

THE CONNECTION

CENTRE VIEW ❖ Chantilly ❖ Great Falls ❖ Herndon ❖ McLean ❖ Oak Hill ❖ Oakton ❖ Reston ❖ Vienna

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Rebecca Borton of Herndon monitors the Democratic table.

'Proof' at the Grange

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'Nothing About Us Without Us'

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Multi-modal Safety Matters

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NEWS

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Elsie Baker prepares to slide her ballot into the voting machine. "I came early because I attend 6:30 Mass," she said.

Harold Boosahda of Herndon and Kevin Peterson of Herndon monitor the GOP campaign tent.

Nov. 7 General Election

What's happening at polling places on Election Day.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Ten minutes before election officials opened the doors at 6 a.m. to the polling place for Fairfax County Dranesville Precinct 320 in Northern Virginia, Democratic and GOP volunteers scurried about in the parking lot of the community center to set up their tents and have their stacks of sample ballots ready to hand out to voters. A line had already formed inside the building as early-bird Election Day 2023 voters prepared to cast their ballots on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 7.

Stakes are high at the state level in Virginia during this year's midterm election and closely watched within the Commonwealth and nationally. Although Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin's four-year term runs another two years and the office is not on the ballot, voters will decide which party controls each chamber of the General Assembly with all 140 seats on the ballot.

Virginia is one of only four states where all seats in the General Assembly are on the ballot for the first time since 2019. The Virginia legislature could see more turnover than usual, resulting from this being the first election under the new set of district maps.

According to an Oct. 17, 2023 survey by The Wason Center, at Christopher Newport University, "Virginia likely voters are split on whether they intend to support the Democratic or Republican Party's candidate in their district for the General Assembly (42 percent to 41 percent)."



Rebecca Borton of Herndon monitors the Democratic table.



Voters fill every seat available as they complete their ballots shortly after the polling location opens at 6:15 in the morning.

University, "Virginia likely voters are split on whether they intend to support the Democratic or Republican Party's candidate in their district for the General Assembly (42 percent to 41 percent)."

In Virginia, Democrats currently control the Senate, by a 22-17 margin. To check Youngkin's conservative GOP agenda, Democrats seek to maintain control of the Senate and hopefully flip the GOP-controlled House

of Delegates, which Republicans won by a narrow margin in 2021, 52-48.

Youngkin is pushing to win full control of

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PHOTO BY SALLY-ANNE ANDREW PYNE

2023-2024 Scholarship Recipients, Scholarship Fund Board and GMU Program Administrators Seated: Kenise Lewis, Helen Ezinne Agbapuruonwu, Fatmata Bah, Alexandra Diaz Franco, Ashley Suyu, Zara Karim, Connie Lam. Standing: Khaseem Davis, Sumaira Malik, Connie Colabatistto, Chenelle Thompson, Muge Yalcin, Suzanne Charleston, Sumita Chopra, Gisela Reyes, Lauryn Nashi, Crystal Forson, Hilary Moya, Jenny Stephens, Lindsay Harper, Kaitlin Cicchetti

Life-changing, Women’s Club of Great Falls Scholarship Fund

Fall Soiree awards held.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Women’s Club of Great Falls Scholarship Fund held its annual fall event on Sunday, Oct. 22. The goal of the gathering was twofold: to honor and celebrate the exceptional individuals who received scholarships for the 2023–2024 academic year and to bestow

the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award on former leaders. A total of eighteen students received scholarships.

Lindsay Harper, president of the Women’s Club of Great Falls Scholarship Fund, said, “The smiling faces and joy within the room were infectious. There were so many wonderful supporters of the Scholarship Fund gathering to celebrate these inspiring and deserving students.”

Sumita Chopra, a single mother of two young children who received the 2022-2023

scholarship, said the award helped her financially and motivated her to pursue a degree in special education. Another student, Hilary Moya, a George Mason Early Identification Program alumni scholarship recipient, discussed how the recent announcement of the scholarship fund provided three additional years of scholarship commitment to her education journey, significantly reducing her financial stress.

Karen Magley and Barbara Gwizdz received Lifetime Achievement Awards.



PHOTO BY HANNAH RATCLIFF PHOTOGRAPHY

Sumita Chopra, a two-time scholarship recipient, shares the impact of the scholarship on her life.

McLean Community Players Present ‘Proof’

This weekend at the Great Falls Grange

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

During the writers strike and ongoing labor dispute with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, McLean native Margaret Berkowitz, an actor and producer in Los Angeles for the past six years, returned home to McLean and is once again involved with local theater.

