

THE CONNECTION

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PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION
GREAT FALLS HEALTH FAIR, PAGE 8 ❖ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 12 ❖ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 14



Moving (Cautiously) Into Fall; Centreville Day Is Oct. 14

PAGE 6

Madison Hummer, 11, walks 80 feet across an 8-foot-high rope bridge during Centreville Day 2022.

zMOD Still On Ice
PAGE 3

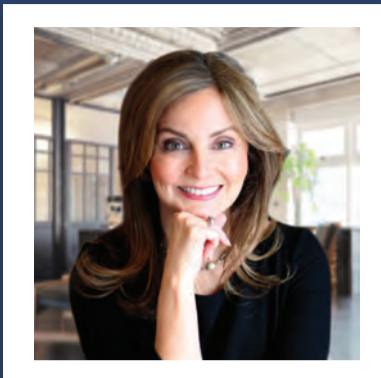
Casino in Reston?
OPINION, PAGE 4

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Va. Supreme Court Refuses Second Petition to Rehear zMOD

What now?

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On Monday, Oct. 2, the Supreme Court of Virginia, in *Berry v. Board of Supervisors*, struck down the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance Amendment, known as zMod, for the second time. The court denied the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors' petition for rehearing in the civil case, which was received on March 19, 2023.

The court ruled this spring that the county's approval of zMod, a broad update of zoning, was illegal, rendering it null and void. Fairfax County removed the 2021 zMod ordinance and reinstated the 1978 Zoning Ordinance, which is in effect today. The amendment, zMOD, re-codified the 42-year-old ordinance to adapt it to Fairfax County's changing development environment. The consequence is that rezoning predicated on the 2021 ordinance may be at risk.

The Court concluded in the March case that adopting zMOD at a virtual meeting was unnecessary to assure the continuation of the County's essential functions and services.

Therefore, the meeting was not authorized by any of the exceptions to FOIA's open meeting requirements. Thus, according to the Court, approval of zMod at the electronic meeting on March 23, 2021, violated the open meeting provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and the state's enabling legislation, which allowed for spe-



SCREENSHOT

Implications of the Oct. 2, 2023 decision by the Virginia Supreme Court to deny the petition for rehearing by Fairfax County Board of Supervisors case on zMOD could be far reaching.

cific electronic meetings in response to the pandemic.

On March 23, 2021, the Board of Supervisors approved the zoning ordinance modernization, which would take effect on July 1, 2021. According to a March 24, 2021, post on the county's NewsCenter, the ordinance "brought zoning into the twenty-first century." (Source: <https://www.fairfax-county.gov/news/modernized-zoning-ordinance-zmod-approved-effect-july-1-2021>)

Jeff McKay, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The new zMod Ordinance was a rewrite of the Zoning Ordinance. Among other things, it updated regulations for certain residential uses, such as accessory structures, accesso-

ry living units, home-based businesses, and flags. Accessory structures up to 12 feet tall, such as sheds, children's play equipment, and gazebos, were to be located at least five feet from the side and rear lot lines, according to zMOD.

The ordinance eliminated the requirements for age and disability for accessory living units (previously known as accessory dwelling units). It changed the process for interior units from requiring special permit approval to an administrative permit. It modernized home-based business use and allowed customers with special permit approval to do so.

It increased the maximum flagpole height to 25 feet for lots with single-family dwellings or manufactured homes and 60 feet for

all other uses, with the option to request a special permit for a higher height. The ordinance stated a three-flag limit per lot. There was no restriction on the size of the flags.

The ramifications of the Court's second denial could be far-reaching to development and legal communities. The status of land use decisions, including zoning approvals, site plans, permits, and subdivisions granted under zMod since mid-2021, may be up for reevaluation and at risk. There may be an impact on permitting that resulted from approvals, financing, and contract conditions that relied on or warranted compliance with approved zoning. There is concern about spillover effects in other jurisdictions that granted development approvals through electronic meetings.

Can FCPD Drones See You? Did the public have any input to county policies on use of drones?

The Fairfax County Police Department says it is revolutionizing policing with its Unmanned Aircraft System. While it has been using drones for small jobs since 2019, "in the past year, FCPD's drone program has expanded to assist the department's helicopter program with a lot more detailed work," states the county's website. On May 21, 2019, the Board of Supervisors approved the Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Manual,

When asked if the 2019 UAS manual is the "official policy" and if it has been updated, Fairfax Police Department media responded via email on Sept. 23: "The Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) policy was drafted by the County, see the link for additional details of the policies guiding drone usage. It is the policy that our department follows." <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/uas/unmanned-aircraft-systems>

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9/1	Homicide Investigation	8000 Block of Sacramento Dr	PD
9/6	Flight Training	9000 Block of Furnace Rd	PD
9/6	Assist patrol on warrant service	6000 Block of Springfield Mall	PD
9/6	Crash Reconstruction	Lee Highway/Clifton Rd	PD
9/7	Barricade	9000 Block of Piney Grove Rd	PD
9/7	Flight training	FS40	FD
9/9	Flight Demo	3700 Block of Stonecroft Blvd	PD
9/10	Critical Mission Person	8000 Block of Reflexion Ln	PD
9/11	Flight Demo	13000 Block of Route 50	PD
9/12	Flight Training	FS40	FD
9/12	Marine Patrol Operation	10000 Block of Hampton Rd	PD
9/13	Dive Team Training	14000 Block of Compton Rd	PD
9/15	SWAT Search Warrant	14000 block of Smithwood Dr	PD

September 2023 Unmanned Aircraft System Mission Schedule.

In response to a question about civilian oversight, Fairfax Police Department media stated, "Regarding public input into our policies, FCPD has historically sought

community input since 2015 on several core General Orders, to include Human Relations (002), Release of Information (402), Vehicle Pursuits (504), Vehicle Stop-

FCPD flies drones:

with a search warrant; to serve a felony arrest warrant at a wanted subject's primary residence; when in pursuit of someone actively sought for an arrest; when there's an amber, silver or blue alert; to investigate a reportable traffic crash; in a location where they have consent to be; for training pilots and evaluating equipment; and to "alleviate an immediate danger to any person," such as an active shooter.

ping Techniques (505), Body-Worn Cameras and In-Car Video (509), Use of Force (540), Arrest Procedures (601), and Immigration Status, Citizenship, and National Origin (604)."

According to Fairfax County, the most recent public comment on the UAS Manual is a series of public meetings held in 2019 with written comments on the draft program previously submitted by Feb. 8, 2019. They are part of the official public record. The public



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSH LAITINEN
Captain Mike Shamblin (File photo)

presentation occurred in January and February of 2019, with the Presentation to the Public Safety Committee on March 12, 2019.

On Dec. 2, 2022, the Office of Aviation Services of the U.S. Department of the Interior revised its Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS) operations and procurement policy. On Jan. 1, 2023, those revisions went into effect. The policy is based on the Department's completion of a comprehensive review of the UAS program, as required

SEE DRONES, PAGE 14

No Gambling Casino for Reston

BY DELEGATE KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM



Some news that is now nearly a year old got renewed attention recently causing many people in our community to become very concerned. Near the end of the 2023 General Assembly session the developer of Reston Station announced that he was interested in building a gambling casino at Reston Station or nearby. The General Assembly was considering at the time requests from several other communities to have a referendum on locating a gambling casino in their communities. The developer came to see me within days of adjournment and told me of his interest and asked for my support. I could not have been more emphatic in saying "no way" would I support such an idea. He was more successful with two Democratic State Senators who agreed to submit an amendment that would add Reston and Tysons Corner to the communities where referenda would be held to approve opening a casino. Fortunately, with the forceful work of

Senators Janet Howell and Jennifer Boysko the amendment was rejected without a hearing. In recent weeks came news that legislation will be introduced in the coming legislative session to approve a referendum establishing a gambling casino in Reston or Tysons Corner. As near as I can determine, the response in those communities has been universally in opposition to such a proposal. Last week I talked with both Senators Scott Surovell and Dave Marsden about their intentions. They were less than clear as to what they intend to do, but you can be sure that I delivered a message to them about the community's strong opposition. I also told them that if they were supportive of a gambling casino they should propose it for the districts they represent. I am pleased that Karen Keys-Gamarra who is running for the House of Delegates to succeed me and Senator Jennifer Boysko who will represent Reston under the most recent legislative redistricting have expressed their opposition to a gambling casino locating in Reston.

