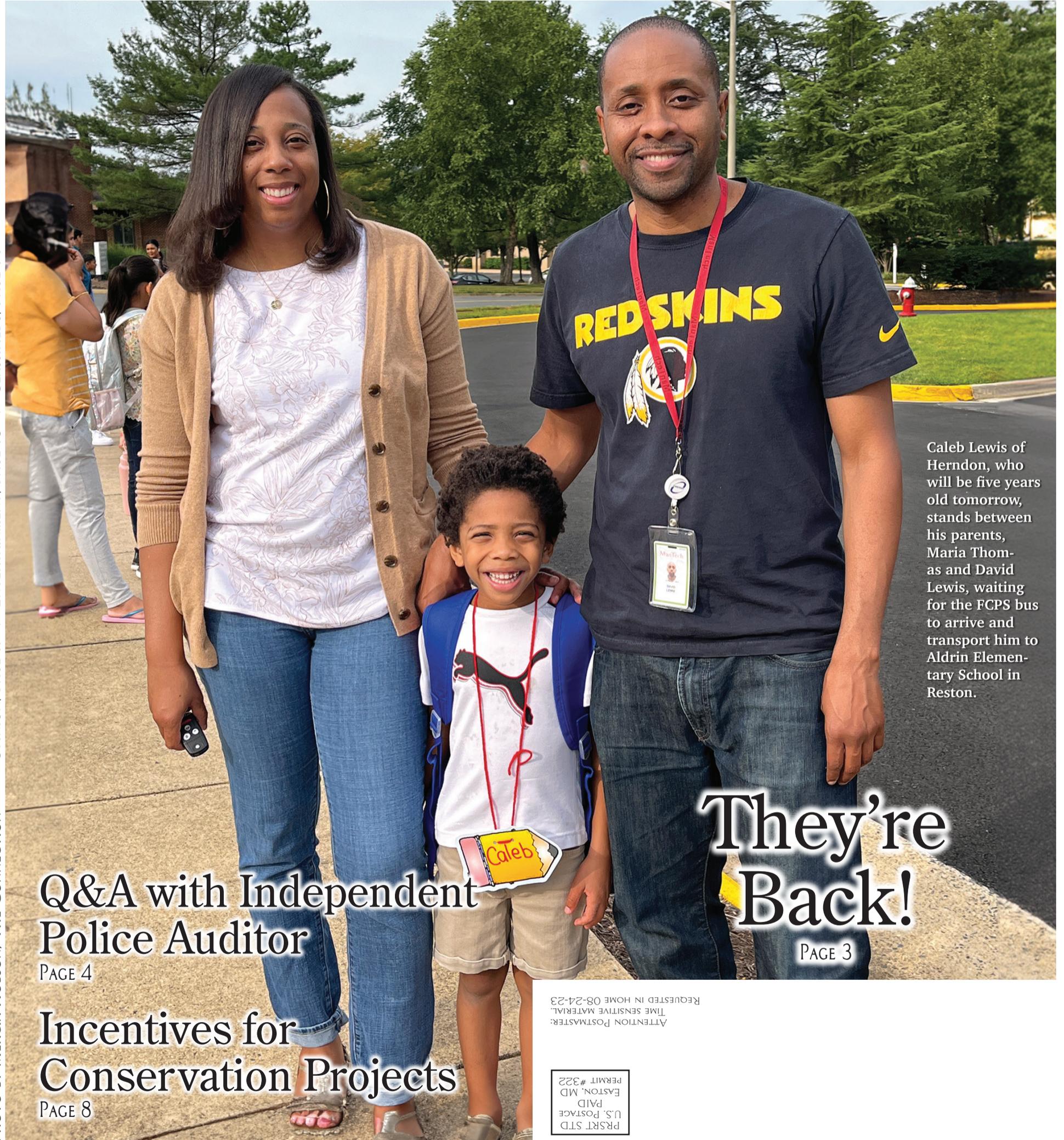


THE CONNECTION

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Caleb Lewis of Herndon, who will be five years old tomorrow, stands between his parents, Maria Thomas and David Lewis, waiting for the FCPS bus to arrive and transport him to Aldrin Elementary School in Reston.

Q&A with Independent Police Auditor

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Incentives for Conservation Projects

PAGE 8

They're Back!

PAGE 3

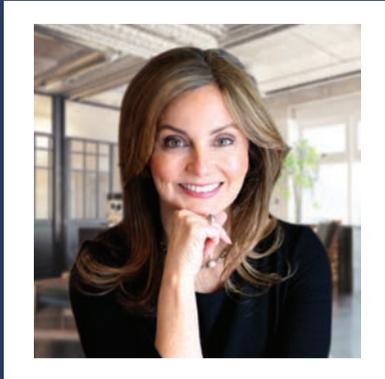
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Caleb Lewis of Herndon, who will be five years old tomorrow, stands between his parents, Maria Thomas and David Lewis, waiting for the FCPS bus to arrive and transport him to Aldrin Elementary School in Reston.



As the children board the bus, the FCPS bus driver checks her paperwork.



Parents wave goodbye to their children on the first of the 180 school days of the FCPS 2023-2024 calendar.

FCPS First Day of School 2023

New strategic plan, expanded bus pass, and Metrobus program.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Public Schools opened the doors of its 198 schools and centers to over 181,000 students on Monday, Aug. 21, for the 2023–2024 school year. Superintendent Dr. Michelle C. Reid wrote in her message to FCPS families, “We are kicking off the new school year with FCPS’ new 2023–30 strategic plan. This student-centered plan focuses on ensuring excellence, equity, and opportunity for each and every student and serves as our North Star moving forward.”

The Fairfax County School Board unanimously voted to adopt Fairfax County Public Schools’ Fiscal Year 2024 Approved Budget in May. It totaled \$3.5 billion, a net increase of \$221.7 million, or 6.7 percent, over the approved budget for FY 2023. Instruction receives nearly 86 percent of the approved budget, according to school board documents.

The Fairfax County Public School Office of Transportation Services is responsible for providing safe and efficient transportation to and from school activities for all eligible students on a daily basis. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, “the school bus is one of the safest vehicles on the road, with less than 1 percent of all traffic fatalities involving children on school transportation vehicles.”

The division has one of the largest bus riderships in the country, reportedly transport-

ing over 141,000 students each day on over 1,600 buses. The children and teens could be in danger as they walk or run to catch their bus. Unless separated from the bus by a median, all drivers must obey the law and stop in both directions for a stopped school bus. Passing a stopped school bus unloading children is considered reckless driving, which is a criminal offense.

On June 27 of this year, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved an agreement between the Fairfax County School Board and the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors relating to the installation and operation of a video monitoring system to enforce the law against passing stopped school buses. However, the division will not join other Virginia school systems with bus stop-arm cameras until 2024.

This year, students at Annandale, Davis Center, Falls Church, Justice, and Marshall will be able to enroll in the Free Student Bus Pass and Metrobus Program. This expanded program provides Fairfax Connector, Cue, and Metrobus access seven days a week from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. Students will be able to take approved routes. Visit the Fairfax Connector website for more information or complete the Permission Form.

Students can also enroll in the Free Student Bus Pass Program at any Fairfax County public high school or middle school and ride the Fairfax Connector for free. Signing up on the Permission Form requires parental or guardian approval. For more information on this program, go to the Fairfax Connector website.

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Parents capture memories.



The morning sun silhouettes a student as she boards her bus on the first day of school.

Fairfax County's First Independent Police Auditor

Use of force policy, recommendations to FCPD, executive director vacancy on the Police Civilian Review Panel.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Connection interviewed Richard Schott, Fairfax County's Independent Police Auditor, on Friday, Aug. 11. The timing coincided with the Fairfax County Police Department's response to recommendations from the University of Texas at San Antonio, the Police Executive Reform Forum (PERF), and the Police Reform Matrix Group.