Berkowitz returned to The McLean Community Players in a directing capacity for the play Proof, by David Auburn. After its debut last weekend in McLean, Oct. 27–29, it will run one more weekend, Nov. 10–12, at The Great Falls Grange. She is assisting Michael Replegle, who was professor of the Musical Theatre & Actor’s Studio at Fairfax Academy, and retired in 2020.

Berkowitz is working with the lead actress in Proof, former classmate Jess Rawls and

she is thrilled to introduce this significant work of art to the Great Falls community.

On Friday morning, Nov. 3, Berkowitz and Julie Maher, the director of the Great Falls Grange Foundation, agreed to meet at the venue, 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, next to the Great Falls Library, to discuss the performance.

Maher said that people who have come to the Grange for the first time will be pleasantly surprised at the intimacy and the character that the Great Falls Grange has to offer. “This is a theater-style hall with excellent amenities and a charming atmosphere, and we have a fantastic stage.”

Berkowitz said that the space of the Great Falls Grange completely lends itself to their particular, intimate performance. “It’s a minimalist set with a four-person cast — no



PHOTO COURTESY OF MCLEAN COMMUNITY PLAYERS

A concerned Catherine, played by Jess Rawls of Alexandria, comforts her aging mathematician father, Robert, played by Dave Wright of Leesburg, as he claims to have a stroke of genius; or is it madness?

SEE ‘PROOF’, PAGE 12

Dementia Caregivers Conference on Friday

Join the Northern Virginia Dementia Care Consortium this Friday, Nov. 10, from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m., for its 37th annual Family Caregiver Conference. Designed for family and professional caregivers, this in-person event will be held at the Korean Central Presbyterian Church, 15451 Lee Hwy. in Centreville. To learn more about the sessions, speakers and registration, visit nvdcc.com or call 703-578-7431.

Military Appreciation Monday For Navy SEAL Foundation

The Nov. 13 Military Appreciation Monday (MAM) dinner will be supporting the Navy SEAL Foundation <https://www.navysealfoundation.org/>. 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.

As always, all you need to do is come and enjoy a great dinner. The Bob Nelson Team, the Old Brogue and our cosponsors will be making the donations.

The Navy SEAL Foundation provides immediate and ongoing support and assistance to the Naval Special Warfare community and its families.

Shepherd's Center Needs More Volunteers

Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church (SCMAFC), an all-volunteer organization, is seeking additional volunteers to support its mission of providing free transportation to seniors for medical and dental appointments or run errands to grocery stores and pharmacies.

The Center is an all-volunteer non-profit organization [501(c)(3)] that has been operating since 2006.

Shepherd's Center volunteers provided 2,362 rides in 2022 and 2,758 rides thus far this year. Of the rides provided this year, 57% were medically related, 17% grocery, and 21% for physical therapy. The Center has added 35 new drivers this year and 83 new riders, so there's a continued need for additional volunteers.

There is no set quota; volunteers are free to choose when and how

often they drive. They can choose rides that are one-way or round trip. The best part is not only do drivers help those in need, they also get to meet wonderful folks, often with very interesting backgrounds and stories to tell.

For detailed information or to apply, please visit the Center's website <https://scmafc.org/volunteer> or call (703) 506-2199 and leave a message.



PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING

This meeting will be held virtually. Please use the information below to join via Zoom.

Thursday, Nov. 16, 2023, 6:00 p.m.

Join Zoom Meeting:
<http://bit.ly/3sr0juS>

Meeting ID: 840 9128 9098

Passcode: 808423

Reston Association members are encouraged to provide comments on the association's 2024 Capital and Operating budgets at this public hearing. View budget materials at Reston.org.



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Westfield High's Cappies Play is 'Miss Holmes'

What if Sherlock and his assistant were women?

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Detective Sherlock Holmes and his assistant are both literary legends. But in Westfield High's upcoming Cappies play, they're portrayed as women, for an intriguing new spin on the story.

"Looking through a feminist lens, we can show what it was like in Victorian-era London for women trying to protect other women from various forms of injustice and abuse," said Director Enza Giannone-Hosig. "And one of the messages is 'Don't underestimate the power and intelligence of women.'"

Show times are Thursday-Friday, Nov. 16-17, at 7 p.m., and Saturday, Nov. 18, at 2 and 7 p.m. Tickets are \$15, adults; \$10 students (with I.D.s), at the door or via westfieldtheatre.com.