Of course legislators can introduce bills that affect districts other than their own. The legislature has been consistent in requiring that a referendum be held in communities in which a casino is proposed that must be approved by local voters before a casino license is issued. You can expect that big-money developers who want to build and operate a casino will spend huge amounts of money to get their proposals approved by local voters. There will be promises of return to the community of tax dollars that will support public infrastructure and programs. The five casinos that are already operational in Virginia are located in low income areas. You can be sure that the greatest chunk of money from the operation of a casino will go to the owners and developers and not the persons who are lured into them to gamble or who live in the locality. Expansion of gambling casinos will likely increase in the state in future years. The horse is already out of the barn. The Republican floor leader in the House of Delegates represents the developer of a proposed Reston casino. Rest assured that I will continue in my future role of private citizen to make it clear that Reston does not want or need a gambling casino!

Fall Is Here, A Casino Too!

JOHN LOVAAS INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE

The coming of Fall is one of my favorite times of the year. Temperatures drop from the 80s to the 60s, even the 50s. I get to put on a long-sleeved shirt and yet feel just a bit of a chill in the air. Still weeks from Reston trees being filled with colorful leaves, the Reston Farmers Market turns to pumpkins, squashes and long-awaited apples to replace fading sweet corn and peaches, plums and the softer tree fruits of summer. However, my warm and fuzzy thoughts of fall have been rudely interrupted by news that a plan is afoot to thrust a casino on our beloved Reston. Yes, a casino! In Reston!? It is hard for me to imagine a worse idea. Sadly, the plot is already in motion, driven by Comstock, the developers of the Wiehle Metro Station complex. The plot involves a two-step approval process. The first step is to generate legislation from the Virginia legislature to encourage casinos in areas meeting certain criteria ... for example, around transportation hubs such as Metro stations. The plotters have identified at least three Democratic legislators who might assist with legislation, and they plan to lubricate the legislative machinery with the pols favorite fuel — cash. A fundraiser for these Dems — State Senators Dave Marsden and Scott Surovell, and Del. Don

Scott, current House of Delegates Minority Leader, will be held at the Wiehle Station Oct. 16. Why on earth would Restonians want a casino in the community? Some legislators, such as Senator Surovell, will tell you, as he has told me, that casinos bring needed tax revenues which might otherwise go to Maryland instead of Virginia. That of course is not all they are likely to bring, and they are known to take a disproportionate share of profits from low-income families who can least afford to gamble. Perhaps legislators are always on the lookout for more revenue, and perhaps it's less of a hassle to get it from casinos than from higher income residents who are so resistant to paying taxes. I hasten to point out that our local legislators, Senator Jennifer Boysko and Democrat Karen Keys-Gamarra, who is expected to win the seat of retiring Reston Delegate Ken Plum, both oppose a casino here. Before anyone builds a casino, it will have to be approved by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. I know that Hunter Mill District Supervisor Walter Alcorn certainly is not on board for a casino. I don't know where Board Chairman Jeff McKay stands but, I imagine both the Chairman and other Supervisors would be reluctant to oppose Alcorn on the matter! Still,

this is a political issue and there is money involved. So, if you think a casino is a bad idea, you might want to let your elected officials know it. Meanwhile, Fairfax County consultants leading Supervisor Alcorn's effort to revitalize Lake Anne's commercial center last week stirred up new controversy within the Lake Anne Condominium (LARCA) itself. While LARCA asked for the County's assistance for revitalization, their fervor for financial help cooled after Alcorn made clear that PART of the County's quid pro quo would be giving the County control of its commercial parking. As we near a rubber-meeting-the-road stage, the consultants'

actual proposals include, for example, a couple of amphitheatres that do not even directly benefit LARCA members' businesses. Furthermore, the proposals include removal of most of the remaining trees in the village center area. (Note: Fortunately, the trees proposed for removal are on land not owned by either LARCA or the County.) Alcorn recently got Board of Supervisors approval to add more than \$200,000 to the consultants' contracts. Let's hope that the additional consultant effort will broaden the participation of real stakeholders and modify proposals to increase their impact on the Condominium Association's member businesses as promised. Stay tuned.

Let Us Know Your View

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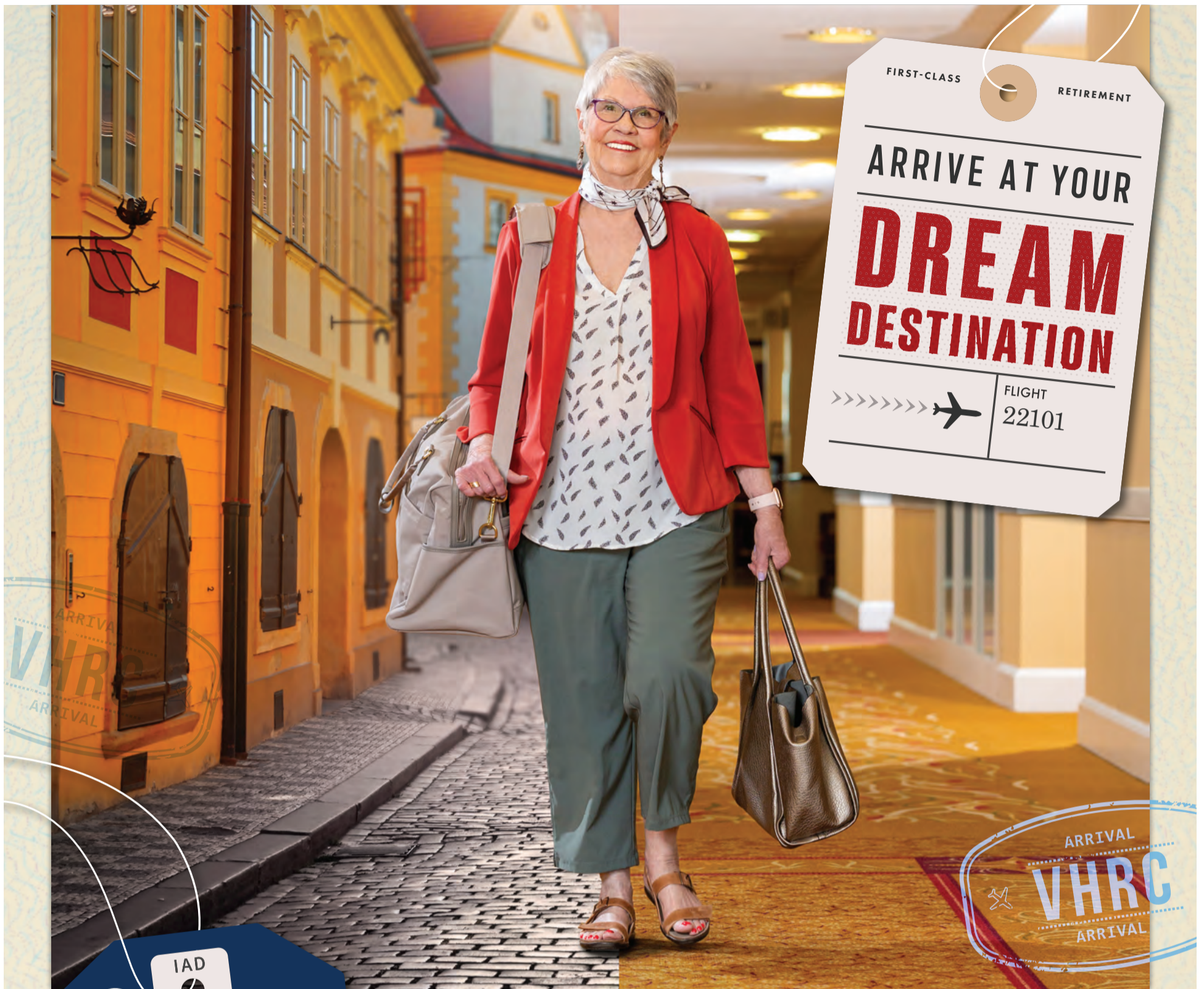
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COMMUNITY



Cub Scout Pack 2525 waves American flags during last year's parade.



Madison Hummer, 11, walks 80 feet across an 8-foot-high rope bridge during Centreville Day 2022.



From left, PFC Kyle Wilson and MPO Tom Eggers tell children about the police bomb squad's android robot at last year's safety expo.

Fun and Festivities for the Whole Community

31st annual Centreville Day is Saturday, Oct. 14.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Live music, a colorful parade, children's activities and fun galore on an early fall day – all that and more are in store at the 31st annual Centreville Day. It's set for Saturday, Oct. 14, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., in Historic Centreville Park. The free event will be held at 5714 Mount Gilead Road (off Braddock Road, across Route 29 from the IHOP).