Connection: Let's discuss the elephant in the room. Steven Richardson, the Police Civilian Review Panel's first executive director, resigned on Aug. 1. What considerations may be taken so the panel can continue along its path without him?

Schott: I won't dodge the question, but I'll deflect. The deputy county executive and county officials told me the plan is to re-advertise the position. I don't think our current structure will change. The Board of Supervisors will simply fill that position. In the interim, the review panel retains a management analyst (a paid county staff person) who, together with me and my staff, provides the necessary support to the panel.

Q: The University of Texas at San Antonio Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice released its Final Report, June 2021, "Investigation of Fairfax County Police Department Use of Force," with 29 recommendations for the police department in three categories. PERF, the Police Executive Review Forum, presented its "April 2023 Review of Issues Surrounding Recent Police-Shooting Incidents," with 15 recommendations, and you presented the Fairfax County Independent Police Auditor 2022 Annual Report with recommendation to the Board of Supervisors on June 13.

Many of the recommendations are language changes. Those may seem insignificant to some. Explain whether language matters in the FCPD's General Order on Use of Force and provide an example.

Schott: What appear to be subtle language changes on the surface can have a big impact on the results. There has been a legal standard since 1989, given to us by the Supreme Court, of "objective reasonableness." Many individuals and groups nationwide would like the legal standard changed, but they can't make the Supreme Court change something. They are asking individual departments, on their initiative, to change the objective reasonableness language to "necessary and proportional." Yes, that may seem like semantics, but that could be a big policy and training change.

For example, the use of force may have



Richard Schott.

been objectively reasonable but unnecessary. Now, I'm going to contradict myself because if it is a policy, and we'll take the Fairfax County Police Department and see if they change their policy to include necessary and proportional force. My recommendation is: first, tell me when force is necessary. Changing one word isn't enough. You must now define what is necessary and in what way.

Q: Next steps?

Schott: The change requires defining the new term. What exactly does necessary mean? The Department of Justice's use of deadly force policy describes when deadly force may be necessary.

Q: Should FCPD use the DOJ force policy?

Schott: Those words are unique in DOJ's policy only on the use of deadly force. That's also important to distinguish. When to use non-deadly force may be harder to define. That includes tasers and electronic control weapons.

Q: What are the University of Texas's most critical recommendations, the most viable changes to the use of force that could save a life in Fairfax County or prevent severe injury?

Schott: That's a big ask. I'm not sure if I can do that, to be honest.

Q: Is it changes in training, data, or language?

Schott: I would probably lean on the language, but I may not agree with some of their suggestions. I provided the Board of Supervisors with my input on UTSA's recommendations, which is public. UTSA only disagrees with one. I disagreed with three CAC decisions. When they said, they wanted to incorporate the minimum [use of force]. I doubt there's a minimum. I don't know that there is such a thing as a minimum. Not to be cavalier, but the minimum amount of force in any situation is not to use any. That's the minimum, but that's unrealistic, in my estimation.

About the Fairfax County Independent Police Auditor:

The Office of the Independent Police Auditor reviews police investigations involving use of force and serves as an independent intake venue for complaints against the Fairfax County Police Department. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/policeauditor/>

Richard Schott, Fairfax County's first Independent Police Auditor, along with the Police Civilian Review Panel are intended to provide an "accessible, safe, impartial and responsive intake venue for Fairfax County Police Department and staff complaints."

Schott came to Fairfax County after a 27-year FBI career as a special agent working with local law enforcement officers, and for the past 16 years has provided training to members of state and local law enforcement agencies, including legal issues associated with police officers' use of force and deadly force. He has extensive experience with Color of Law violations, including reviewing police reports and citizen complaints, recommending to U.S. Department of Justice attorneys whether or not to proceed with investigations and conducting the ensuing investigations. Schott was also an instructor at the FBI Academy in Quantico,

The Police Civilian Review panel is made up of non-paid members and an executive director, a recently created paid position appointed by the Board of Supervisors, Steve Richardson, the first executive director of the Police Civilian Review Panel, recently resigned. More on the Civilian Review Panel, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police-civilianreviewpanel/>

After their study and recommendations, UTSA presented them to the Board of Supervisors. Supervisor Lusk, who chairs the Safety and Security Committee, convened the Community Advisory Committee, the CAC, to provide input on UTSA's recommendations, a kind of check and balance to how our community felt about UTSA. I independently commented on UTSA's and the CAC's feedback and overwhelmingly agreed with both groups' recommendations. I had just a small number of items I disagreed with.

Q: PERF's report was a quick turnaround. Chief Davis requested it in February and received it in April 2023; UTSA recommendations have been available for two years. How many have been implemented, meaning the chief says to his officers, You know, this has been changed?

Schott: I don't want to speak for the department, but shortly after UTSA presented its findings to the Board of Supervisors in June 2021, the police department made the claim that the department had implemented about 80 percent of UTSA's recommendations. ...

I don't think it's in writing yet, but it is my understanding, and I would be shocked if this didn't happen.

At the upcoming Oct. 3 Safety and Security Committee meeting, the police department is scheduled to present to the Board of Supervisors their responses to the Reform Matrix Group's Action Plan recommendations, as well as my understanding of PERF's 15 recommendations, a very manageable number. ...

One of the matrix's recommendations was simply for the PD to reexamine UTSA's recommendations. Some of these are again in play through incorporation. After this October meeting, we may have a more definitive number of UTSA recommendations the PD has implemented.

Q: Officer training appears to be key. Which traits of a model chief would significantly change an officer's use of force? What must a chief

get across to their officers?

Schott: Speaking generally, if a department has problems with the use of force, a new chief has to emphasize a culture change. I don't like the saying, but 'culture eats policy for lunch.'

Integrating, emphasizing, and meaning de-escalation, ICAT, and crisis intervention training — don't just check the box. Emphasize those tactics before resorting to force or anything else. You must emphasize it in training and recurring training. And recognize good examples of using those techniques in isolation or crisis intervention. Emphasize and acknowledge department-wide those aspects of policing or working in your department. I am almost positive the Fairfax County Police Department is doing that.

Q: Given your anticipated 2023 calendar list of activities (and responsibilities), how are you doing as the police auditor?

Schott: I was doing better before the resignation of Steven Richardson. I have been devoting a lot of my time to panel issues. It does pull me away from my primary mission as the auditor, which is to get over to the Internal Affairs Bureau more regularly and review their investigations into the use of force incidents. I do that as frequently as I can, but I wish other obligations wouldn't keep me from doing it more frequently.

Q: What do you think about when you're not working, like walking your dog or waking up?

Schott: That's a tough one and a good question. I try to escape from work. It's not easy. When I proverbially clock out for the day to try to leave work aside, guess what? What concerns me is getting that notification during the night or early morning that the county has had a fatal shooting involving an officer. Nobody wants to see it—the community, the police department, and I don't want to see it. But in a 1.1 million-population county with 1,300 sworn officers, you're going to have some critical situations.

Officer Arrested for DUI

On Aug. 19, an officer assigned to the Mount Vernon District was arrested for driving under the influence following a two-vehicle crash on Route 50 near South Manchester Street in Seven Corners. Seven occupants from the other vehicle were taken to a nearby hos-

pital and treated for minor injuries. The officer was off-duty and driving his personal vehicle at the time of the arrest. Officer Justin Faison, sworn since 2022, has been placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of an Internal Affairs Bureau investigation.