Giannone-Hosig said her tech students were really excited about all the technical elements this play could have, and her actors were thrilled to sink their teeth into highly dramatic material. "Because it's a period piece, we created a set, costumes, sound, props and lighting that are very realistic and truly immerse the audience into the time period," she said.

With a cast and crew of about 50, the show will feature elaborate clothing, and the tech crew is recreating the sounds and sights of rainy, foggy London. Scenes will take place in Sherlock's iconic home, 221-B, as well as at Scotland Yard, hospitals (including an insane asylum), and in the Victorian houses of London's middle and upper class.

"It's nice seeing the students mature into playing something so dramatic and with such heavy themes," said Giannone-Hosig. "A lot of seniors are in the cast – many of whom started at Westfield with me virtually during the pandemic. So they've really come a long way, and I'm proud to see how much they've grown. There's also a talented crew of seniors passing on their skills to a new crop of techies."

Portraying Miss Sherlock Holmes is senior Zoe Brennan. "She's incredibly intelligent – a once-in-a-generation genius," said



Rehearsing in costume are (from left) Yishak Kelkay, Thomas Craypoff, Mackenzie Vance, Zoe Brennan and Gwendolyn Eagle.



From left are Zoe Brennan and Gwendolyn Eagle as, respectively, Sherlock Holmes and Watson.

Brennan. "The show's premise is what it would be like if both Holmes and his assistant, Watson, were women. But it also explores the fact that – although Holmes is

a detective and helps people – society tries to keep her from doing that. So she's mainly helping women, not men."

Brennan said Holmes can be a

mysterious secret. "It's a change of pace and an acting challenge for me," she said. "It's also an important role showcasing the hold husbands had on their wives back then."

Vance said audiences will be quickly taken to Victorian London through the costumes, scenery, accents, lighting and special effects. "Everyone loves a good mystery," she said. "And it's a great opportunity to see a woman in the role of Sherlock and to see this iconic story portrayed from a woman's point of view."

Playing Thomas Chapman is senior Thomas Craypoff. "He's close to an upper-class person," said Craypoff. "He's also conniving and does everything with malicious intent. He saw a chance to move up in the world and took it. He's an evil detective and doesn't care for his wife as much as she does for him."

It's a challenging role for Craypoff because, previously, he's mainly played comedic parts. And that's why he likes it so much. "Thomas is a serious villain, so it's a big shift for me and is also so different from my everyday life," he explained. "And it lets me explore another way of acting and being more dramatic."

Noting the popularity of Sherlock Holmes mysteries, Craypoff said this one stands out because of its themes of feminism and woman empowerment. "Audiences will also like the 1800s London setting, with dark alleyways and sinister lighting," he said. "We put lots of work into this show and we hope everyone will come see it."

Senior Yishak Kelkay portrays Edwin Greener, who starts out as a henchman for Thomas Chapman. "But he doesn't really want to do it because he has a set of morals that don't align with that job," said Kelkay. "He's firm, stern and militaristic. But later on, you see he's really a good guy in a bad situation. He eventually softens and becomes more friendly and agreeable."

Kelkay said his role is both fun and challenging because "It's hard to initially show his nice side to the audience because he's the muscle to Chapman's grand scheme. And I like playing complex characters and portraying the shift where you can see their vulnerability."

He said audiences will "definitely like the deeper message behind this show and learning about the situation for women in the 1800s. Women's rights and equal rights weren't what we have today – and we've almost forgotten the struggles people went through so they could have these rights."

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Female Olympic Rowers Break Barriers to Win

Centreville High presents 'Girls in the Boat.'

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Centreville High's upcoming play, "Girls in the Boat," tells the stories of the U.S. women's Olympic rowing team as it breaks down barriers for women in sports and eventually wins its first gold medal. Battling prejudice, discrimination and even differences among themselves, the women work together to achieve greatness.

The curtain rises Friday-Saturday, Nov. 17-18, at 7 p.m., and Sunday, Nov. 19, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$10, adults, and \$8, students, at the door or via theatrecentreville.com. Groups of 10 or more may email pgmcee@fcps.edu for \$5 tickets.

Attendees will see glimpses of the team throughout history, as early as 1892, until 1984 when it wins its first gold medal in the Los Angeles Olympics. They'll also learn about the characters' lives and dreams and what led them to become rowers. The play has a cast and crew of 30, and a boat will always be onstage but will also become other set pieces, as called for by the various scenes.