Event Chair Cheryl Repetti and her tireless group of volunteers have been working on it since February and can hardly wait to see it come to fruition. "The Centreville Day Planning Committee is so excited about Centreville Day 2023," she said. "We're looking forward to seeing old friends, exploring historic sites, enjoying live entertainment and eating great food. We hope everyone will be able to join us to learn from and support the members of their community."

The opening ceremony is at 10 a.m. on the Abogados En Virginia Main Stage, where Supervisor Kathy Smith (D-Sully) will present Centreville Day's Citizens of the Year awards.

American Legion Post 1995 organizes the parade, which includes various Scout groups, dancers, fire, police and sheriff's personnel and McGruff the Crime Dog. Individuals and families are also welcome to decorate a bike or scooter and join the fun; Halloween costumes are encouraged. Participants gather near Wharton Park Court, with the parade stepping off from Wharton Lane at 11 a.m., passing the stage for review around 11:30 a.m. and continuing along Mt. Gilead Road toward Braddock.

Afterward, visitors can visit the many craft and business vendors in the Marketplace while children stop at their tables to receive candy along the Trick-or-Treat Trail. And throughout the day, music at the stage will fill the air as attendees enjoy performances by RearVue (formerly known as the VaDeat-



Map of the 2023 Centreville Day activities.

COURTESY OF CHERYL REPETTI

les), Mixed Greens, Centreville Dance Academy, Harmony Road Strings, and Korean Dance and Autoharp Ensembles.

Performing, as well, will be Jonathan Acosta, a Venezuelan singer and songwriter who plays the violin and Venezuelan cuatro, similar to a small guitar. His theme of "Vamos Paisano!" and messages of optimism are evident in his songs. Acosta has entertained audiences throughout the world and, in 2017, was nominated for a Latin Grammy award. He'll take the stage at 12:30 p.m.

Also giving a demonstration there will be members of the Northern Virginia Wushu Academy. Then at 2 p.m. onstage, the Rotary Club of Centreville-Chantilly presents the pet cavalcade, "Pets in the Park." People are encouraged to bring their pets and show them off. No registration or fees are necessary, and every pet is a winner. Later on, children may vie for the coveted pineapple award during the

Hula Hoop Contest at 3 p.m.

There'll be a variety of games and activities for children, throughout the day, including a challenging climbing wall and fun-filled double slides in the Wegman's children's area. And the Boy Scouts are bringing back their monkey bridge, which was a big hit at last year's Centreville Day.

After working up an appetite, attendees will be able to enjoy the diverse flavors available at the food court. Among those offering their tasty dishes will be Taste of Asia, Srithon's Kitchen, A Southern Fish Fry, Asian Grill, El Chef Latino and Tiki Grill. On hand, as well, will be Snowie Nova, Kona Ica and Uniontown Coffee.

In the Safety Expo, children may meet their local first responders, including Fairfax County police and especially officers from the Sully District Station. They'll get to see their vehicles up close and get lots of safety tips, too. And new this year, Covanta is spon-

soring the Eco Expo, where people may learn more about recycling and the power of bees.

Attendees may also hop onto the Southwestern Youth Association (SYA) History Train to quickly travel from Mount Gilead to the Old Stone Church area.

From the Braddock Road train stop, it's just a short walk to the historic Old Stone Church (the Church of the Ascension), which will be open to the public.

There, historian John Carter will answer questions about Centreville's history and provide walking-tour guides. And natural philosopher Rachel Pelovitz will share the many wonders and mysteries of 18th-century science. Other historic sites open that day include the Spindle Sears House, St. John's Episcopal Church and cemetery, and the Mount Gilead house.

This family-friendly event also offers free parking and shuttles from Carrabba's parking lot on Route 29, with overflow parking available at the Trinity Centre, 5860 Trinity Parkway. For more information about Centreville Day,

along with vendor and parade forms, go to www.CentrevilleDay.org.

Centreville Day benefits Friends of Historic Centreville, the nonprofit that organizes Centreville Day in partnership with the Fairfax County Park Authority, to encourage residents to discover Centreville's rich history.

It's made possible through the generosity of community partners who provide sponsorships, donations and volunteers. They include Stone Middle School, Korean Central Presbyterian Church, Navy Federal Credit Union, Pets Supplies Plus, and the Centreville Immigration Forum.

Hoping for a great turnout, Repetti said, "The Friends of Historic Centreville enthusiastically invite friends, families and neighbors from throughout Northern Virginia to celebrate community and history with engaging, educational and joyous activities for all."

— Cheryl Repetti contributed to this story.

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Two Suspects Arrested Within 72 Hours of Shooting

Detectives from FCPD Major Crimes Bureau Armed Robbery and Contact Shooting squad have arrested two suspects in a shooting that left one adult man injured in Centreville.

At 2:23 p.m. on Sept. 27, officers from Sully District responded to the 5400 block of Belcher Farm Road in Centreville for a shot-person call. Upon arrival, officers located one victim, an adult man, in his vehicle suffering from gunshot wounds to the upper body. The officers provided aid until Fairfax County Fire and Rescue personnel arrived. The victim was taken to a local hospital and treated for non-life-threatening injuries.

During the investigation, detectives were able to identify a vehicle of interest. After a thorough investigation, investigators identified a 20-year-old man of Centreville and a 22-year-old man of Stafford as the two suspects involved.

Both suspects were charged with Aggravated Malicious Wounding, Conspiracy to Commit Felony (Aggravated Malicious Wounding), Use of a Firearm in Commission of a Felony, and Robbery with a Firearm. Both are being held at the Adult Detention Center on no bond.

Anyone who may have information about this shooting is asked to call 703-246-7800, option 5.

ROUNDUPS

New Lanes Opening on Route 28

On or about Monday, Oct. 9, (weather depending), drivers will see new traffic patterns along Route 28 northbound and southbound between the Fairfax County/Prince William County line and Old Centreville Road in Centreville. There'll be an additional lane for three total in each direction. Shoulders, however, will still be closed as ongoing construction continues.

Motorists should expect periodic single-lane closures on Route 28 in both directions in off-peak hours (Monday-Thursday, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.; and Friday, 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.) to complete remaining work in the corridor. Final completion is anticipated in spring 2024.

MORE ROUNDUPS, PAGE 15



Gunston Hall Opens Historic Riverside Garden

After years of archaeological investigation, research and construction, we have moved from concept plan to 1-acre restored garden!

Join us on
Saturday, October 7, 2023
10 am - 4 pm



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Brennan Maher, former Great Falls resident, talks with Jamie Salazar with Paragon Home Care in McLean. He says, "They take great care of the elderly with their services."



Speaker June Melloni Kelly, Ph.D., president-elect of the Rotary Club of Great Falls, service project chair, and Opioid Abuse Prevention lead preps for her remarks.



Delores Athey-Clearfield, Director of Strategic Partnerships and Continuum of Care, Capital City Nurses, What Medicare Really Covers, Resources, and More!

Inaugural Health and Wellness Fair Held in Great Falls

Speakers share key talking points.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Great Falls Grange Foundation hosted the Inaugural Health and Wellness Fair on Saturday, Sept. 16. The event, which Julie Maher, executive director of the Grange Foundation, and Karen McPhail, chair of the Health and Wellness Fair and member of the Great Falls Grange Foundation Board, organized, featured speakers from seven different organizations and businesses. Additionally, the fair featured 22 vendors and an on-site lab, according to June Kelly of the Great Falls Rotary Club.

Silver sponsors Great Falls Assisted Living — A Memory Care Community, and Great Falls Physical Therapy joined gold sponsors Dr. Ranjana Chawla, Ayurveda and Alternative Medicine, and Brightview of Great Falls in supporting the five-hour event.

Highlights:

Peggy Breda, Founder/Owner of A Family Tie- Topic: Navigating Senior Living with Ease: Communication is key. Share your expectations for your loved one's care. All assisted living communities are not the same. Use a local advisor to help you navigate all the options that meet your particular loved ones' needs.

Gabriela Bravo, The Residence at Colvin Run- Assisted living can be a scary set of words, but its goals align with yours: independence, autonomy, and companionship. Being at home to age in place can only be the goal for as long as it is safe and realistic. The Residence at Colvin Run is a luxurious, boutique community that puts residents first.

