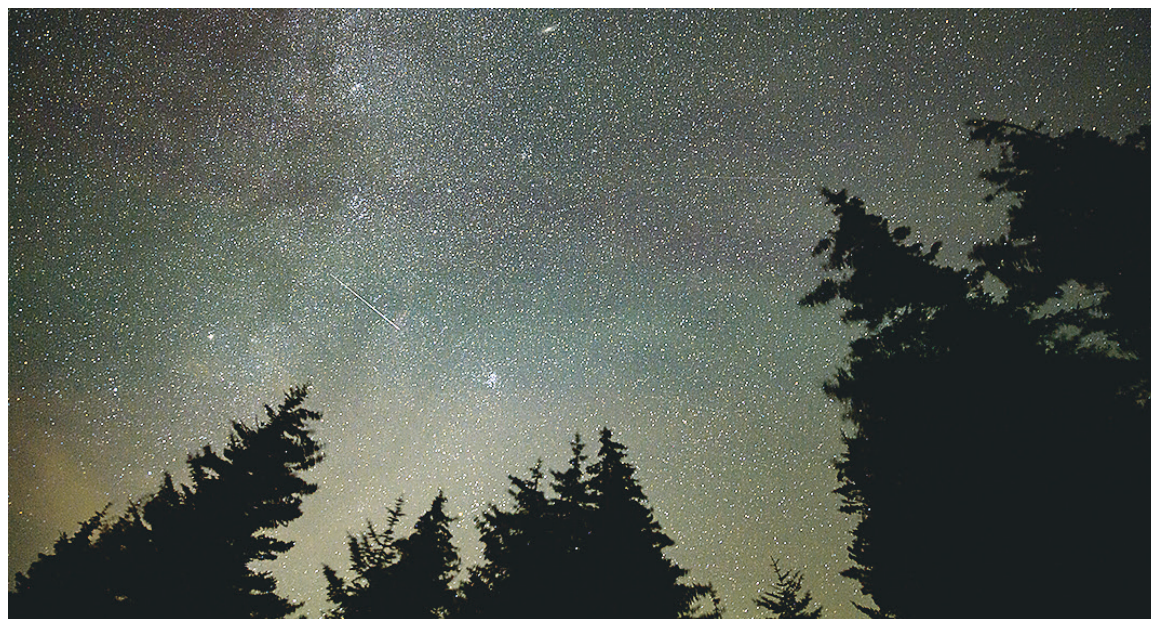
WEDNESDAYS

THROUGH SATURDAYS

Tours Aboard Tall Ship Providence and Sen. John Warner Maritime Heritage Center.

10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Alexandria's Waterfront Park, 1A Prince Street, Alexandria. Guests of all ages are recruited into the Continental Navy aboard Tall Ship Providence with legendary Captain John Paul Jones. Recruits are assigned jobs on the ship, learn where they will work and live, how to load a cannon, etc... Tours conclude in the Naval History Theatre with a film about the ship. The Heritage center is a floating museum on the Alexandria waterfront. Visit <https://tallship-providence.org/>

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Experience the Perseid Meteor Shower on Saturday, Aug. 12, 2023 at Turner Farm Park Observatory in Great Falls.

Experience the Perseid Meteor Shower

8:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. At Turner Farm Park Observatory, 925 Springvale Road, Great Falls. Fairfax County's Observatory Park at Turner Farm and the Analemma Society invite you to witness the annual Perseid meteor shower. The Perseid showers are among the most plentiful showers with upward of 100 meteors per hour. Come prepared to enjoy the shooting stars with your unaided eyes, lounging on a lawn chair or blanket under the night sky. Binoculars can enhance the viewing experience while sitting or lying down. Call Sebastian Arnez, Turner Farm Park Observatory educator, at 703-324-2820, or visit Turner Farm.



The VietFest 2023 will be held Aug. 12-13, 2023 at the Plaza at Tysons Corner Center.