"When I read the script, it resonated with me because I did my master's thesis based on using interviews to create theater productions," said Director Patrick McGee. "And this show, like 'The Laramie Project,' uses that technique to tell what happened."

The girls in the boat are onstage nearly all the time, and because they're in a variety of locations and time periods, they also play multiple characters. Each person is named according to their position in the boat, with the actors portraying different people as the team members change over time.

"This show is about finding your place on a team, in your family, community and in the world," explained McGee. "As Girl #4 says, 'It takes hard work, discipline, drive, focus and a competitive spirit.'"

He said he's been impressed with his cast members' ability to work together in this new style of theater and to develop their characters in an innovative way. "This year's theater-season theme is Dare to Dream," said McGee. "And in this play, audiences are going to like our creative staging, life moments we all can relate to, and the fact that we all have dreams we want to accomplish."

Sophomore Madelyn Regan portrays Girl #3. "She's optimistic and a great collaborator with her teammates to lift everyone up," said Regan. "But she's still competitive against the other teams. She never gives up and always perseveres; she loves to win and see her teammates succeed – and that drives her."

Enjoying her role, Regan said, "I can relate to her myself in wanting to do well but also wanting others around me to succeed too. And oftentimes, she's the glue holding everyone together. In the hard times, she's in the background cheering everyone on. It's also been interesting learning about a sport that, before this production, I knew abso-



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Crew and coxswain: From left are Vanesa Barraza, Kelley Simpkins, Madelyn Regan, Shannon Sidwell, Maron Meyer, Hannah Crawford, Noora Seidou, Taylor Lekuch and Breanna Zazzara.



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Noora Seidou's character (in center) teaches the other girls about Title IX. From left are Breanna Zazzara, Maron Meyer, Hannah Crawford, Shannon Sidwell, Seidou, Madelyn Regan, Taylor Lekuch, Vanesa Barraza and Kelley Simpkins.

lutely nothing about."

"The girls each have unique stories, so every audience member will be able to see themselves in at least one of their journeys," continued Regan. "And they'll also be rooting for the girls as a whole because their spirit is infectious."

Playing Girl #7 is senior Noora Seidou. "She's determined, strong and kind, but definitely not afraid to voice her opinion and fight for what she thinks is right," said Seidou. "She's part of the stern pair closest to the front of the boat and has to be able to follow the front rowers' pace. She also has a strong moral compass and is very confident in her abilities."

Seidou has lots of lines to speak and has worked hard to learn them all. But she likes playing her part because, she said, "It lets me tap into her confidence because I'm not always quick to speak up. So she's the way I want to be."

She said the actors often talk about what's happening in the story, rather than show it. "Women's rowing wasn't even a thing until the '70s," said Seidou. "And they struggled, but eventually made it to the Olympics and won. The lesson is that, if you keep on trying, you'll achieve what you want to."

Junior Hannah Crawford portrays Girl #6. "She's competitive and wants to be the best in the world of rowing, so she puts her

heart and soul into doing that," said Crawford. "She has a temper and likes things to go the way she wants them to. But ultimately, she's able to do whatever's needed to make the team successful. After the death of her brother, she uses rowing as a coping mechanism. Both he and her dad were rowers; so after he dies, her dad steers her into rowing – but she also enjoys it."

"It's the first time I haven't played a person all bubbly and nice," continued Crawford. "So it's a different dynamic for me, and I like playing her. My character interacts with and tolerates the other girls, so they'll win."

She said this play shows that "Even if there are major differences between you and someone else, you can come together to make something meaningful happen. And the audience members can see themselves in at least one member of the show because of all their different personalities and back stories."

As the coxswain – who doesn't row but gives orders from the front of the boat – junior Breanna Zazzara is stern, confident and loud. "She's determined, hardworking, self-confident and pretty social," said Zazzara. "She doesn't always get along with the others, but she encourages the rowers to keep moving and is the spirit on the boat."

She's enjoying her role because it's so different from herself. "I'm a quiet person, so it's refreshing to play someone who's loud and bold," said Zazzara. "And I've made lots of friends with my castmates and have many scenes with them, so that's made the process more fun."

She said audiences will like this play because "It's inspiring to see these girls overcome the discrimination against them and other women in society. And people will watch them build on their confidence over their journey to see who they really are."

GALA



PHOTO COURTESY OF SPARC

U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine was named a SPARC hero for his commitment to young adults with severe and multiple disabilities by championing SPARC's funding request to open three SPARC centers, two on Fairfax County's Rt. 1 corridor and one in Leesburg, Va.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SPARC

From left: Adam Toobin, James Dyke, master of ceremonies, and State Senator Richard L. Saslaw, who received SPARC's Lifetime Achievement Award for his 48 years of public service including thwarting an attempt to kill Medicaid Expansion, thus providing over 400,000 Virginians with health insurance coverage.