June Melloni Kelly, Ph.D., Rotary Club of Great Falls and Opioid Abuse Prevention lead- "There is a growing problem with drug misuse and abuse throughout the country that also affects our local communities. In



Joan Bliss and Katie Camogursky, Great Falls Fire and Rescue

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



(From left) June Melloni Kelly, president-elect; Jeff Pan; Elizabeth Bouchard, board member; Wilbert Wilkinson, past president; Teresa Rutledge board member; Connie Sawtell president; Eileen Curtis, past president and David Hunt

2022, more than 90 percent of fatal overdoses in Fairfax County involved fentanyl. Every person can help prevent a potential first-time drug abuser. Properly dispose of unused drugs in the medicine cabinets of your home; consider using a medicine lock box for necessary medicines; and talk to your children about the dangers of overdosing. By age 11, children are starting to self-medicate."

Joan Bliss and Katie Camogursky, paramedic of Great Falls Fire and Rescue- Fairfax County Fire and Rescue, reminds all residents that hands-only CPR can save lives. About 90 percent of people who experience cardiac arrest at home, work, or in public die because they don't receive immediate CPR from someone on the scene. Seventy percent of cardiac arrests occur in the home, so knowing how to give CPR in an emergency means you are prepared to save the lives of the people you love. Studies have shown that hands-only CPR is just as effective on an adult cardiac arrest victim as conventional CPR with breaths when given in the first few minutes, especially if an automated external defibrillator (AED) is used.

Jane Rutledge Hampson, OTR/L, pediatric occupational therapist, owner of Common Senses, LLC- We each have unique patterns of interacting with our sensory environment. Our comfort level with distractions and change, or recognition of detail and patterns, and our skills at organizing time and space are all based on our sensory processing. Knowing your unique sensory profile can help you identify your strengths and challenges and make engaging in life more satisfying. As a parent, knowing your child's sensory profile can improve your ability to nurture, encourage, and build confidence and resilience in your child.

Other speakers included Abigail Lawler, M.D., Inova Parkinson's and Movement Disorders Center, Living Well with Parkinson's, and Delores Athey-Clearfield, Director of Strategic Partnerships and Continuum of Care, Capital City Nurses, What Medicare Really Covers, Resources, and More

Interview with Author Daniel Stuart Olmes

Behind the writing process and life's "aha" moments.

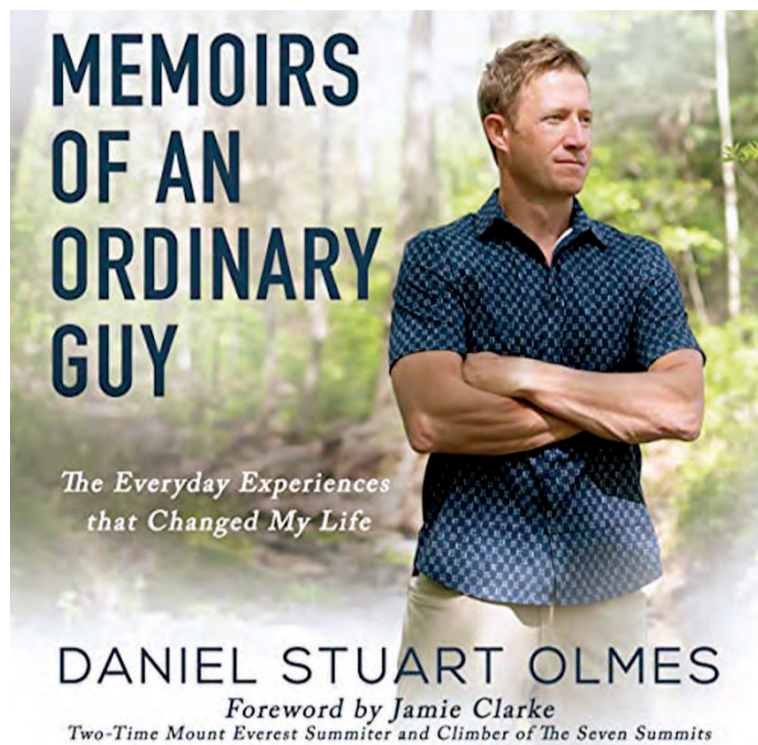
BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Daniel Stuart Olmes of Fairfax County wrote and narrates "Memoirs of an Ordinary Guy: The Everyday Experiences That Changed My Life." Olmes wrote the book throughout his day, starting at 3 a.m. He wrote after that while running around Reston and Herndon, because that's when inspiration struck. Running is the ultimate distraction.

"It's very difficult to have negative emotions while you're exercising, and it's amazing what does come when you're not obsessing over everything that's wrong with your life," Olmes said.

In the shower was another place he needed to jot down his thoughts. There were ah-ha moments throughout his day. Thank goodness for the water-resistant watches Olmes used for dictation and auto-translation.

According to Olmes, writing is not about making money. It never was and will never be. He wrote the book for the benefit and enjoyment of everyone else and not for personal gain. Olmes provided



Daniel Stuart Olmes' book, "Memoirs of an Ordinary Guy: The Everyday Experiences That Changed My Life"

an illustrative anecdote: "I haven't had a drink in 17 years."

The first few chapters of the book are about Olmes' struggle with alcohol and substance abuse. He mentioned three people he knows who have made "very courageous decisions based on those stories." Olmes understands that not everyone will make a life-changing decision as a result of something they read, saw, or heard.

However, everyone should do

their part to spread more love and positivity, he said. "The more we do it, the more the universe responds," Olmes explained. Olmes devotes an entire chapter to the subject of love. He believes there are "aha moments" in people's lives. Olmes hopes that when those moments reach people, they pause and reflect. Olmes described one of those moments for him.

He was leaving his house for work one day, discouraged and de-

pressed due to a personal issue. He comes to a stop sign near an elementary school. A woman and her young son were on their way to school. The scene was uncommon in that the boy was riding on the handlebar of his mother's power wheelchair. Olmes observed how these two interacted and how the love between them played out. It happened at eye level.

"They laughed; they were enjoying each other's company. And here I am. I was depressed about a certain aspect of my life, but I was watching this woman who clearly had a lot of things that were challenging in her life," Olmes said. According to Olmes, the first thing that occurred to him was that if that mother could smile, so could he. It's just a matter of perspective.

"Memoirs of an Ordinary Guy: The Everyday Experiences That Changed My Life," according to Olmes, is a collection of such incidents mixed in with "all kinds of stuff," such as his love of science, physics, philosophy, popular culture, and art.

Olmes says he is an introvert and an observer of the world. He is content watching things and people, what they do, and why they do it. As a result, Olmes believes he is a good listener. "I think I take in probably more information than most people to make a decision," he said.

The success of a newly published book is dependent on many factors, two of which are the selection of an appropriate title and the

design of the cover. Post Hill Press published Daniel Stuart Olmes' book earlier this year.

Olmes stands alone on a path in the woods on the cover. Light rays dapple the scene. He is not in the center of the image but rather to the left, near the fore-edge of the book. Olmes crosses his arms and tilts his head and body to the left, observing something unknown that prompts him to smile back. He is present and inquisitive; his enigmatic smile begs the potential reader to open the book and read a few pages.

When asked why he chose that as the cover of his book, Olmes said that it is a confident image. "You might think it's a paradox that the guy on the cover doesn't necessarily look like an ordinary guy. By the look on my face, you can tell I'm looking at the world inquisitively and thoughtfully. I'm contemplating something deeper, giving the world more attention than usual."

For Olmes, writing the book is his way of giving back to the world that has given him so much. His wish is that the book will remind people of the importance of introspection.

"I hope that everybody who reads the book, in some small way, changes the way they see the world for the staggering miracle and beauty that it is," Olmes said. "You don't have to see something huge and grand to recognize that the subtlety of life is where the greatest beauty exists."

Reduced Fee Schedule Comes to Community Center

Collaborative effort by Cornerstones' Opportunity Neighborhood influenced system gap remediation.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Town of Herndon Parks and Recreation Department offers a newly approved lower fee entry for admission to the community center to residents in lower income brackets. A daily or multi-visit admission pass grants access to the community center's indoor pool, gymnasium, fitness room, and racquetball courts.

"Families who may typically and historically be under-connected to valuable assets in the community or underrepresent-

ed in spaces positioned for advocacy will now be able to directly experience the benefits the programming at the Herndon Community Center can offer," Cindy Roeder, director of Herndon Parks and Recreation, wrote on behalf of the town in an email on Friday, Sept. 15.

The price decrease resulted from a community collaboration with 12 ON Herndon Ambassadors of Cornerstones, who advocated for more affordable access to Herndon's recreational activities. On September 12, the Town of Herndon Council approved a resolution to amend the town's parks and recreation fees.