Herndon Woman, 70, Dead in Crash

A 70-year-old woman died from injuries from an Aug. 11 single-vehicle crash on Dranesville Road in Reston.

Detectives from our Crash Reconstruction Unit determined Flavia Caero, of Herndon was traveling north on Dranesville Road near Shallow Ford Road in a 2018 Toyota Corolla. Caero lost control of her vehicle, left the roadway and struck a retaining wall.

She was taken to the hospital and died three days after the crash. Preliminarily, speed and alcohol are not believed to be factors in the crash.

This is the 10th non-pedestrian-related fatal crash in the County to date in 2023.

Those with information are asked to please call our Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543.

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.

GIRLS ON THE RUN

REGISTRATION OPEN

Registration for the fall 2023 season of Girls on the Run is open! Registration will close on Friday, Sept. 15 at 11:59 p.m. Girls on the Run (GOTR) is an out-of-school program designed to help young girls build key life skills through dynamic lessons. Teams are led by trained volunteer coaches who lead by positive example and have a passion for helping others be the best version of themselves. Teams typically meet twice a week for 75-90 minutes and are led by volunteer coaches. The 10-week season will begin the week of September 11th and conclude at the celebratory 5K events the weekend of November 18-19.

Each practice has a corresponding lesson from the Girls on the Run research-based curriculum, which

focuses on building social, emotional, and physical skills while encouraging healthy habits for life. While many teams meet at schools, GOTR NOVA also offers community teams based out of neighborhoods, community centers, and parks. If a team is not offered at your school, make sure to check out GOTR NOVA's interactive map to find a team near you!

Girls on the Run programming is specifically designed for elementary school girls starting in grade 3 while Heart & Sole programming is created for middle school girls. Visit www.gotrnova.org.

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR CAR FREE DAY 2023

World Car Free Day 2023 will be held Friday, Sept. 22 in the metropolitan

Washington region, and registration is now open. This annual event organized by COG's Commuter Connections program encourages residents, commuters, and students to choose a greener way to travel by going car free or car lite on Friday, Sept. 22. By taking the free online pledge at carfreemetrod.org, participants contribute to reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions, improve their health, and qualify for great prizes. Interested residents can simply take the pledge to reduce their single occupancy trips on Sept. 22 by choosing an alternative travel option such as public transit, bicycling, carpooling, vanpooling, scootering, walking, or simply teleworking. Each registrant will be entered into a raffle for a chance to win great prizes from this year's sponsors.

PUBLIC NOTICE

In-Person Public Hearing on the McLean Community Center's FY2025 Budget

(July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025)

**McLean Community Center Governing Board
Wednesday, Sept. 27, 6:30 p.m.**

Small District 1A-Dranesville residents who wish to speak at the Public Hearing are asked to call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711, to be placed on the speakers list. The draft budget proposal will be available on the center's website and copies can be picked up at the center's reception desk on or after Thursday, Sept. 14.

Written comments may be delivered to the McLean Community Center (see address below) marked "Attention: Executive Director," or sent by email to feedback@fairfaxcounty.gov. Written comments may be provided after the Public Hearing up through Friday, Oct. 6.



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1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean VA 22101
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mcleancenter.org

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Comstock Files Revised Plan For Herndon Downtown Center

Herndon Town Council Public Session, August 8.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

At the Aug. 8 Town Council Public Session, Scott Robinson, director of public works, acting as town manager, presented the Town Manager Report. Robinson reported that Comstock (Herndon Venture L.C.) filed a revised site plan for its mixed-use development in Herndon's downtown.

"A big step for them," Robinson said. He did not elaborate and spoke on the matter for only 25 seconds at the council meeting.

Comstock calls the Herndon Downtown Center "Herndon Station" on page 14 of its 2022 Annual Report. The company reportedly revised its site plan for Herndon Downtown Center to meet current code requirements as the developer in the public-private partnership. Town staff will start reviewing the plan.

Given a request for further information, Herndon Town Manager Bill Ashton replied in an email dated Aug. 14, saying the site plan revision was required for Comstock's effort to update the design to meet the current building code.

"What was submitted was a revision of the site plan that incorporates design changes needed for compliance with the latest version of the building code," Ashton wrote. "The revised site plan must match the building plan; likewise, the building plan is required to be updated to meet the current Building Code."

The site plan revision is a 48-page technical document that was provided to The Connection. On Aug. 17, Ashton responded confirming the length of Comstock's market pause to begin construction, describing critical design updates, the project timeline, documenting if financing is complete to start the project and if additional town funding will be required for the project to begin. Town Council reportedly had not been provided with a copy of the revised site plan as of Saturday, Aug. 19.

In his email, Ashton verified that the market pause for Comstock's



Herndon Town Councilmember Naila Alam reads the proclamation.



Scott Robinson, director of public work of the Town of Herndon.



Bill Ashton, town manager of the Town of Herndon.

SCREENSHOTS VIA HERNDON GRANICUS



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

The site for the Comstock project has been fenced and bannered at the corner of Elden and Center streets since May 1, 2020.

project, as per the 2020 amendment to the Comprehensive Plan Agreement (2018), is valid for up to 24 months from the day it was accepted, April 2022. He also said that no new information about deadlines or financing is available "at this time."

As for key changes in the new site plan, Ashton wrote that parking garage level P1, which was two stories below grade and the smallest level at 56 parking garage spaces, was removed with this plan revision. "The remaining parking garage levels, P2 through P8, range between 80 spaces to 115 spaces per level. There are bicycle parking spaces ranging from 30 spaces to 60 spaces on parking garage levels P3 through P7. The plan revision reduced the total number of parking spaces for the multifamily apartments from 450 to 377."

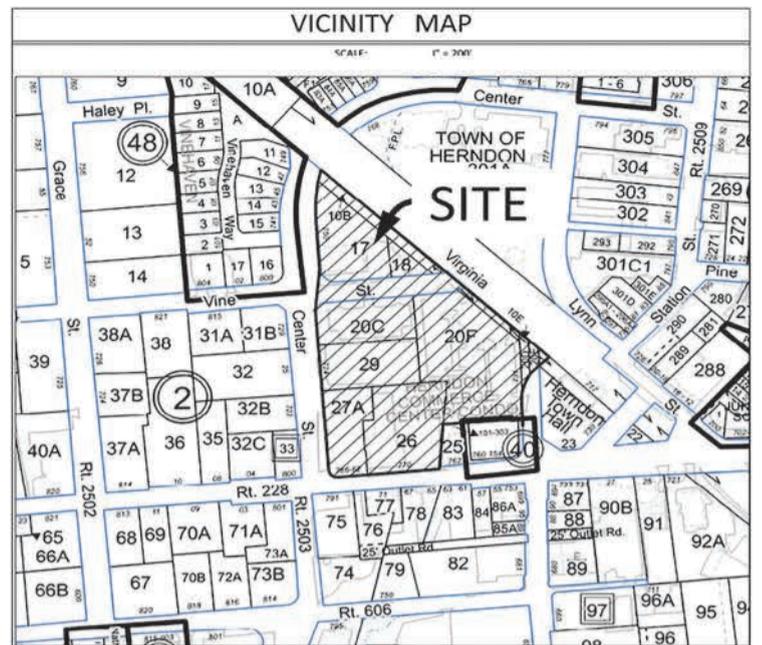
According to Ashton, the project still provides more parking than the zoning ordinance requires for an arts-focused redevelopment. "There are 334 parking spaces available to the public inside the parking garage, located on levels P2 through most of P5," Ashton wrote. There will be no charge for

parking. Ashton wrote that Comstock submitted the amended site plan around two weeks ago, and the town's review still needs to be finished. "We are not able to summarize design updates as the updated building plans have not been submitted at this time," he said.