SPARC's Inaugural Gratitude Gala

U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine and State Sen. Richard L. Saslaw honored.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On a stunningly beautiful fall evening, SPARC participants arrived at their gala. Dressed in creative cocktail attire, they graced the red carpet leading into the grand ballroom of the Washington Dulles Airport Marriott. It was a dream come true for the young adults.

SPARC is the acronym for Specially Adapted Resources Clubs. It is a nonprofit organization that provides vital day programs for adult participants with severe and multiple disabilities, and the evening of Saturday, Nov. 4, was their 2023 Gratitude Gala. The young adults planned the event themselves because they believed in the mission of SPARC, "Nothing about us without us," and they had two goals for the gala.

"The event was created by our participants as an answer to the question, 'What can SPARC do to help you live the life of your dreams?' Overwhelmingly, they wanted a sparkling event, pun intended, at which they could showcase their talents, make new friends, socialize, laugh, have fun, and dance however they fancied," said Ellen Dyke, SPARC's board chair.

Another goal of the reception-style gala emerged: everyone deserves a chance to attend SPARC. The gala raised funds for SPARC's cost-effective program, which assists young adults who have outgrown the K-12 system's special education support and are ineligible for other community-based programs that help people with severe disabilities.

SPARC's public-private partnership with Fairfax County is an alternative to the Medicaid model. It provides a choice for many adults with severe disabilities who do not fit



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

From left, Debi Alexander, executive director of SPARC, joins Joanne Adams and Dave Adams, members of the SPARC Board of Directors, to acknowledge SPARC partners at the 2023 Gratitude Gala.

into traditional day support programs funded by Medicaid.

The reason SPARC participants called their event the "Gratitude Gala," Dyke said, was that they wanted to express their gratitude to all of the attendees, sponsors, elected officials, and others who helped them realize not only their dream for the evening but also their concern for others and their willingness to give of their time, energy, financial resources, and, above all, their humanity.

Mark Ingrao, interim CEO and president of the Dulles Regional Chamber and chair of the Reston Hospital board of directors,

served as auctioneer for the evening's live auction while the silent auction continued in the hallway. Items in the silent auction included original wheelchair action art by SPARC participants. Jonah, one of the artists, said, "Everyone at SPARC can paint. Green represents the season, spring, when leaves begin to emerge." From choosing the bright paint colors, applying them with a paint roller extension pole, to using the tires of their wheelchairs to paint instead of brushes, the artists created original patterns across the painting papers that provided a canvaslike surface with no buckling. A completed work, matted and framed above shows the artist's



MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Katherine Montgomery of Herndon, secretary of the SPARC board of directors, and Carla Claire of Arlington

wheelchair tracks and was one of many sold during the silent auction.

From the roast beef carving station to the crispy chicken sliders, black-eyed pea hummus with vegetable crudites, and the dessert display of miniature cupcakes, chocolate truffles, and petit fours, SPARC participants planned every aspect of the gala. Award-winning chefs at the hotel prepared all of those dishes and more. The hotel's wait staff came forward as volunteers to support the fundraiser, serving the guests and thereby helping to cover the organization's costs. Guests noticed the event venue's all-around inclusive layout — wheelchair accessibility, stage ramp, and deliberate lack of high-top tables.

As master of ceremonies and emcee, Jim Dyke oversaw the proceedings. "You have given your time, energy, and wherewithal to celebrate some of the most important, courageous, but often forgotten people in our community and, at the same time, make their dreams come true," Dyke said.

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GALA



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS
Bailey Brandt of Springfield and Mikea Jackson

FROM PAGE 8

Dyke named the sponsors, including the Claude Moore Charitable Foundation, Dominion Energy, Google, Tullman Family Office, Washington Gas, and The Washington Group Special Care Planning Team. Dyke told how Sen. Janet D. Howell (D-Fairfax) received the first SPARC Hero Award this past June and set a high standard for other recipients. According to Dyke, Howell's leadership resulted in the 2023-2024 Virginia state budget including, for the first time, an annual \$250,000 line item for SPARC, positioning it to become a pilot program for Virginia.

"SPARC has changed the long-term care blueprint for young adults with severe disabilities by providing a safe, caring environment where they learn and have fun together," said Rose Mario Risley, chair of Fairfax Area Long-Term Care Coordinating Council. "The SPARC model is designed to provide access to community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination."