ON is an abbreviation for Fairfax County's Opportunity Neighborhoods initiative of Neighborhood and Community Services. Led locally in Herndon by the nonprofit Cornerstones, it brings together residents, service providers, schools, and other supporters in the community to create a shared vision to address needs and achieve equitable results for youth and their caregivers.

Alexandra Stewart is the strategic director of Cornerstone's Opportunity Neighborhoods in Reston. During a public comment at the Sept. 12 Herndon Town Council meeting, Stewart said that "an amazing partnership was formed

to develop the vision" through the commitment and dedicated collaboration of Opportunity Neighborhoods' 12 resident leaders. They hold the title of either neighborhood ambassador or community connector. Members collaborated to identify system gaps and meet community needs, striving for equitable outcomes.

The Opportunity Neighborhood members who worked hard to change the fee policy were gathered beside Stewart at the Town Council Public Hearing. Standing at the microphone and addressing the council, Stewart, emotional with pride, had to pause, hand on heart, and take a deep breath before she called out their names one by one, and they stood for recognition.

"The town is extremely appreciative of the collaborative spirit

demonstrated by the ON Herndon team, and we look forward to working with them on future projects to inform, engage, and celebrate Herndon's diverse community," Roeder added.

Earlier this month, during a council work session, Roeder briefed Herndon Town Council members on the proposed resolution to expand access to the community center's programming for Town of Herndon families and individuals. They are residents who, due to financial constraints, may need help to utilize the center.

The fee reduction will increase opportunities for socialization, personal and family wellness, physical and mental health, and a sense of belonging within Herndon's important pillar and community.

Brush Piles – Headaches or Havens?

From chipmunks to chickadees, these can shelter local wildlife.

By GLENDA C. BOOTH
THE CONNECTION

Tropical storm Ophelia soaked the Washington area last weekend, leaving behind, among other impacts, fallen limbs and sticks scattered around. Instead of becoming landfill or incinerator material, they can support local wildlife, from chipmunks to chickadees.

“Brush piles are a valuable habitat component for many wildlife species, especially in areas where good natural cover is lacking,” says the Virginia Department of Forestry website. A brush pile is a mound or heap of woody vegetative material. While some may see a brush pile as an unsightly jumble of sticks, brush piles can be valuable habitat. In fact, in some places, they are called “rabbitats,” used by rabbits like our Eastern cottontail.

Among others, DOF lists these animals as using brush piles: rabbits, chipmunks, squirrels, raccoons, foxes, box turtles, gray treefrogs and many insects. Birds often use brush piles as shelter during severe weather and feed on the pile’s insects.

Brush piles can offer a safe retreat from predators, provide areas to rest, feed and shelter from bad weather and be a place to raise young. Lizards, for example, may lay eggs in the rotten wood.

As a brush pile decomposes, it helps enrich the soil. As the materials biodegrade, they provide a home for invertebrates and micro-organisms for many years. Millipedes, sowbugs and pillbugs feed on the dead plant material. Lichens may grow on wood surfaces.

Fewer trips to the landfill means reducing pollution from gas-powered vehicles. Vehicular traffic is the major source of heat-trapping greenhouse gases in Northern Virginia. Fairfax County’s data show that transportation and mobile emissions are 42 percent of all carbon emissions.

How to Build a Brush Pile

Most experts recommend starting with a sturdy base, putting the largest logs or limbs



PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

A brush pile supports many wildlife species.

down first to create “tunnels” and air spaces. Some people use discarded wooden, untreated pallets or rocks as a base. Then just pile up branches, twigs or prunings, going from longer to shorter on top. Some recommend placing branches at different angles to form air spaces. Experts recommend not packing the materials down. Virginia DOF advises, “Effective brush piles are at least six to eight feet wide – usually larger – and at least four to six feet tall.”

Wildlife biologists urge avoiding materials that may have toxic substances, like pressure-treated lumber, lead-painted materials, tires or other petroleum-based products. A brush pile is basically just a pile of sticks.

Some people put evergreen foliage on top to create a dry place for birds to roost in the winter, especially if there are no evergreen trees or shrubs nearby. Some add discarded Christmas trees and cutback perennials and grasses. Some people grow flowering vines like trumpet honeysuckle and passion flower over their brush piles. The blossoms provide nectar for pollinators.

While some people may see a brush pile as unkempt and “messy,” incompatible with typical grassy landscapes, the piles can be



PHOTO BY LARRY MEADE

Northern Cardinal

tucked into a back corner, behind shrubbery or along a fence. And they cost nothing.

Here’s what Alonso Abugattas of the Capital Naturalist blog has to say: “Brush piles don’t just provide wildlife sheltering and feeding habitat, and occasionally nesting and basking sites, but also good locations to pile your leaves, branches and cuttings from your garden when you clean up. The native bees, chrysalis, cocoons, larvae and other ways that invertebrates spend the winter in them now have a safe place to overwinter and then emerge the following spring. And even if they don’t, they can feed birds and



PHOTO BY LARRY MEADE

Eastern chipmunk



PHOTO BY LARRY MEADE

Eastern Towhee



PHOTO BY LARRY MEADE

Brown Thrasher



PHOTO BY ALONSO ABUGATTAS

White throated sparrow.

other wildlife, along with the seed heads that they may harbor. This is all part of us being a good neighbor for wildlife that is struggling to survive.”

“A brush pile is a place of life, death and regeneration,” says a Department of Forestry brochure.



PHOTO BY LARRY MEADE

Male and female Northern Cardinal



PHOTO BY ALONSO ABUGATTAS

A box turtle hiding



PHOTO BY ALONSO ABUGATTAS

Cottontail rabbit

Suspect in Chantilly Sex Crimes Acquitted

Prosecution's case against Dinh disintegrates at preliminary hearing.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Jailed and charged with sexual battery and abduction with intent to defile, Hien The Dinh, 20, sat through his entire preliminary hearing, Sept. 18, in handcuffs. That's because Fairfax County General District Court bailiffs considered him a flight risk.

Ultimately, though — even though his attorney agreed a sexual assault took place — she was able to make mincemeat out of the police investigation and the prosecution's case. And at the end, the judge's unexpected ruling to dismiss both charges came so quickly and with so little explanation, it left many in court asking each other, "Wait, what just happened?"

In early July, both TV and print media published stories about two sexual assaults in the Meadows of Chantilly mobile home park. One happened May 18, and the other, July 3. So when police developed Dinh as their suspect, arresting him July 6, Chief Kevin Davis held a press conference denigrating Dinh and praising his officers.

Police charged Dinh, of Stafford, with the July 3 offense and said they were investigating him for the May crime. But they never charged him with it; and in court, Sept. 18 — due to a combination of an inexperienced sex-crimes detective and the prosecution not bringing surveillance video to court as evidence — the case against Dinh simply collapsed.

At the start, the victim, 23, testified that on July 3, around 11:30 a.m., she and her mother had just returned home from shopping,

when her mother went to knock on a friend's door, leaving the young woman outside with her little brother in his stroller.

Then, she said, via a Spanish-language interpreter, "A man came from behind me and touched all my intimate parts with one hand and tried to detain me with his other arm. He attempted to hold onto me, and I screamed with all my strength and didn't let go of the stroller. I was paralyzed. He put his hands on my rear and on my vaginal area." Crying, she added, "I was scared, afraid."

"I didn't know him, and he didn't say anything; I don't know what his intentions were. After I screamed, he let go of me, and that's when my mother turned around. I remained still; I didn't know what to do but scream. When my mother saw him, he took off running."

Under cross examination from Public Defender Dawn Butorac, the woman said everything occurred quickly. She described what the man was wearing but said she couldn't tell what race he was because he wore a surgical mask. She said the touching was over her clothes but, because she was wearing short shorts made of thin material, "I could feel everything."

Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Kate Steier then called police Det. Willmer Romero, with the Adult Sex Crimes Unit. He said he responded to the scene and was briefed by two other officers. He also said he interviewed Dinh on July 6, after police developed him as a "person of interest" in this case, and he pointed out Dinh in court.

SEE ACQUITTED, PAGE 15

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ENTERTAINMENT

NOW THRU NOV. 10

Into the Hothouse Exhibit. At Gillespie Gallery of Art, GMU's Art and Design Building, 4515 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Mason Exhibitions presents Into the Hothouse, an immersive site-specific installation by Chicago-based artist Aimée Beaubien. The exhibit is a category-defying constellation of dozens of gathered, printed, and hand-made works that explore botanical and environmental subject matter. Natural forms, technological interventions, and laborious craft techniques abound. The gallery is free and open to the public from Monday to Friday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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/>

FUNDAY MONDAY

"Funday Monday is open to children of all ages, however is best suited for the preschool set! Funday Monday runs from 10:30 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. and — unless otherwise noted — is held at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. There are plenty of free parking lots/garages in Old Town Fairfax. Stroller access is available at the side entrance Old Town Hall facing Route 236/Main Street. For more information visit www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts."