VietFest 2023

August 12, 10 a.m. - 10 p.m. August 13, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. At the Plaza at Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Celebrate Vietnamese culture with VietFest, a 2-day festival on the Plaza at Tysons Corner Center. Attendees can look forward to food and exhibition vendors, raffle prizes, live music and entertainment, traditional dance performances, crawfish eating contest, pho eating contest, and much more.

providence.org/

NOW THRU AUG. 23

Art Wednesdays. 4 p.m. - 8 p.m. Summer on The Plaza at Tysons Corner Center. Enjoy the rest of summer watching live graffiti art come every Wednesday. The Lorton Workhouse and Live Art International hosts a free event showcasing alternative art concepts for participants. All materials will be provided to engage in a drawing class, take home personalized airbrushed swag and more.

AUG. 11-12

"The Addams Family." 7 p.m. At Church of the Good Shepherd, 9350 Braddock Road, Burke. Presented by the Metropolitan School of the Arts Music Theatre Company. The Addams Family theatre performance will feature 29 student-actors from the DC area, including Metropolitan School of the Arts and surrounding high schools. The performance is recommended for ages 10 and older, and will be supported by a 12-piece mentoring orchestra, consisting of professional musicians and the top

youth orchestra players in the DC area. To get tickets to watch the comical antics of The Addams Family, go to www.metropolitanarts.org. Cost is \$25 per adults and \$10 per student.

SATURDAY/AUG. 12

A Night of Art and Music. 6-9 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. The August Second Saturday event features a free music performance by Quin Tango, as part of the Mount Vernon Nights Summer Concert Series, a collaboration with Fairfax County. Join

for a fun and casual evening of art and music. Stroll through the campus buildings and browse the ever-changing exhibits in dozens of artists' studios. Many of the artists will be there in person to chat about their work.

AUG. 12-13

Gel Plate Printing Basics. 1-4 p.m. 2-Day Workshop with Jennifer Duncan. Learn to use the Gel plate to create beautiful collage paper and as an easy form of monotype printing. In this two-day workshop they will create prints using botanicals and stencils on a variety of papers. Class limited to 8 participants. Supplies list will be sent to registered students. About the instructor: Jennifer Duncan has been teaching abstract painting and collage from her home studio and Great Falls School of Art since 2010. Her classes aim to be fun, innovative, and informative, and are designed to help students discover their own creative approach to making art. Visit <https://artsofgreatfalls.org/adults-summer-2023/>

SATURDAY/AUG. 12

Hiroshima/Nagasaki Remembrance. 4-6 pm. At Herndon Friends Meeting House, 2263 Coccina Drive, Reston. Join in this remembrance of the victims and effects of the 1945 bombings. Outside 4-5 p.m. vigil; inside 4-6 p.m. learning and reflecting through art (painting and peace crane making). Light refreshments will be served. Parking is available at the meeting house via Locust Street and nearby public parking is located across the street from the Herndon Depot. Visit the website: <https://www.herndonfriendsmeeting.com>.

SATURDAY/AUG. 12

"Civil War History Where It Happened." 1 p.m. At Mercer Tavern Antiques, 39359 John Mosby Highway, Aldie. The Aldie Ruritan Club Presents "Civil War History Where it Happened." Hear historians and authors Don Hakenson and Carl Sell describe Mosby's Flour Mill raid, Captain George Custer's fall into the Little River and the Battle of Aldie right where it all happened. Books on sale benefit Aldie Ruritan Club and Clinton Hatcher Camp Sons of Confederate Veterans. Contact Carl Sell at sellcarl@aol.com or 703-971-4716 or Don Hakenson at dhakenson@verizon.net or 703-971-4984.

SUNDAY/AUG. 13

N Gauge Train Display. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 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.

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NEWS

Student Meal Debt

FROM PAGE 7

raise funds and awareness for this ongoing issue that affects hard-working families," Segal said.

In January 2023, Segal collaborated with the nonprofit Educate Fairfax to raise money to pay off the ballooning student meal debt at one of the county's middle schools, where he taught. Segal asked local community organizations and businesses to help him, and he succeeded. Once again, Segal is collaborating with Educate Fairfax to raise funds and erase student meal debt.

"Let's reinstate universal free school meals, #Virginia," tweeted Roem. "When the federal government doesn't do its job, we have to do it in the states."

Schools cannot pay off meal debts using federal child nutrition funds. Schools may look to state, local, or charitable sources to try to offset the meal debt. The district writes off debts it cannot fund as operating losses.