SPARC has five clubhouse locations: Fairfax, McLean, Reston, Vienna, and Arlington.

Katherine Montgomery, a SPARC participant and secretary of the SPARC board, took to the stage, joining Dyke, as did U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine, Sen. Richard L. Saslaw, Adam Toobin, Ellen Dyke, and Mark Ingrao auctioneer. Montgomery handed Kaine the award and said, "Thank you, Senator Kaine, for being a champion."

Montgomery commended Kaine for realizing the vital roles that family caregivers and direct care providers play in the lives of individuals with disabilities. She expressed her gratitude to him for his bill, the Supporting Our Direct Care Workforce and Family Caregivers Act, which directs the Department of Health and Human Services, through the Administration on Community Living (ACL), to develop a national care center for the direct care workforce and family caregivers. It affects not just SPARC members but also individuals with disabilities and chronic medical conditions.

The SPARC Hero Award is given to a person who has tirelessly worked to fill the huge hole in our social safety net that ignores and neglects far too many citizens and who works to remove barriers when others have declined to act. "It's very difficult to find direct care professionals because of the lack of compensation and the ability to provide a living wage," Montgomery said.

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS
Supervisor John W. Foust (Dranesville) holds his auction number as he joins Hazem Eldarwish of Falls Church and Josephie Nwalipenja.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS
Front left, Patrick and Jennifer Callahan of Fairfax join Supervisor Pat Herrity (Springfield) and Maldyn Godfrey, Springfield District staff.

SPARC honored Saslaw with the Lifetime Achievement Award. Jim Dyke said that for this award, SPARC honors those talented, committed, and visionary individuals who have dedicated their careers and devoted their time and energy to improving the lives of others.

"Individuals who have had a major positive imprint on our community and whose actions and accomplishments have been transformative. If you put those guidelines into Google, no doubt up will pop Senator Dick Saslaw," said Dyke.

Toobin presented Saslaw with the award and told Saslaw what his support meant to him and his friends. It meant that when he had COVID, he could join his SPARC friends from home on his computer and was still able to participate in the activities.

Shawn Flaherty, a board member at large and communications chair, reported that as of Monday, Nov. 6, SPARC had raised \$152,000 during the gala.

SPARC offers day programs five days a week. Programs include a curriculum based on daily living activities like continued education, skill building, exercise, outings, cooking, music, art, lectures, discussion groups, and more. The annual cost for each participant is \$9,000, compared to an average of \$39,000 per year in publicly funded costs for a program through Medicaid.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Left, SPARC participants are abstract impressionist painters. A video beside the red carpet shows the process for the talented artists to create their original Wheelchair Action Art.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY SPARC

U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine receives his Hero Cape from Ellen Dyke chair of SPARC, as Jim Dyke, gala master of ceremonies, looks on.

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HISTORY CONFERENCE

Blessed with Diversity

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Five sequined-clad Bolivian dancers, San Simon Sucre, were an attention-grabbing, glittery climax for the Nov. 4 Fairfax County history conference, following five hours of inspiring presentations on the county's rich mix of 1.2 million people.

"Fairfax County recently became a majority minority community," Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay reported, calling it "a tapestry that celebrates all nations."

"Immigrants are who America is," concurred Lynne Garvey-Hodge, History Commission chair. "We must hold hands and do the best we can to care for and support one another."

Citing current "chaos in the Middle East," McKay said he issued a statement because, "We have families directly affected. Even on the international stage, there is so much diversity here, someone in the Fairfax County community is affected."

The conference, the third in a four-part series and titled "We Are Fairfax County," focused on Muslim, Asian and Latino residents. Across the county's 407 square miles, 57 percent of residents speak a language other than English at home, county statistics show. Fairfax City Mayor Catherine Read welcomed attendees.

Facing Some Challenges

Abra Omeish, at-large county school board member, whose family came from Libya, urged all to "see beyond the tropes of bias." While her family has enjoyed the "blessings of this community," she has experienced "a lot of beautiful moments and difficult moments." The Sept. 11, 2001, al-Qaeda attack on the United States and some public statements have fed anti-immigrant sentiments. She seeks to "debunk misconceptions," especially associated with people who practice the Islamic faith. "We must see kinship in one another and have a sense of belonging in a community that saw us as people and enabled us to thrive," she said.