SCHEDULE

Oct. 9 -- No Program
 Oct. 16 -- Music together Sing and Groove
 Oct. 23 -- My Gym
 Oct. 30 -- Kids Nature Puppet Show "Creepy Creatures"
 Nov 6 -- Miss Mollie's Musical Fun
 Nov. 13 -- No Program
 Nov. 20 -- My Gym
 Nov. 27 -- Drew Blue Shoes Magic
 Dec. 4 -- Music Together Sing and Groove
 Dec. 11 -- My Gym
 Dec. 18 -- TBD

SATURDAYS THRU NOVEMBER

Reston Museum. See how Reston's founding principles were implemented by joining the upcoming walking tour. Tour will be held 10 a.m. every Saturday through November. Sign up at: <https://www.restonmuseum.org/event-details/guided-walking-tour-reston-founding-2023-09-09-10-00>

SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

Spooky Fall Festivities. At Go Ape Zipline & Adventure Park, South Run RECenter, Springfield. This ground-based experience will take guests on a hike through the park, navigating various creatures from your deepest, darkest nightmares. Participants will be immersed in the natural environment, never

knowing what might be waiting around the next curve in the path. Is that just the wind through the branches? Definitely not! This guided, anxiety-filled adventure will take 20-30 minutes with a cost of \$14.95 per person. Go Ape is also expanding the Frights at Height experience! Launched in 2022, this autumnal aerial activity is now available on select evenings in both September and October. Guests will find zombies, ghosts, and ghouls hiding in creepy corners under the Treetop Journey zipline and ropes course. Only \$39.95 per person for this 1-hour gravity defying, scream-filled adventure after dark...if you dare. Visit www.goape.com.

NOW THRU NOV. 7

Cox Farms Fall Festival 2023. At Cox Farms, corner of Braddock Road and Pleasant Valley Road, Centreville. The Fall Festival is filled with family-friendly entertainment and attractions including slides, swings, animals, hayrides and more. From the world-famous hayride to our corny Cornundrum and giant slides, our Fall Festival has something for the whole family. The Fall Festival is open Sept. 16-17, and then Thursday through Monday Sept. 23-Nov. 6, plus Tuesday, Nov. 7. Hours Sept. 16 – 17; Thursdays through Mondays Sept. 23 – Oct. 30: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. | Nov. 2 – 7: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. (last entry one hour before closing). Market is open daily through Nov. 7.

The Fields of Fear Hours: Friday and Saturday nights Sept. 22 – Nov. 4 (plus Sunday, Oct. 8) 7:30-11 p.m. (last entry 10 p.m.) Featuring more than 20 acres of fear and spooky attractions.

NOW THRU OCT. 29

Fall Fest 2023. At Reston Farm Garden Market, 10800 Baron Cameron Avenue, Reston. Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Fall Fest schedule spans weekends from September 23rd to October 29th, with the Columbus Day special on October 9th, operating from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Tickets are \$20 per child and \$5 per parent, while children aged two and under enter for free. The festival offers a variety of activities, including inflatables such as a corn maze, two 20' slides, two pumpkin bounce houses, and a basketball game. There's also a charming petting zoo, the Reston Farm Garden Market Express Train, and live music for entertainment. The market features seasonal items like chrysanthemums, pansies, fresh produce, natural jams, local organic honey, farm-fresh products, pumpkins, seasonal decor, and our famous Apple Cider Donuts. You can also savor offerings from local food trucks throughout the weekend. Book your tickets on our website: <https://www.restonfarm.com/fall-fest>.

SEPT. 28 TO OCT. 22 (EXTENDED)

"The Chosen." At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. The Chosen by Aaron Posner and Chaim Potok, directed by Alex Levy. Tickets: \$25-\$50 general admission, \$15 students, educators, and military. Purchase online

at www.1ststage.org or 703-854-1856.

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 4

Panel Discussion on Book Banning. 10 a.m. At the Little River United Church of Christ, 8410 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Hosted by the Lifetime Learning Institute of Northern Virginia, the panelists will be Matt Callahan, senior staff attorney at the American Civil Liberties Union of Virginia, and Lisa Varga, Executive Director of the Virginia Library Association. The panelists will discuss the law and policy applicable to banning books in libraries, both public and in schools, and in bookstores, and whether certain books should be restricted to certain readers based on age or removed from library shelves entirely. For further information, contact David Drachslar at drachslerd@gmail.com.

THURSDAY/OCT. 5

"Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown". 1 p.m. At McLean Community Center 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. (Spain; Directed by Pedro Almodóvar); Shown in Spanish with English subtitles. In Almodóvar's breakout dark comedy, a television actress encounters a variety of eccentric characters after embarking on a journey to discover why her lover abruptly left her.

THURSDAY/OCT. 5

Free Fall Concert. 6:45 p.m. At Burke Lake Park, Fairfax Station. Supervisor Pat Herrity (Springfield District) along with the Fairfax County Park Authority and Foundation will be hosting a Fall Free Concert at Burke Lake Park. The concert will feature the Magic Trio, a three-man rock n' roll band based out of Northern Virginia. 2 Silos food and drinks will be available for purchase at the event. Attendees are encouraged to bring blankets, lawn chairs, picnic dinner, and to dress appropriately for a fall evening show.

THURSDAY/OCT. 5

Foreign Language Film. 1 p.m. At The Alden, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The Alden's foreign language movie series is curated by Performing Arts Director Sarah Schallern Treff, with more than a little help from our audience members! The series has a few surprises thrown in.

OCT. 5-9

Disney on Ice. At Eagle Bank Arena, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. This newest Disney On Ice spectacular features the most Disney characters in one show, including the on-ice debuts of Frozen 2 and Raya and the Last Dragon. Audiences will take a journey across the night sky with Mickey, Minnie, and all their friends from Encanto, The Princess and the Frog, Toy Story, Moana, Cars, Aladdin, and more. Tickets now available for purchase online at Ticketmaster.com or visit the venue Box Office.

Dates and Times:
 Thursday, October 5 at 7:00 PM
 Friday, October 6 at 10:30 AM & 7:00 PM
 Saturday, October 7 at 10:30 AM, 2:30 PM & 6:30 PM
 Sunday, October 8 at 10:30 AM, 2:30 PM & 6:30 PM
 Monday, October 9 at 1:00 PM



Vienna Oktoberfest takes place Saturday, Oct. 7, 2023 in Vienna.

OCT. 6 TO OCT. 31

The Haunted Trail. Every Friday, Saturday and Sunday night starting at 6:30 p.m. At The Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. The Workhouse Arts Center celebrates its 10th annual Haunted Trail by bringing scares and laughs to the Halloween season. Haunt: Game Over immerses guests through a highly themed walk-through experience, as creepy characters deliver contactless scares in multiple scenes. Guests will travel in small groups via a timed entry for a frightening experience that brings them next to abandoned, historic buildings where they will encounter terrifying characters and sights that are not for the faint of heart. The spirits will get loud with live music on Fridays, Saturdays, and Halloween night, with a rotating schedule of band performances in the Rizer Pavilion, which also serves as the check-in area and 'virtual line' for Haunt entry. Food trucks, soft drinks, snacks, wine, beer, and themed-specialty drinks will be available for purchase on campus. Gates open at 6:30 p.m.; Final groups will be dispatched by 10:30 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays; and 9:30 p.m. on Sundays.

SATURDAY/OCT. 7

Vienna Oktoberfest. 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. On Historic Church Street, Vienna. More vendors, more food, great music and entertainment, plenty of free kids activities and locally-sourced beer and wine selections. The festival has historically drawn an average of 20,000-30,000 attendees and is sure to be a smash hit this year. Presented by the Vienna Business Association and the Town of Vienna.

Vienna's 2023 Oktoberfest will feature:

- ❖ Live entertainment on three stages: Main Stage, Kid's Stage, Acoustic Stage
 - ❖ Beer/Wine Garden featuring the Caboose Brewing Company, Hawk and Griffin, Norm's Beer and Wine and Vienna Vintner
 - ❖ Beer and multinational food offerings located on Mill Street
 - ❖ Free kids activities, inflatables, games and entertainment on the Town Green
 - ❖ Business Expo Showcase
 - ❖ Vendor Marktplatz
 - ❖ Artisan Market
 - ❖ Loads and Loads of Fun!
- Visit www.viennaoktoberfest.org.