The total school meal debt in Virginia is \$44,693,082. The initiative adds, "Charitable funds and general district funds were the largest contributors to paying off meal debt, regardless of the school district size or the region of the U.S."

FCPS Meal Charge Policy states, "At the end of the school year, the Assistant Superintendent of Financial Services and the Food and Nutrition Services Director will evaluate all delinquent debt for conversion to bad debt. Bad debt will be restored to Food and Nutrition Services from the general fund prior to the end of the same fiscal year."

Segal aims to increase awareness that the student meal debt crisis is escalating. It is not only at the school where he teaches but across the county and the state. Many students who will owe school meal debt are part of households that earn too much to be considered for free or reduced meals but also earn too little to afford the meals.

According to the Education Data Initiative, updated July 8, 2023, there are 247,470 food-insecure students in Virginia. In Fairfax County Public Schools, just under 60,000 children qualify for free and reduced meals.

Cheers for Children, organized by Segal, is a Student Meal Debt fundraiser that will be held on Thursday, Aug. 17, 7 to 10 p.m., at Jimmy's Old Town Tavern, 668 Spring Street, Herndon, Va. Jimmy Cirrito met with Segal a few days before the event to coordinate de-

SEE STUDENT MEAL, PAGE 11

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 11

7:30-9:30 p.m.
 Callbacks by Invitation on Thursday, Aug. 17
 from 7:30-10 p.m.
 Performances Oct. 20 to Nov. 5, 2023
 Visit: www.viennatheatrecompany.org/audition/

'DRIVE-IN' TO THE STARLIGHT CINEMA
 Enjoy an all-new season of family-friendly entertainment at the Starlight Cinema at Trinity Centre, in Centreville, every Saturday evening in August. Come to watch the movies "drive-in" style from your car or bring chairs and blankets to watch from the lawn. As part of the Summer Entertainment Series, the Starlight Cinema brings the community together for wholesome family entertainment with live pre-show entertainment and feature film after dark. The schedule features:

- Aug. 12:** "Lightyear" at 8 p.m. (pre-show by Rocknocoeros at 7 p.m.)
- Aug. 19:** "The Bad Guys" at 8 p.m. (pre-show by Geoff Marsh at 7 p.m.)
- Aug. 26:** "DC League of Super-Pets" at 8 p.m. (pre-show by Marsha and the Positrons at 7 p.m.)

Grab your picnic and enjoy the free entertainment that your family will remember. Gates open at 6 p.m., so come early to get a good spot. The Starlight Cinema is hosted at Trinity Centre, 5860 Trinity Parkway, in Centreville. For details, visit the Summer Entertainment Series' Starlight Cinema webpage.

SATURDAY/AUG. 19

Lake Anne Cardboard Boat Regatta. 12 p.m. At Lake Anne Plaza in Reston. Sail or splash -- it's all fun. Register or sponsor Reston Museum's 2023 Lake Anne Cardboard Boat Regatta at <https://www.restonmuseum.org/cardboard-preregister>. You must register to race; spectating is free and open to the public.

SATURDAY/AUG. 19

Poetry Beneath the Stars. 7:30-9:30 p.m. At Turner Farm Park, 925 Springvale Road, Great Falls. Calling all stargazers. Join up at Turner Farm Park to contemplate the cosmos through poetic form. Attendees will be provided with examples of star-gazing poetry and then given writing prompts to generate poems of their own while staring up at the marvelous Milky Way. This event will include a telescope viewing in the Roll Top Observatory, weather permitting. This workshop is limited to 25 participants. Visit ArtsFairfax.org to register.

SATURDAY/AUG. 19

Summer Concert Series: Genres. 7-9 p.m. At Tysons Corner Center, The Plaza, McLean. Join the Summer Concert Series featuring 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 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.

AUGUST

- 9 The Road Ducks
- 16 The Colin Thompson Band
- 23 Riptide

SATURDAY CONCERTS AT WORKHOUSE ARTS CENTER

9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton • 7:30 p.m.

- AUGUST
- 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

- AUGUST
- 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.

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/>

Student Meal Debt

FROM PAGE 10

tails.

Cirrito said Fairfax County is a "tough place for low-income families because the rent is very high around here." Some small businesses and others that employ may start new hires at or near minimum

wage, which is \$12 an hour.