Keynote Tom Gjelten, author of "A Nation of Nations: A Great American Immigration Story," credited a 1965 immigration reform law with making "America the diverse country it is today." That law eliminated "blatantly discriminatory and racist quotas" that favored white European immigrants. In his 2015 book, he traces the Omeish and Keam families' journeys. As late as 1970, fewer than four percent of people in Fairfax County were born outside the U.S.; today it's about 33 percent, he said. "Few places in the United States reflect the changes in population like Fairfax County."

While Gjelten still believes the 1965 law made America's promise more of a reality, he now thinks he overstated that promise in 2015. With "voices suggesting it was wrong to open America's doors," he said. "What I thought was a settled debate turned out to be very much alive," citing a proposed ban on immigrants from some Muslim countries and Islamophobic and anti-Semitic public comments.



Erik Martinez said at first he felt "tiny," translated by Pablo Nunez



Catherine Read, Ean Eschenburg and Jeff McKay. Eschenburg and Mike Salmon received an award for their video on the county's small family cemeteries. "Family Cemeteries in Fairfax County,"



Catherine Read, Robert Beach and Jeff McKay. The commission gave Bob Beach an award for designing the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial at Lorton.

"Diversity leads to more tolerance," Gjelten said. "The more people are exposed to people from different backgrounds, the more their hostility decreases."

Former Congressman and Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Tom Davis described countering opposition to mosques. "Societies don't last if groups feel

excluded. You don't have to demonize people." Applauding the ethnic mix of students in George Mason University and the public schools, Davis said, "We have a diverse community with a lot of talent. If you tap it, it's there. The county provides great promise, but challenges. Our society today is increasingly polarized and it's increasingly important that we talk to each other."

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Annual Fairfax County history conference inspires with a growing "tapestry that celebrates all nations."



Attendees heard multiple presentations over five hours.



Lynne Garvey-Hodge and Abrar Omeish.



Author and former National Public Radio reporter Tom Gjelten

Daniel Altman, co-founder of NOVA Resettling Afghan Families Together (RAFT), reviewed Afghanistan's history starting with Alexander the Great and described the 2021 U.S. withdrawal that airlifted over 70,000 Afghans out in two weeks. Over 74,000 visa applications for Afghan people who supported the U.S. government are still pending, a "disgrace," he asserted; the documents are moving at a "glacial pace." Over 7,600 Af-

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The San Simon Sucre dancers, Bolivian-Americans, put on a vigorous performance



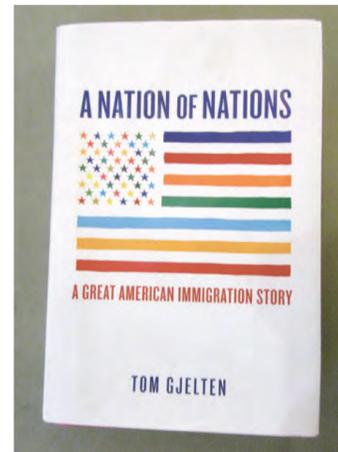
PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Delegate Kathy Tran and Tom Davis



Daniel Altman, co-founder of RAFT (NOVA Resettling Afghan Families Together).



Tom Gjelten's book "A Nation of Nations: A Great American Immigration Story."

ghan refugees have resettled in Virginia, including over 1,000 in Fairfax County and they are still arriving, he noted. RAFT has furnished 300 homes and offers support like job searches.

Immigrants' Journeys

Virginia Del. Kathy Tran recounted how

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when she was two her family fled Vietnam and rebuilt their life. "The values of hope, opportunity and freedom are very American values that hold us together. We must build a stronger Fairfax regardless of where people are from, to achieve their own American dream," she said.

Former Del. Mark Keam, the first Asian-American elected to the Virginia legislature, whose family immigrated from Korea, said, "My success is because this country gave me opportunities very few places in the world would." He contended that Fairfax County is uniquely welcoming, partly because of the county's official "One Fairfax" policy and the federal government's draw. People come to the Washington area from all around the world which has "created a sense of synergy that does not exist in many places in the United States." Fairfax County is "willing to accept us and be part of Virginia's change, part of the system. History is not looking backwards. It's about looking forward and making history. We have to focus on the future and make sure we're teaching folks what can be."

Through translator Pablo Nunez, Erik Martinez told the group that he "felt tiny, really tiny in this new culture," when he came from Guatemala. He praised the Centreville Immigration Forum which helped

him find a job. "My life is really great at this moment," he said.