OCT. 7-8

Virginia Opera Presents Siegfried. At GMU's Center for the Arts,

Fairfax. Reenter the fantasy realm of gods, heroes, and an epic quest for true love in Wagner's Der Ring des Nibelungen (the "Ring" cycle) with Virginia Opera's production of Siegfried. Libretto and Music by Richard Wagner; Adaptation by Jonathan Dove and Graham Vick; Orchestral Version by Jonathan Dove; Sung in German with English surtitles. Featuring the Virginia Symphony Orchestra. Adam Turner, Conductor.

SATURDAY/OCT. 7

Vance Gilbert with Sue Horowitz. 7 p.m. At Community Lutheran Church, 21014 Whitfield Place, Sterling. Adv tickets \$25, day-of \$30 (member / congregation as-applicable \$25 at the door) at www.focusmusic.org | Info: at rob@focusmusic.org or www.focusmusic.org.

SATURDAY/OCT. 7

Moneyless Market. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Chantilly Baptist Church, 14312 hantilly Baptist Lane, Chantilly. Chantilly Baptist Church is holding its "Moneyless Market" where those in need in the community can come and receive donated clothing items free of charge. There will be clothing for women, men, children, and babies. There will be free pony rides from 12 to 2 p.m., a car show, children's entertainment, and food. Visit www.chantillybaptist.org or call the office at 703-378-6880.

SATURDAY/OCT. 7

Parktober Fest. Noon to 5 p.m. At Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5049 Walney Road, Chantilly. The whole family is invited to a celebration at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park that is becoming a community tradition. Join friends to shop local from artists and artisans, makers and bakers. Enjoy delicious food and drink from Ono Brewing Co. and DC Steakholders. Call 703-631-0013.

SATURDAY/OCT. 7

DC-Metro Modern Home Tour. At homes located in McLean, Arlington, D.C. and Chevy Chase. Visitors will get to see and celebrate some of the finest examples of current Modern residential architecture in the DC area – and meet the people who created them. Host/organizer – Modern Architecture + Design Society; partner/"Finale House" hosts – listModern; participants – BLDUS, Alair Homes with architect Paul Weber and designer Iona Tzatcheva, MPR Architecture, Sagatov

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ENTERTAINMENT



Clifton Day will be held Sunday, Oct. 8, 2023 in the Town of Clifton.

Design+Build, Paola One Design, and Green Build Group. Visit the website <https://mads.media/2023-dc-metro-modern-home-tour/>

SATURDAY/OCT. 7

McLean 5K Race. 8 a.m. Registration, Package Pick Up, Warmup begins at 7 a.m.; Race begins at 8 a.m. At McLean Square Shopping Center, 6631 Old Dominion Drive, McLean. Hosted by the McLean Community Center with the support of sponsors, Century 21 New Millennium and the Greater McLean Chamber

of Commerce, the race features a USATF-certified course through the heart of McLean and is designed to appeal to runners of all abilities. The proceeds of the run benefit the McLean Community Foundation. Register at mclean5k.com

OCT. 7-8, 14-15 AND 21-22

Goblin Golf. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Halloween arrives early at the Burke Lake Park mini golf course. Enjoy a festive-themed experience with Halloween treats

included. Our ghosts and goblins will be appearing throughout the day from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Bring a date, a friend or the whole family. This mini golf experience is fun for everyone! Buy your tickets before they sell out! Cost is \$10. Call 703-323-6600.

SUNDAY/OCT. 8

Clifton Day. 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. To be held on Main Street in the Town of Clifton. Now in its 55th year, Clifton Day features a marketplace with around 150 artisans, antique

Capital Art and Craft Festival, Oct. 13-15, 2023

More than 200 artists from throughout the US will be at the Dulles Expo Center. Art and crafts return to Northern Virginia Oct. 13-15, 2023 as the Capital Art & Craft Festival (www.CapitalArtandCraftFestivals.com) brings more than 250 juried artisans to Dulles Expo Center for its Fall weekend event.

The Capital Art & Craft Festival will feature handcrafted, one of a kind art in more than a dozen mediums including glass, jewelry, leather, paint-

ings, prints, photography, pottery, wearable art and wood. It is the largest indoor arts festival in Northern Virginia.

Capital Art and Craft Festival, Oct. 13-15, 2023 - Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly, VA 20151

Friday, Oct 13 and Saturday Oct 14: 10 am – 5 pm; Sunday Oct 15: 10 am -4 pm

Tickets: \$10 in advance; \$12 at the door; Senior discount available; children under 12 free
Ticket information: www.CapitalArtandCraftFestivals.com

dealers, vintage sellers and other vendors. Live music, children's activities, pony rides, a beer and wine garden and other delicious food and beverage choices add to the fun. Clifton Day is family-friendly event but please leave your pets at home.

SUNDAY/OCT. 8

T-TRAK Model Train Show. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Northern Virginia T-TRAK members will hold a N gauge Model 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. Visit www.fairfax-station.org.

OCT. 8-9

Community Wide Yard Sale. 12-3 p.m. Sunday; 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday. At Congregation Sha'are Shalom, 19357 Evergreen Mills Road, Leesburg. The large sale will be held in the Synagogue's social hall and will include a wide variety of unique items including: clothing, shoes, accessories, toys/games/puzzles, baby gear, books, home decor, seasonal decor, dishes, kitchen gear, small household appliances, small furniture items, electronics, media, and much more. The yard sale will benefit Rosie Uran Jewish Education Center.

MONDAY/OCT. 9

Touch-A-Truck. 10 a.m.-noon. Free

Admission. Registration required for Sensory Friendly Experience at 9:30 a.m. only. Families can now come from 9:30-10 a.m. to see and touch the trucks without all the noise. Join them during the Fairfax County Public Schools' holiday for this free event that gives kids and families the chance to see, touch and explore some of their favorite vehicles.

TUESDAY/OCT. 10

McLean Historical Society Meeting. 7:30 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The program will feature Paul Kreingold who will discuss "Potomac Marble." All are welcome to attend at no charge.

SATURDAY/OCT. 14

Open House. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sponsored by Vienna Volunteer Fire Department, 400 Center St., S, Vienna. Join them for food, games, interactive learning, live demos, safety workshops, prizes and more. Learn more at VVFD.org

FALL BOOK SALE

At Centreville Regional Library 14200 Saint Germain Dr., Centreville. Fiction, nonfiction, DVDs and audiobooks. Bag sale on Sunday; fill a grocery bag with books for \$10. Oct. 20, Friday, 1-5 p.m. Oct. 21, Saturday, 10-5 p.m. Oct. 22, Sunday, 1-4 p.m.

OCT. 28-29

Ghost Town at Burke Lake Park. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Tickets are \$15/person online until Oct. 26. Day of tickets are \$20.

Military Appreciation Monday

Mark your calendars for the Oct. 16 Military Appreciation Monday dinner supporting the organization Stop Soldier Suicide. If you can join us, be sure to call the Old Brogue at 703-759-3309 and make a reservation for either the 5:30 or 7:30 seating. Helping prevent suicide by our veterans is by far the most important thing we as a community can do. If you can't join us, but would still like to make a donation, click on the link above and go to the "Donate Now" tab. <https://stopsoldiersuicide.org/donate>

A MAM (Military Appreciation Monday) dinner more than 13 years ago helped launch Stop Soldier Suicide.

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Drones

FROM PAGE 3

by Secretary's Order (SO) 3379. It addresses the Department's critical need for UAS capabilities while ensuring that necessary security measures and related mitigations are met per Executive Order (EO) 13981.

Fairfax Police Department began flying UAS (Unmanned Aerial System), or drone missions in 2019, and by 2020, it had 30 trained drone pilots. According to the department, they fly drones under certain conditions, such as with a search warrant, to serve a felony arrest warrant at a wanted subject's primary residence, when in pursuit of someone actively sought for an arrest, when there's an amber, senior, or blue alert; to investigate a reportable traffic crash; in a location where they have consent to be; for training pilots and evaluating equipment; and to "alleviate an immediate danger to any person," such as an active shooter.

According to Captain Mike Shamblin of the Fairfax County Police Department, the department had 12 drones by mid-2021: six for the SWAT team, one for the Technical Investigation Unit, one for Fugitive & Apprehension, two for the Crime Scene Unit, and two for Helicopter Search & Rescue. There are logs of drone activity and lists of what the drones can and cannot do on the county's website.