Cirrito recalled that he was "One of those kids in the lunch line that others made fun of. ... The students that had money would pick on the rest of us, and I couldn't get an ice cream because I didn't have the money."

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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'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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Not a Fan of Humidity



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Recently, through no fault of our own, we have been without central air-conditioning on our first floor, non-sleeping space. While we were out of town on vacation, we suffered an unexpected property loss to our home caused by a particularly bad, typical Washington DC summer rain event on Fri., July 14. Since we were on a cruise out to sea, we had no cell service, so it wasn't until we arrived back in port on Sun. July 16 that Dina retrieved a text message from Robert, one of our many super-friendly/helpful neighbors. The message simply texted: "Call me." Which we promptly did once we got settled in the car heading south from New York on I95.

Dina calls Robert, who was also collecting our mail while we were gone. Robert picks up immediately. Dina asks, "What's up? I just got your text." To which Robert responds: "Not horrible. But a tree has hit your house. We had a bad storm here Fri. night. I went inside and checked on the cats (being cared for by another neighbor); they're fine." The tree that fell, not the one you might have expected (he tries to explain which one), crashed onto the back of the house. It broke a window, and it looks like you suffered some water damage inside your house too. I just wanted to let you know before you came home and saw it for yourself."

Dina stammered a "What!" and a "Thank you" before she ended the call. Since she was on the speaker through the car, I heard the entire conversation. After which, we looked at each other and said something like "Yikes!" Over the next four hours or so until we got home, our attitude went from let's wait and see (me) to know what are we going to do (Dina)? Call the insurance company, that much I know.

Being that this would be my first real experience making a home-insurance-policy claim, I proceeded with extreme caution. What little I know of this process came from my years attending continuing education classes required to maintain my Life and Health Insurance License. And what I learned/retained, other than the Property and Casualty (home, car, et. cetera) world is excruciatingly complicated, is that the claim process, communications, timeline and so forth is fraught with misinterpretation, disagreement, and disappointment. To that end, I figured I needed to file a claim as soon as possible, especially since the event had occurred almost two days prior.

Even though it was early afternoon on Sunday, I surmised that since P&C claims don't just happen during the week, I called the company expecting to talk with an actual person. Sure enough, I was able to connect with a claim's specialist. I filled the claim and listened as the process going forward was explained to me. It all sounded reasonable and so we continued our drive home secure in the knowledge that we had fulfilled our initial filing-a-claim responsibilities.

After silence on Mon., on Tues. I called the 800 claims number for a status. Needless to say, the hole in my roof - which I couldn't see since the tree limbs and all were draped across it, was not getting any smaller, and its existence was making me nervous since I was told that there was rain in the forecast for later that day. Moreover, the downstairs central air conditioner was dead as the water from the storm had seeped through the roof into its electrical circuit and tripped the breaker thereby shorting out the circuit and burning out the motor of the air conditioning unit for the downstairs (where we live, mostly) as well as the light switch in the den. (When I saw we had no power, I immediately checked the fuse box and sure enough, a breaker had been tripped. When I flicked it back on, the air handler for the downstairs air conditioner restarted but only for a second and then stopped, never to restart again. Additionally, the den chandelier never came back on as its light switch was on the same circuit and thus was compromised as well.)

The following week has produced record-shattering heat and humidity. It has hardly been the ideal weather conditions to have had two-thirds of your house unair-conditioned. To add insult to perspiration, though we were able on Tuesday to get a water mitigation team to attend to our interior and sop up the moisture still in our house - and check for mold, and then on Wednesday (July 19) have a tree service contracted to remove the tree from atop our house, it wasn't until Sat. July 22 in the morning, nearly a week later, that we actually had an adjuster finally come by the house to "adjust" our claim. As Paul Harvey never said: Now you know the beginning of the story. Good fortnight! (To be continued next week.)

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

Women Call Attention to Remaining Equity Issues



PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



Lisa Sales, President, Virginia NOW, said, “We need people to know that this fight rages on and that women and the men allied with them need to shout for equal rights for all from the rooftops.”

Befitting the women’s equality anniversary, women and men gathered at the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial on Monday in the progression to Richmond to hear from speakers, including Pat Wirth, docent at the memorial, and Gayle Converse of Alexandria Celebrates Women.