The Herndon Town Council passed a resolution on Nov. 17, 2020, amending the Comprehensive Agreement with Comstock dated Nov. 1, 2017, to, among other things, specify construction beginning and outside satisfaction dates. Comstock exercised its right under the amended comprehensive agreement in April 2022 to pause development for up to 24 months owing to market circumstances or other matters, including delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Herndon Proclamation Recognizes Pakistan Independence Day

Sheila Olem, mayor of the Town of Herndon, recognized Pakistan Independence Day on Aug. 14 by issuing a council-approved mayoral proclamation during the Aug. 8 Town of Herndon Council Public Hearing. Councilmember Naila



LOCATION OF BENCHMARKS

TRAV	NORTHING	EASTING	ELEV
903	7038360.3342	11799651.2847	363.04
907	7038308.9544	11799143.6868	363.32

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DATE	DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS
DATE	DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
DATE	ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

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SECTION 78-202.6(h): SITE PLAN AND SINGLE LOT DEVELOPMENT PLAN APPROVAL SHALL AUTOMATICALLY EXPIRE AT THE END OF A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD FOLLOWING THE DATE OF ITS APPROVAL BY THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR FOR ANY PHASE OR PART OF AN APPROVED SITE PLAN FOR WHICH A BUILDING PERMIT HAS NOT BEEN APPROVED.

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TOWN OF HERNDON, VIRGINIA

COVER SHEET

SUBDIVISION OR SITE PLAN NAME: **HERNDON DOWNTOWN CENTER**

OWNER, ADDRESS, INCLUDE ZIP CODE AND TELEPHONE NUMBER: TOWN OF HERNDON, 777 LYNN ST, HERNDON, VA 20170

DEVELOPER, ADDRESS, INCLUDE ZIP CODE AND TELEPHONE NUMBER: DAVID ZAPPONI, COMSTOCK HERNDON VENTURE, LC, 770 ELDEN STREET HERNDON, VIRGINIA 20170, PHONE: (202) 439-0130

CERTIFIED ENGINEER, ARCHITECT OR SURVEYOR SUBMITTING PLAN, ADDRESS, INCLUDE ZIP CODE AND TELEPHONE NUMBER: JOE AMATETTI, P.E. VIKI VIRGINIA, LLC, 8180 GREENSBORO DRIVE SUITE 200 TYSONS, VIRGINIA 22102, PHONE: (703) 442-7800

FAIRFAX COUNTY TAX MAP NUMBER: 016-2-02

TOTAL AREA: 4.84 AC (AFTER CONSOLIDATION) PRESENT ZONING: PD-TD

REVISED: JULY 2014 PAGE 1 OF 21.04 PAGES

A partial image of The Town of Herndon, Cover Sheet for the site plan name, Herndon Downtown Center, "Revision B," site construction plan, originally approved March 8, 2019, developer, David Zapponi, Comstock Herndon Venture L.C. Building permits are to be submitted separately.

Alam made the request.

Pakistan marked its 76th anniversary of independence from British rule on Monday, Aug. 14. Olem urged town residents to learn more about Pakistan's history and culture, recognizing their contributions to the Herndon community.

According to the proclamation, read aloud by Alam, the town "takes great pride in being the home of many Pakistani Americans, and on this occasion, our

community celebrates the hopes, dreams, and vital contributions of Americans of Pakistani origin across all aspects of our society." Councilmember Cesar del Aguila said he hopes the community can have a real celebration, perhaps a festival, next year, as "actions speak louder than words."

Alam is the first Pakistani-American Herndon town council member, and voters re-elected her to a second term in 2022.



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CONSERVATION

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



A stormwater retention pond slows down excess rain and groundwater runoff before it flows to the storm drain.



A native garden installation slows and reduces runoff before reaching storm drains.

Virginia Conservation Assistance Program

Cost-share program offers up to 80 percent of eligible project funds.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

A Virginia Conservation Assistance Program presented by the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts is offering property owners in Fairfax County an urban cost-share program. It is also offered to independent cities not covered by a Soil and Water Conservation District, such as the City of Fairfax and the City of Alexandria.

The retrograde program offers financial and technical support for eligible best management practices in areas experiencing erosion, poor drainage, excessive rooftop runoff, steep slopes, insufficient vegetation, and more. The goal is to “slow down the water and not carry pollutants,” according to Blair Blanchette, Virginia Conservation Assistance Program Coordinator.

Nonpoint source pollution runoff from lawns, paved driveways and concrete walkways from collecting natural and human-made pollutants and depositing them through storm drains into groundwater, streams, lakes, rivers, wetlands, and coastal

waters. Storm drains do not filter runoff.

Meghan M. McGinty, Ph.D., of Great Falls, is a botanist and ecologist. She is the creator of @CultivateNature on Instagram and is well-versed in preserving clean water sources from stormwater runoff, nurturing ecosystems, and with the program. McGinty confirmed that property owners can receive financial assistance for up to 80 percent of qualified project costs.

Among the many qualified projects are impervious surface removal and permeable pavements, conservation landscaping, rain gardens, dry wells, bioretention, and planting native flora, thereby fostering wildlife habitats.

A permeable paving surface can be pea gravel which allows stormwater to flow through it, or partially porous paver blocks spaced so water drains through the areas between the blocks.

Find out more about the program, as McGinty tells it all at the Old School House at the Great Falls Grange, 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, on Sept. 10 at 1 p.m. Register by September 3 at Meghan@cultivatenature.com. Visit the



A stormwater drain cannot filter pollutants in the excess rainwater that flows through it.

Virginia Conservation Assistance Program website at <https://vaswcd.org/vcap/> for more information and application.

Find Out More

Meghan McGinty tells it all at the Old School House at the Great Falls Grange, 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, on Sept. 10 at 1 p.m. Register by September 3 at Meghan@cultivatenature.com. Visit the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program website at <https://vaswcd.org/vcap/> for more information and application.

VCAP PROCESS



MOST PRACTICES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR 80% FINANCIAL REIMBURSEMENT

Additional assistance may be available

VIRGINIA CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
Program process

Environmental Groups Sue to Stop Exit from RGGI

Legal action calls for Virginia to remain in Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and continue participation; challenging Youngkin administration action.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On Monday, Aug. 21, the Southern Environmental Law Service filed a petition for appeal in Fairfax Circuit Court on behalf of a coalition of four environmental groups, including Reston-based Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions. The

suit challenges the Virginia State Air Pollution Control Board, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, and Michael Rolband, director of Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, for plans to withdraw Virginia from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, or RGGI (pronounced Reggie). The other petitioners are the Association of Energy Conservation Professionals, Virgin-

ia Interfaith Power & Light, and Appalachian Voices. “The primary issue in this case, however, remains simple: Virginia’s participation in RGGI is required by law. The Agency Respondents do not have the authority to contradict decisions of the General Assembly and in any event, cannot do so on this record, which lacks evidentiary support for the respondents’ changed position,” argued counsel for the petitioners, Southern Environmental Law Center.

The action requests the Court, among other things, “invalidate, vacate, and declare

null and void the Agency Respondents’ approval and issuance of the Final RGGI Repeal; (and that) this Court direct the Agency Respondents to take all necessary steps to reinstate the RGGI Regulation and continue participation in RGGI.”

“The Director must continue selling carbon allowances, the state treasurer must continue distributing the proceeds from such allowance sales into specific accounts, and the responsible state agencies must continue filing annual reports about Virginia’s participation in RGGI,” states the petition.