The use of drones has raised concerns. "There is no national framework governing their use and how police make use of the data collected by the thousands of the machines across the United States," according to the Brookings Institute. "In the absence of a federal framework for governing the technology, cities, [counties], and states have written a patchwork of rules and regulations for police drone use that, taken together, show what a more transparent and just set of laws governing police aerial surveillance might look like."

Brookings cites the George Floyd protests as an example, calling them the largest protests in the US since the 60s. Law enforcement across the country gathered personal data on peaceful protesters by means of drones, as well as social media, body cameras and facial recognition.

While Virginia and some other states require a warrant for many law enforcement use of drones, it also exempts police from the warrant requirements if they're using drones for non-law enforcement purposes, like taking photographs of accident scenes, for disaster response and for assessing traffic levels, Brookings says.

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-Werner Heisenberg

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Suspect in Chantilly Sex Crimes Acquitted

FROM PAGE 11

Steier played part of that recorded interview for the court and entered it into evidence. In it, Dinh said he initially saw the woman in the shopping-center parking lot and started following her in his car. "I had a compulsion, and it overtook me," he said. "So I followed her. I was trying not to, but it happened again. I started following her again, still fighting it."

When Romero asked what that compulsion made him do, Dinh replied, "To assault her. I just slapped her butt and ran off." He said he didn't touch any other part of her, "just her shoulder."

Butorac then asked the detective how long he'd been with the Sex Crimes Unit, and he said, "four or five months" and that he'd only investigated "three or four" such cases. Under her questioning, Romero also stated he didn't ask Dinh to describe the victim, but Butorac said it was something important Romero should have done, since Dinh "could be sent to prison for life, if convicted."

"Did you show him a picture of the victim?" she asked, to which Romero said no. "Don't you think that might have been important?" she asked him.

"I guess," he replied.

Steier asked Romero what the surveillance videos police obtained from the shopping-center businesses and from the neighborhood's Ring cameras showed. Romero said they showed Dinh following the woman

and her mother in his car. But Butorac objected because the prosecution didn't bring those videos to court to show as evidence.

Butorac then asked Judge Dipti Pidikiti-Smith to drop Dinh's charges, saying, "This was a simple assault; abduction has to be more intentional detaining. There was a touch, she screamed, he immediately let go. She said, 'The other arm attempted to hold me. I don't know what his intentions were.'"

"There has to be some intent to defile after an abduction, and some intent to abduct," she continued. "This was a sexual assault - the defiling was done. But the detective didn't show Mr. Dinh a picture of the victim or even ask what time of day it happened."

Steier countered that Dinh "came from behind, grabbed her and held on, and [the woman] stated she could not move - she froze. It doesn't matter if it's quick or not. Holding onto her is separate from him touching her. The defendant talked about his compulsion and that he followed her and slapped her butt. Your Honor, there's enough to certify these charges [to the grand jury]."

But Butorac was adamant that "The Commonwealth failed to meet its burden of proof" and that the "identity [of the alleged assailant] wasn't established."

Pidikiti-Smith then dismissed both charges against Dinh. "The victim said she was held and then modified her answer," said the judge. "While a crime was committed, there wasn't sufficient evidence presented to connect this defendant to this victim."

ROUNDUPS

FROM PAGE 7

Car Seat Inspections on Oct. 12

Parents may get their children's car seats inspected on Thursday, Oct. 12, from 5-8:30 p.m., outside the Sully District Police Station. It's at 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Inspections are done on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants should install the child safety seat themselves, so the inspection can be performed. The seat will be properly re-installed if necessary, and parents will be taught how to install the seat properly in the future. Everyone is eligible. Another car-seat inspection is scheduled for Nov. 9, at the same place and time.

Fire Stations to Hold Open Houses

In celebration of Fire Prevention Week, all Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Stations will host open houses on Saturday, Oct. 14, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Stop by Stations 17 and 28 in Centreville, Station 15 in Chantilly, and Station 21 in Fair Oaks to meet local firefighters and paramedics, join in children's activities, learn about fire safety, and see the fire trucks and ambulances.

Halloween Trunk or Treat on Oct. 18

The Fairfax County Police Department is hosting its fourth annual, Halloween Trunk or Treat on Wednesday, Oct. 18, from 6-8 p.m., in the county Government Center parking lot at 12000 Government Center Parkway in Fairfax. People hosting trunks must register in advance, as well as parents wanting to bring their children to this event. Registration for parents is open now at <https://bit.ly/fcpdtot2023>. Individuals, businesses and organizations wanting to decorate their vehicle's trunks and pass out candy to children should register at <https://bit.ly/fcpdtrunks23>.

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Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped to keep all your Connection Newspapers alive throughout Alexandria, Fairfax County, Arlington County and Potomac, Md. along with affiliated websites and digital media. Now we need help again in 2022.

Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

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

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

The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyper-local news to residents. It feels like no small miracle to be looking forward into 2022.

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

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

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Certain About Burton



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

The little dog, affectionately referred to as, recently celebrated his first birthday. And as I anticipated when I wrote my initial column about him/me having gotten a puppy for the first time in 28 years or so: "Burton For Certain," he has been everything a dog owner could want. He's a sweet and loving golden retriever (it's rare that the breed is anything else) who still believes - at almost 75 pounds, that he's a lapdog. Have you ever tried eating off a snack table with a big dog sitting on your lap and sniffing your plate/fork? It's not easy. Part of what brings me joy about Burton is the story of how and why he was christened, so to speak, with his name. I'm always interested in pet names and their stories, if any, which people are only too happy to share about their pet's given name. And Burton, as with Brandy and Bailey before him (both liquor-related), has a good backstory which I will now share.

My wife, Dina surprised me with puppy-Burton on a Saturday morning in early October one year ago. Dina was helping a neighbor, or so I was told, that morning, when she got up at 6 am to drive four hours to Lexington, Va. What little did I know? As Sergeant Schultz said so often on "Hogan's Heroes" so too did "I know nothing." Of course, I didn't have a dog name at the ready since I was clueless what Dina had started planning three months earlier in June when she first met the breeder in Harper's Ferry on a Saturday when we took a day trip with some friends. Fast forward, when she arrived home later that afternoon, puppy in tow, with the associated puppy paraphernalia, some of which had been spread around the neighborhood - to maintain the surprise, I was nearly speechless at the sight of him. He was adorable and lovable. Dina placed him in my arms, and I very nearly started to cry. I really hadn't thought much about a puppy. Ever since I was diagnosed with cancer, I had always thought that with the indeterminate issues with my health and life expectancy, especially factoring in the side effects - and demands of chemotherapy, that adding to the family when we might be subtracting from it was a risky proposition. Nevertheless, here I was back in the dog business for the first time in 14 years. Having not considered a canine addition, given the cancer diagnosis and the five cats we already had in house, I was not thinking expansion. As such, I was totally unprepared for Burton emotionally (physically I could mostly manage, although occasionally a little challenging on some days when I felt the effects of 14 years of chemotherapy), and since I had no inkling as to what Dina was planning, I certainly didn't know what to call him.

For the next day, we struggled to give him a proper name. We did agree that his name should begin with the letter "B," given the names of our two previous goldens, but other than that, we were stuck. The only name we could produce was "Buddy," but other than the "B" part, we weren't all that enamored, particularly Dina. I can still see her sitting on our living room couch that morning, cellphone in hand, scrolling pet name lists on the internet, as we tried to resolve this pet-naming dilemma. Frustrated by the choices we were considering; we were temporarily at a loss. Then, out of the blue, as I'm sitting in a wingchair perpendicular to the couch, I get a text from Dina's father in New York - who rarely texts. He knew about the puppy surprise but had no idea that we were focused on finding a name at that moment or were as stuck as we were, struggling to find a suitable name and beginning quite frankly to get a bit frustrated. Granted, it was barely a day, and we hadn't had much time to get our arms - and head around the changes to our life (me more so than Dina obviously since she was the "surpriser"), but we wanted to call him something other than "puppy." And until we had a name, it's almost as if the surprise wasn't quite finished and therefore, we couldn't move on and/or plan for our new future as dog owners once again.

Then I hear my phone-text ring, look down on my lap, and see a text out of the blue/unsolicited, from Dina's father. I click on his name and read the message. I immediately smile and look over to the Dina on the couch, still scrolling/researching names. I snicker and say, "Dina, your father has just come up with the dog's name: Burton." And since we live in Burtonsville and live in the Isaac Burton House and the name begins with "B," we had found/been given Burton's name. And when I said so, Dina smiled back at me and chuckled: "Perfect," and so he was officially named. Soon thereafter, his AKC registration confirmed it: "Sir Isaac Burton of Burtonsville."

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



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