Women’s Equality Day - August 26.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Women celebrating the historic achievement of women’s right to vote, gained 50 years ago this Aug. 26 in 1920, began their commemoration in Alexandria on Aug. 5. The walk, sponsored by Alexandria Celebrates Women, expects to reach Richmond’s Capital Square and the Virginia Women’s Memorial on Aug. 26 with several stops of note. Their aim is to call attention to women’s history and the many issues related to health and equality that remain for women today.

Organizer Gayle Converse described the areas that demand attention for women: health research, particularly cardiac research; maternal morbidity; teenage suicide for young girls; the glass ceiling; and equal pay.



Liz Boddye, with her 4-month-old daughter Jamison, a member of NOW, said, “I support women’s rights and moving forward in reaching equality and equity. Women deserve to be in the places where decisions are being made.”



Director of the nearby Lucy Burns Museum, Katie Crooks, attending with associate Giovanna Uberti, said, “Really want to support Alexandria Celebrates Women in what they are doing to call attention to women’s achievements. I feel a lot of people don’t really know what went into the fight for suffrage.”



DAR member Sherly Sims with daughter Amber Wihshi said, “It’s important to support anybody trying to advance the cause of women, as Gayle [Converse] is and the Daughters of the American Revolution. I can’t walk 133 miles to Richmond, but I can urge on Gayle and others.”

Pat Wirth, former executive director of the Turning Point association, reminds all that women’s equality still is not recognized in the U.S. Constitution.

Co-president Diane Schrier of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), commented, “Supporters of this

walk know the importance of women’s history and achievement in Virginia. Women too long have been ignored, including in the fight for ERA. It’s important to keep fighting for women’s equity and education.”

Former county supervisor Gerry Hyland reminded gatherers, “Women [suffrag-

ists] were not willing to give up, and they changed the world for everyone. They changed the lives of so many women.”

Alexandria Celebrates Women is a non-profit which recognizes Alexandria women, past and present, who make a difference to the city.

Bandaid Approaches to Food Insecurity

FROM PAGE 7

est ‘number’ of food insecure in Virginia. Now nearly 75,000 residents are food insecure, and just under 60,000 children qualify for free and reduced meals in Fairfax County Public Schools. Since the pandemic, it is estimated that the number of residents who are food insecure has doubled,” says the Fairfax Food Council. FCPS extension of the summer meals program does not ensure a significant number of Fairfax County food-insecure students have a viable opportunity to readily access two healthy meals and an afternoon snack during the last two weeks before school starts. Access to the free food at Camp Fairfax’s Summer Food Service Program is only for children enrolled in a fee-based activity program, open from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The Fairfax County Department of Neigh-

borhood and Community Services Camp Fairfax program is participating in the Summer Food Service Program as a closed enrollment site. That means at least half the children and teens enrolled in the activity programs are determined to be income-eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.

A sliding fee schedule is available to parents and guardians seeking to register their children for the two remaining Camp Fairfax weeks at public school sites as well as at community centers. The school division is in charge of the program locally, state-run, and with federal funding. The U.S. Department of Agriculture reimburses program operators who serve children and teens with no-cost, healthy meals and snacks. Meals are served at summer sites in low-income communities, where sponsors often offer enrichment activities.

County-wide Food Assistance, the Fairfax Food Council

A patchwork quilt of food resources and programs in Fairfax County is available to support those experiencing food insecurity. They include but are not limited to Coordinated Services Planning (CSP) Neighborhood & Community Services, Capital Area Food Bank Hunger Lifeline, School Food & Nutrition Program, Virginia Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, and the Free Summer Meals for Kids Program.

Food Assistance sites exist throughout

the county: Lorton, Alexandria, Centreville, Falls Church, Burke, Herndon, Springfield, Fairfax, Lorton, and Chantilly.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will launch a new Summer Food program in the summer of 2024, the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program will officially launch as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s collaborative efforts to boost its summer nutrition program. The program will provide grocery benefits to low-income families with school-aged children. Families can use pre-loaded EBT cards to purchase groceries during the summer months. Families will receive \$40 per month per eligible child. These benefits operate in conjunction with other FNS nutrition assistance programs, such as summer meal sites, SNAP, and WIC.