SEE FACS LEGAL ACTION, PAGE 15
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

COMMUNITY

SPARC of Vienna Competes in Reston's Cardboard Boat Regatta

FVCbank donates to SPARC.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Crew members of the 30 registered participating teams in the Reston Museum Cardboard Boat Regatta 2023 had a single purpose leading up to the Saturday, Aug. 19 event: design and build a 100 percent person-powered cardboard boat. What they had to do with their cardboard boat on race day would be far more challenging.

While seated in or on top of their boat, crew members would compete in timed heats against other teams, paddling their boats across Lake Anne to a designated buoy, circling it, and returning to the plaza docks. Those with the fastest time would place and be declared the winners. Adding to the fun, approximately 1,000 people would be watching from the quay, balconies, and dock and cheering participants.

The morning before the race, clients at the SPARC program for individuals with disabilities at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Vienna put the final touches on their boat for Team Mauri. This would be SPARC's second year competing, and their theme for 2023 was Inclusion. SPARC stands for Specially Adapted Resource Clubs.

Andrea "Anee" Stanford took the lead on the technical design of the SPARC cardboard boat. "I easily watched over 100 videos on boat building, learning and researching," she said.

Last year's participation taught the team not to build the boat's hull so high. It proved difficult to reach over and row, Stanford said. The propelling device could not be motorized or kick-powered, but oars or paddles might be made of any material or bought from a shop.

Christina Cole of McLean said she applied some tape to help waterproof the team's boat. It is a critical component in lessening the possibility of the boat taking on water and capsizing.



The SPARC Team and supporters gather to celebrate.

Excitement pulsed at the pre-launch party. The boat's theme became a single word, inclusion, painted on one side of the hull. A zephyr depicted inclusion. Its red-pink head rose amidst ashes from the deck floor, stronger and more inspirational than before. Like the people of Mauri devastated by wildfires will rise stronger, so too the clients at SPARC who advocate for inclusion will also rise stronger.

Representatives of FVCbank took a moment amidst the buzz to present a donation check of \$3,500 to SPARC. The funds will help support the nonprofit's essential day programs at five locations in Northern Virginia for adults with disabilities.

Community supporters, staff, and others joined Team Mauri's final boat build efforts, including Ellen Dyke, chair of SPARC; Patricia A. Ferrick, president of FVCbank; Deborah Cabala, vice president of FVCbank; Debi Alexander, executive director of SPARC, Reston; and Mary Burger, SPARC board director, Reston, to name a few.

With everyone gathered in the main audi-

torium, each took a turn signing their names on the SPARC vessel, a personally penned christening to bring it good fortune on its maiden and sole voyage the next day.

Team Mauri successfully launched their boat and completed the course during the Cardboard Boat Regatta without capsizing. Riley Carlson said they plan to compete in next year's race and take their next boat to an even higher level.

Started nearly 20 years ago, SPARC hosts five clubhouse locations that operate five days a week at various buildings in Fairfax and Arlington. The staff-led programming is based on a curriculum rooted in therapeutic recreation principles that consist of continued education or leisure learning, skill building, exercise, excursions, cooking, music, art, lectures, discussion groups, and more.

All revenues from the Cardboard Boat Regatta go to the Reston Museum, a 501(c)3 non-profit devoted to preserving history, enlightening the present, and shaping the future of Reston via educational programs, archives, and exhibits.

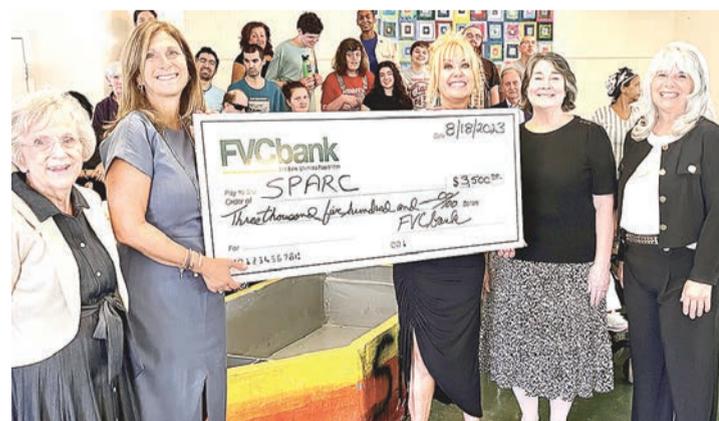
PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Andrea "Anee" Stanford and Lisa Domech display the zephyr's head for the SPARC entry. Team Mauri created it for the Cardboard Boat Regatta presented by Reston Museum and Trust at Lake Anne in Reston.



Katherine Montgomery, secretary of the SPARC board



From left, Mary Burger, SPARC board member-at-large, Reston; Patricia Ferrick, president of FVCbank; Deborah Cabala, FVCbank and treasurer of SPARC; Debi Alexander, executive director of SPARC, Reston; and Ellen Dyke, chair of SPARC



Christina Cole of McLean and Jonah Gilman of Springfield prepare to sign the boat.

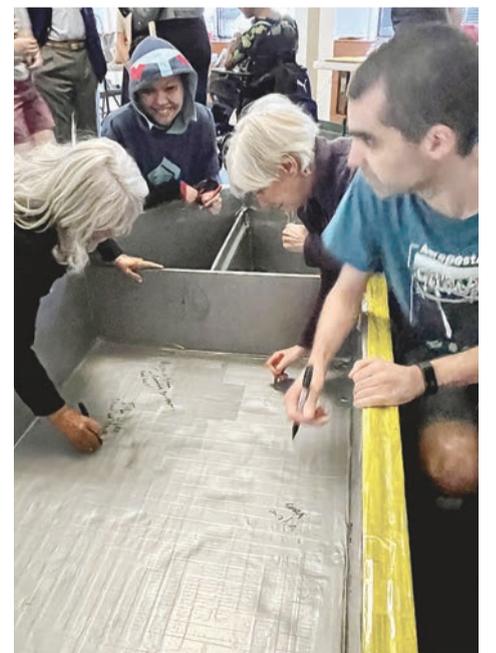


PHOTO BY RILEY CARLSON

Clients and supporters sign the floor-board of Team Mauri's boat.

Honey Harvest Festival

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August 27

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3:00 PM SYMPHONY CONCERT

Featuring Cecelia McKinley, Washington National Opera
Scan below for more info on the festival and concert:



First Day of School

Fairfax County Police Department School Resource Officer T.K. Belling gives a thumbs up as Herndon Middle School students do the same.



PHOTOS BY
MERCIA HOBSON/
THE CONNECTION



Officer Murn of the Fairfax County Police Department is on traffic duty, directing cars, buses, walkers, and bicyclists onto the grounds of an FCPS elementary school.



Students rush off the buses and into school.



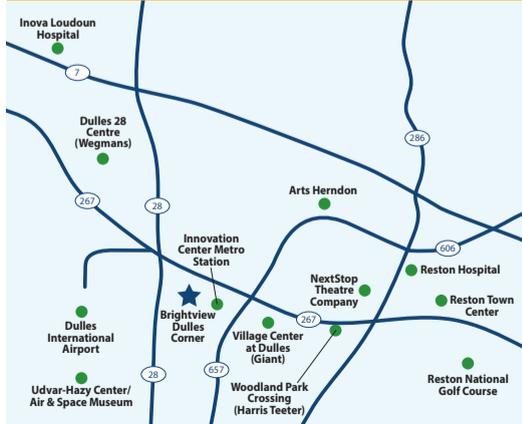
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OPINION

Reinventing American Democracy

DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM



The 250th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of the United States is fast approaching. We can celebrate being the oldest constitutional democracy in the world. Our form of government, however, is under undue stresses that cause many to worry as to whether we can show the same resiliency of the past going forward in the next century. While our form of government endured a civil war that attempted to split our country apart, can we endure a former president leading a dishonest campaign backed by the majority of a major political party to overturn the results of a political campaign? Endure the dispelling of scientific research that would end a pandemic? Sustain our way of life when political leaders turn their heads on the rapidly evolving evidence of climate change? When the results of most elections and passage of legislation depend on who has the most money? Endure when public support of governmental institutions and political leaders are at historic lows? And many more seemingly improbable challenges.

Many scholars spend a lot of time thinking and writing about these challenges. Most recently, the American Academy of Arts and Science established a Commission on the Practice of Democratic Citizenship that issued a report, "Our Common Purpose: Reinventing American Democracy for the 21st Century." You can read the report online or request a free copy at www.amacad.org/OurCommonPurpose. I suspect that you

will not agree with all its conclusions as I do not, but the amount of public participation that went into its writing is quite impressive. It will certainly lead to lively discussions. Its conclusion is frightening.

"We have no time to waste. Our constitutional democracy is only as strong as our belief in it. For love of freedom and equality, for love of country, for love of one another, and our hope for a better future, we need to reclaim our bond

... we can transform our institutions, elevate our culture. We can at last achieve a true democracy."

The immediate task is to become active in our state and local elections to ensure that misinformation and negativism are rejected and that persons of good moral character are elected through our participation in campaigns. For next year it means that we speak out against the voices of hate and lies and that we work tirelessly to defeat those who would destroy our form of government for their own personal gain. This is no time for silence or inaction. Too much is at stake.

For the long run it means that we study our form of government and how it might be improved through established procedures and institutions. We can improve our form of government as we have throughout the last two and a half centuries. We need to be careful in actions we take to ensure that we are moving in the direction of enhancing democracy. Reinventing our democracy can lead to greater equality and more freedom. We have a great form of government. Let's build on it for even greater equality and freedom.

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The Honeylarks, a female blues supergroup performing roots music with incredible vocal harmonies: Carly Harvey (DC's queen of the blues), Jenny Langer (Blues Hall of Fame), and Holly Montgomery (Blue Elan Records)

McLean Project for the Arts Unveils Musical Lineup for Oct. 1 MPAartfest

Expanded musical program features international roster of critically acclaimed artists.

McLean Project for the Arts has released the lineup and programming for MPAartfest 2023, set for Oct. 1, 2023 in McLean Central Park. Presented by Mars and featuring everything from nu jazz/ progressive soul to a female blues supergroup and a 15-piece youth swing big band, the MPAartfest Music Stage schedule offers something for every age and musical interest.

During MPAartfest, McLean Central Park is transformed into a lively landscape of mini art galleries showcasing and offering for sale the work of acclaimed artists from the Mid-Atlantic region and beyond. Along with the artists' tents and MPAartfest Music Stage presented by Mars, MPAartfest offers food from local restaurants; Café Beret, presented by The Mather; the New Dominion Women's Club Children's Art Walk; and a hands-on Children's Art Village to engage creative minds and captivate art-lovers of all ages.

Curated by Ken Avis—radio host of Antidote (WERA 96.7 FM) and a performing musician with the award-winning band Veronneau — MPAartfest's musical lineup features artists fresh from the stages of venues such as the Kennedy Center, The Smithsonian Institution, Wolf Trap Farm Park, Blues Alley, and more.

Blues Alley Youth Orchestra will kick off the day at 10 am. This award-winning 15-piece youth swing big band, directed by renowned bassist Michael Bowie, performs musical selections by masterful jazz composers such as Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, and others.

The quintessential nu jazz/progressive soul singer of her generation, Alison Crockett will take the stage at 11 am. Alison has a voice dripping soul, with generous helpings of jazz, gospel, and blues. Her 2023 album release has spent three months on the US Jazz Chart.

Folk-blues singer-songwriter Bobby Thompson will kick off the 12 noon hour. Find out why Blues Blast Magazine said "Bobby Thompson's talent fills one's

ears and heart with the vigor and camaraderie that only comes in the midst of an appreciative audience." Fresh from his summer Canadian tour and festival appearances Bobby brings his authentic blues and soul to the MPAartfest stage.

Blues, zydeco, funk, gospel and more are blended and distilled into the unique sounds of Little Red & The Renegades, performing on MPAartfest Music Stage at 1 pm. This is party music, best served with good friends, food, drink, and lots of dancing in McLean Central Park to the accordian and steel-pan driven sounds of Little Red & The Renegades!

The Honey Larks will take the stage at 2 pm. A female blues supergroup performing roots music with incredible vocal harmonies, the group is comprised of Carly Harvey (DC's queen of the blues), Jenny Langer (Blues Hall of Fame), and Holly Montgomery (Blue Elan Records). These three best friends came together for a one-off jam session that wound up evolving into a female blues sensation, with immediate fans requesting more performances.

Taisha Estrada will close out the MPAartfest Music Stage at 3 pm. Puerto Rican vocalist Taisha Estrada is rooted in the traditions of Latin music and jazz. Her innovative, contemporary, multi-genre sound engages audiences through compelling compositions and dynamic stage performance. Taisha was a finalist in the International Ella Fitzgerald Vocal Jazz Competition, and a featured Strathmore Artist-In-Residence performer. Her musical projects have been featured in the Washington Post and NPR's Tiny Desk Concerts.

MPAartfest will take place on October 1, 2023 from 10 am to 4 pm in McLean Central Park. A one-day juried fine art show and sale, MPAartfest features the work of visual artists showcasing a variety of media and styles. Children's Art Village is sponsored by BOWA, Deirdre Maull Orthodontics, McLean Community Foundation, and TTR Sotheby's International Realty.

MPAartfest 2023 is presented by the McLean Project for the Arts, with the help of lead community sponsor, McLean Community Center, and through partnership with Fairfax County Park Authority.

MPAartfest admission is FREE, and all are welcome and encouraged to join. Parking will be available at the McLean Community Center, at 1234 Ingleside Avenue. For more information visit www.mpaart.org/ or call 703-790-1953.

Herndon East Meets West Festival Saturday, Aug. 26,

Arts Herndon, Arts Herndon Lawn Stage, Saturday, Aug. 26, 750 Center Street Herndon. Fusion of Eastern and Western music, performance and culture at Herndon's very own East Meets West Festival. Organizers SaRaGaMe and Arts Herndon are delighted to introduce Green and Beyond, Soil Save, Natyamargam Indian Dance, Art of Living, Drumming with Daniel, and SaRaGaMe Band with Live Music, Arts, Dance, Food, Games, Henna, meditation and more. www.artsherndon.org info@artsherndon.org

9-11 Remembrance Ceremony at Great Falls Freedom Memorial

On Monday, Sept. 11, at 7 p.m., the annual 9-11 Remembrance Ceremony will be held at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial to honor the six residents of Great Falls and all others who lost their lives and suffered in the attacks and their aftermath. The event will feature patriotic songs, a Boy Scout color guard, a keynote speech by Great Falls native Vitale Christy, and a candlelight vigil.

The Freedom Memorial is located behind the Great Falls Library at 9830 Georgetown Pike. The ceremony is open to all. Parking is available in the library parking lot. In case of rain, the ceremony will move to the Grange. Limited seating and shelter will be provided. Attendees are encouraged but not required to bring portable chairs.

Updates to the schedule will be posted at www.gffreedom.org.

Great Falls Rotary Club Donates to Cornerstones

Gift baskets for children and youth at Neighborhood Resource Center in Herndon.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Rotary Club of Great Falls donated 40 'End of the Year' baskets to Cornerstones in Reston for its Out-of-School Youth Program for elementary and middle school students. The Cornerstone program is held in the Town of Herndon at the Neighborhood Resource Center, 1081 Elden Street.

"This is incredibly generous," said Meredith Hovan, vice president of resource development at Cornerstones. We can't begin to thank you (Bob Dinkel) and the club enough."

According to one of the Rotary volunteers for children, Steve Flannery, several entertainment and business organizations, including MicroSystems Automation Group, supported the effort. MSAG is a service-disabled, veteran-owned small business that was one of the corporate sponsors. "[They] helped make this possible by bringing together all of the great things for the kids," Flannery explained.

As Cornerstones transitions from



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/ CONNECTION
Great Falls Rotary Club members (left to right) Bob Dinkel, Steve Flannery, and (far right) Connie Sawtell, president-elect, join Meredith Hovan, vice president of resource development at Cornerstones, as she accepts their donation of 40 'End of the Year' baskets. The donation is on behalf of the club and supports its community service activities.

its after-school care program at the Neighborhood Resource Center to its summer Excite program, Hovan said that the baskets would be used as rewards for the children, celebrating the end of the school year.

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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 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 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 non-profit organization dedicated to building community in Fairfax County, is excited to announce the launch of a weekly farmers market at The PARC at Tyson. 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://tallshipprovidence.org/>

SATURDAY/AUG. 26

East Meets West Festival. 2-8 p.m. At Arts Herndon, Arts Herndon Lawn Stage, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Fusion of Eastern and Western music, performance and culture at Herndon's East Meets West

www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

The East Meets West Festival, Saturday, Aug. 26, 2023 in Herndon.



Fairfax City Restaurant week Sept. 4-10, 2023 in the City of Fairfax.

Festival. Organizers SaRaGaMe and Arts Herndon are delighted to introduce Green and Beyond, Soil Save, Natyamargam Indian Dance, Art of Living, Drumming with Daniel, and SaRaGaMe Band with Live Music, Arts, Dance, Food, Games, Henna, meditation and more. Visit www.artsherndon.org.

SATURDAY/AUG. 26

Celebration Day. 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. At Lake Accotink Park, n7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield. Enjoy the summer season with free amusements, boat rentals, exciting nature hikes, workshops and fishing! Explore the trails, enjoy the scenic views and relax with your family in a beautiful park setting. This one-day celebration is free for all participants and all activities are first-come, first-serve. Call 703-569-3464.

SATURDAY/AUG. 26

David Bach Consort 7:30-9 p.m. At Arrowbrook Park Concerts, 2351 Field Point, Herndon. Featuring David Bach in concert.

SUNDAY/AUG.27

Honey Harvest Festival. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outdoor Festival; 3 p.m. Symphony Concert. At Christ the King Lutheran Church, 10550 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Featuring local honey, petting zoo, craft vendors, baked goods and Rocklands BBQ. Featuring Cecelia McKinley, Washington National Opera.

SEPT. 2-3

30th Annual Middle Eastern Food Festival. 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday; 12:30 to 5 p.m. Sunday. At Holy Transfiguration Church

8501 Lewinsville Road, McLean. The festival will feature authentic Middle Eastern food, pastries, music and dancing, as well as vendors, church tours, and activities for both children and adults. Smell the aromas from the outdoor grills, partake of Kibbee, Chicken Shish Kebab, Roast Lamb, Falafel, Fattoush, Hummus, and Stuffed Grape Leaves, or any number of other delicious menu choices. Be sure to save room for dessert and coffee. Some of the mouth-watering Arabic pastries include Baklawa, Maamoul, Namoura and Ghraybeh. Children can enjoy the moon bounce, face painting, pony rides and the petting zoo, as well as participate in some of the many games going on throughout the festival. Visit www.MiddleEastern-FoodFestival.com.

SUNDAY/SEPT. 3

5K Run/Walk. 9 a.m. Registration/10 a.m. Race/Walk. At Fairfax Memorial Funeral Home & Fairfax Memorial Park Cemetery, 9902 Braddock Road, Fairfax. Proceeds from the 5K will benefit the local Make-A-Wish chapter, the organization that makes wishes come true for terminally ill children in our area. Visit Fairfaxmemorialfuneralhome.com

SEPT 4-10

Fairfax City Restaurant Week. At restaurants in Fairfax City. Some 30 participating restaurants will offer prix fixe menu experiences at set prices of \$25 for brunch/lunch and \$40 for dinners. Additionally, specialty restaurants offer a Two for \$10 Deal, providing food lovers the opportunity to further explore the rich variety and eclectic flavors of Fairfax food and drink purveyors. Fairfax City Restaurant Week allows diners to experience flavors from Azerbaijan to Vietnam. The ever-popular program will feature more than 30 participants, including Audacious Ale Works, Baku Delicious, Bellissimo, Bollywood Bistro, Cameron's Chocolates, Capital Ale House, Coyote Grill and Cantina, Curry Mantra, Draper's Steak and Seafood, Dolce Vita, El Pollo Rico, Hamrock's, Jas & Fam Caribbean Flavor, Kims Pho Kitchen + Bar, Marco's Pizza, Marumen, Meokja Meokja, Merkado Mexican Grill and Bar, Ned's New England Deck, Old Dominion Pizza Company, ONE Bar and Grill, Ornergy Beer Company, Patriots Pub and Grill, PJ Skidoos, Red Hot and Blue, Roots Natural Kitchen, The Auld Shebeen, The Wine House, and Vivi Bubble Tea. Visit fairfaxcityrestaurantweek.com.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 9

Memorial Benefit Concert. 2 p.m. At Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 1301 Collingwood Road, Alexandria. Benefitting United Community and in memory of Phil Bolin, come to a Memorial Benefit Concert/Recital. Join in this enchanting performance honoring the memory of Phil Bolin featuring mezzo-soprano, Caroline Nielson, and pianist, Eddie Rothmel. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for students. All ticket purchases are non-refundable and will be donated to support United Community. Visit unitedcommunity.org/concerts.

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.

'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. 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.

FREE CONCERT SERIES AT BURKE LAKE PARK

Every Wednesday night from June 28th through August 23rd at 7p.m., Supervisor Pat Herrity (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
23 Riptide

SATURDAY CONCERTS AT WORKHOUSE ARTS CENTER

9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton • 7:30 p.m. Aug. 26, The United States Army Field Band Six-String Soldiers (Country)

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.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 14

FROM PAGE 13

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.

9-11 REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY

Great Falls Freedom Memorial.
 On Monday, Sept. 11, at 7 p.m., the annual 9-11 Remembrance Ceremony will be held at the Great Falls Freedom Memorial to honor the six residents of Great Falls and all others who lost their lives and suffered in the attacks and their aftermath. The event will feature patriotic songs, a Boy Scout color guard, a keynote speech by Great Falls native Vitale Christy, and a candlelight vigil. The Freedom Memorial is located behind the Great Falls Library at 9830 Georgetown Pike. Updates to the schedule will be posted at www.gffreedom.org.

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Arrests in Golf Course Robberies

One adult man and a 14 and 16-year-old have been arrested in an ongoing investigation of a robbery and brandishing at a Reston golf course.

On Aug. 16 around 6:41 p.m., officers responded to the Hidden Creek Country Club located at 1711 Clubhouse Road in Reston for a reported weapon brandishing. An employee approached a group of teenagers who he suspected of stealing golf carts in the past; a verbal altercation ensued. One of the teenagers brandished a handgun. Officers and the helicopter searched the area but did not locate the teens.

Later that evening, at 8:06 p.m., officers responded back to the golf course for a robbery. A group of teenagers stole a golf cart and crashed it. The group then robbed a party of golfers of their golf cart at gunpoint and drove away, according to police. Officers and the helicopter

searched the area again without locating the suspects. No injuries were sustained by anyone involved.

Through the investigation, detectives were able to identify and charge Deon Luangraj, 18, of Lynchburg, with Possession of a Firearm with an Altered Serial Number.

Detectives identified and charged two additional teenagers with Robbery, Firearm, and Narcotics offenses. The 16-year-old was charged with PWID of Schedule I/II Narcotics, and Possession of a Firearm While in Possession of Certain Substances. The 14-year-old was charged with Robbery, Use of a Firearm in the Commission of a Felony, and Underage Possession of a Firearm.

The investigation that led to these arrests yielded the recovery of four firearms and suspected narcotics.

FACS Legal Action

FROM PAGE 8

The 2020 RGGI Act requires Virginia to participate in RGGI at least through 2030, according to the petition with the Air Pollution Control Board maintaining the RGGI Regulation.

From 2031 to 2050, the 2020 Utility Act “requires the Air Pollution Control Board to maintain a regulatory program to reduce power plant emissions but affords the Board some discretion in how to do so—including allowing the Board to keep the existing 2021 to 2030 RGGI Regulation in place,” states the petition.

According to Andrea McGimsey, the executive director of Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative has dramatically reduced pollution from power plants while protecting Virginians from the growing effects of climate change.

“RGGI helps us leave a better world to our children and grandchildren, and we will continue to vigorously defend Virginia’s participation in this successful, bipartisan program,” she said in a FACC Facebook post on Aug. 3. Virginia joined the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative in 2021 after the General Assembly passed a law in 2020 requiring Virginia’s participation in the regional program.

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, established in 2005 by seven governors, includes twelve Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states and one Southern state. These states are part of the mandatory, market-based Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, which seven governors established in 2005. They are Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Virginia.

The twelve individual state programs function as a regional carbon emissions compliance market. The initiative sets a cap on carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from fossil fuel-fired power plants with a capacity of 25 MW or higher and allows sources to trade emissions allowances.

On June 9, 2023, carbon dioxide allowances were sold in the 60th RGGI Auction at a clearing price of \$12.73, according to RGGI, Inc.: “The auction generated \$280.4 million for states to reinvest in strategic programs, including energy efficiency, renewable energy, direct bill assistance, and GHG (greenhouse

gas) abatement programs.”

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative represents the first cap-and-invest regional initiative implemented in the United States. The program began “by capping emissions at current levels in 2009 and then reducing emissions 10 percent by 2018,” according to the IEA, the International Energy Agency.

“It is critical that we continue our participation in RGGI, a proven climate solution,” said SELC Senior Attorney Nate Benforado.

According to the Petition for Appeal, “Virginia has seen significant benefits since joining RGGI. Carbon dioxide emissions from Virginia power plants have declined by 16.8 percent in the first two years of participation. The RGGI auctions have also generated over \$650 million for Virginians, which have flowed to important flood resiliency and energy efficiency programs, as required by the 2020 RGGI Act.”

On June 7 this year, the Virginia state regulator, the Air Pollution Control Board, voted 4-3 to repeal Virginia’s participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. According to scientists, carbon emissions contribute to global warming, accelerating sea level rise, and worsening extreme weather. On the day the Virginia regulator voted for the repeal, Canadian wildfire smoke caused a local code-red air quality alert.

On Dec. 8, 2021, then-Governor-Elect Youngkin stated that one of his first executive orders would be to withdraw Virginia from the initiative, which he called a carbon tax. “We’re no longer going to be part of it,” Youngkin said during a speech to the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce.

State law allows utilities to recover the costs of allowance purchases from their ratepayers. The Virginia State Corporation Commission approved on July 12 a modified reinstatement and revision of the rate adjustment clause, designated Rider RGGI. Residential customers will see an additional fee of approximately \$4.44 on their monthly electric bills beginning Sept. 1 to cover the utility’s costs of participating in the market between July 31, 2022, and the end of this year. Previously, Dominion Energy added about \$2.39 to the average residential electricity bill.

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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.

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And So “The Dance Begins”



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

So said my roofing contractor when I told him of the total amount my homeowner's policy/company has agreed to compensate us for the damage to our house caused when a tree crashed onto my roof on July 14. Not that I have much experience with such matters, but even though the adjuster was as understanding and reassuring as a homeowner in distress would hope, I realized after that initial Sat. morning “adjustment” when he arrived at my home and assessed the damage, that it matters less what he says and more what he/the company does (as in valuing the agreed-upon repairs/replacement and compensating me reasonably). At this juncture, all we do is wait and see. However, it doesn't make it any less frustrating. In fact, it kind of makes it worse. I don't want to push, or should I pull, or vice versa.

Sure enough, 15 days after filing the claim (Maryland law mandates that claims must be paid/settled within 15 days), I received a phone call from my adjuster (finally) advising me of the settlement. Given what we all had discussed on that first Saturday – and the damage done: one entire roof including gutters and downspouts, two central air-conditioning units, exterior whole house painted, one interior room painted, two rooms of wooden floors refinished, a new chandelier and associated electrical work to install/repair the chandelier and related switches in the den, and a 6 x 9 Oriental-type rug and pad, all adversely affected by the water leaking through the ceiling/electrical fixture – in Montgomery County Maryland in 2023, and \$38,500 “ain't gonna cut it.” (Exactly what my wife, Dina said to me on concerning our presumptive fancy dinner plans to celebrate our 10th wedding anniversary all those many years ago.)

So now, apparently, the burden falls on me, according to my roofing contractor, to up the ante and present my evidence (estimates, and invoices already billed/paid – by us) to the adjuster/company and hopefully prove my loss. I didn't think the financial resolution was as simple as the adjuster seemed to indicate/say during his on-site visit on Sat. July 21, but his manner was so matter-of-fact/agreeable that a part of me was fairly hopeful/convicted that what has actually happened: very little, and an awfully low settlement to boot was not inevitable. Live and learn, or buyer beware; I'm not sure which. But I fear I may soon find out.

Though I'm hoping (expecting not so much) that once the company has reviewed the actual estimates and invoices I will have supplied, that all will be right in my homeowner's policy's world and the company will have no contractual recourse other than to pay what I've been led to believe – by experts, that I'm due. And the process/negotiation likely occurring from now until the damages are fairly valued and settled to my financial satisfaction (as in I and our house are made whole) are likely to be characterized by a series of ups and downs, and fits and starts; all absolutely consistent, as it so happens, with the last 14 and half years of my life as a cancer patient undergoing treatment for an originally-diagnosed-as-terminal, stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer. As such, if anybody can assimilate what I presume lays ahead – with respect to this moving-target-type homeowner's insurance claim, it would be me, my oncologist's self-proclaimed “third miracle.” I have not only been there and done that, but I am still doing it going on nearly 15 years. I might even say that this kind of uncertainty is exactly how I roll. Still, I never completely know if I'll be rolling over a cliff as in cancer patients are rarely given guarantees about their future. In fact, my oncologist is usually hesitant to even discuss scenarios; he'd rather wait and see and then assess whatever presents. It's not ideal, but as I've said many times before: “It's a living and it sure beats the alternative.”

However, I do have my limitations and the fewer hurdles and blips as possible would be preferred. I don't exactly have an unlimited capacity for such pursuits. I use most of it to withstand the vagaries of my current thyroid cancer diagnosis. After all, I didn't cause the tree to fall on my house anymore than I caused my original diagnosis of lung cancer by smoking cigarettes or generally neglecting my health, et cetera. Nevertheless, as much as one must accommodate a cancer diagnosis, I really don't want to do the same concerning a homeowner's claim. To the company/adjuster: please don't make a bad situation worse. Follow the evidence and follow the money. I'm simply a claimant. Don't make me a victim too.

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



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