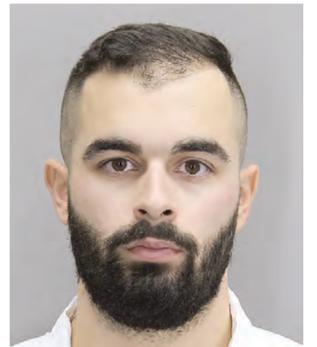
Claudia Alvarez, a single mother also from Guatemala, said she too "was lost" until she found Centreville Immigration Forum, which helped her find work and English classes.

Lynette Sappe-Watkins, Executive Director of the non-profit Falls Church Culmore Clinic, told attendees that most of their patients are uninsured, come from other countries and two-thirds have chronic illnesses. The many languages and traditions they bring to the clinic "all add color and depth, a beautiful illustration of what America's supposed to be," she said.

Braddock District Supervisor James Walkinshaw told the conference-goers, "Fairfax County is a welcoming place because we realize the ideals of our nation. Somebody like me, whose family has been here since the 18th century, has no more voice than someone who immigrated here from Guatemala yesterday. We are all equally Americans, Virginians and Fairfaxians."

"My own life has been enriched by so many immigrants," echoed Springfield history buff Judy Baldwin.

Chairman McKay encouraged the audience to heed his history teacher-mother's advice, "We must learn from our past and strive to do better."



Alexander Roy

McLean Park Police Officer Charged in Fatal Shooting

Detectives from FCPD Major Crimes Bureau are investigating a reported unintentional shooting by an off-duty U.S. Park Police officer in McLean that left one man dead. Both the victim and the shooter in this case were off-duty U.S. Park Police officers.

Alcohol is believed to be a factor in the shooting, according to police.

There were four individuals in the apartment at the time of the shooting. All were known to each other. Three of the four involved individuals were off-duty U.S. Park Police officers.

At 12:20 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 5., officers responded to the 1700 block of Old Meadow Road in McLean for the report of a shot person. The caller reported an adult man was unintentionally shot inside of an apartment. Jesse Brown Hernandez, 22, of McLean was found deceased with a gunshot wound to the upper body.

Preliminarily, detectives determined Alexander Roy, 25, of McLean was attempting to dry fire a firearm. Dry firing is when one simulates the discharge of a firearm by pulling the trigger of a firearm that is unloaded. Roy unintentionally shot the firearm he believed to be unloaded, fatally striking Hernandez.

After consulting with the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney, Roy was charged with Involuntary Manslaughter. Roy is being held at the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center on no bond.

Detectives continue to investigate the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the shooting and are asking anyone with information regarding this incident to call our Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 2. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone - 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477)

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/ THE CONNECTION



Margaret Berkowitz, an actor and producer in Los Angeles for the past six years, returned home to McLean and is assistant director of a play coming to Great Falls this weekend.



Julie Maher, the director of the Great Falls Grange Foundation, and Los Angeles actor and producer Margaret Berkowitz discuss the upcoming performance of *Proof* at the Grange.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MCLEAN COMMUNITY PLAYERS

Love interest Hal, played by Ernest Daniel Fleischer of Washington, D.C., nervously approaches Catherine as she celebrates her birthday alone.

McLean Community Players Present 'Proof'

FROM PAGE 4

mics. I mean, these acoustics in here are amazing. Everybody will be able to hear everything," Berkowitz said.

David Auburn wrote the decisive play, particularly for the community. According to Berkowitz, it's a beautiful story of the intricacies of family dynamics between fathers and daughters and sisters and sisters. There's also a love

interest, so there's something for everybody.

"And in this space, it gives me the vibe of *Footloose* and *Music Man* (on stage). Both of those plays also bring to mind the strength of community and particularly the arts between McLean and Great Falls as a community," Berkowitz said.

The actors will play the roles as written and as directed by Michael Replogle and assistant director Berkowitz; when asked to review

each actor, Berkowitz shared the following:

"I'll start with Dave Wright, who plays Robert, the father. His energy speaks for itself. He brings so much humor to a historically challenging role with so much ease."

"Jess Rawls is powerfully sarcastic and yet vulnerable at the same time."

"Earnest Fletcher is a breath of fresh air to the D.C. theater community. It's his first time back on the stage."

"And Hilary Sutton is bubbly and so enjoyable to watch."

Visit <https://www.gfgrange.org/events> to purchase tickets for performances of *Proof* held this weekend at The Grange in Great Falls. 9818 Georgetown Pike (VA-193), Great Falls, Va. Tickets are selling fast for three performances: Friday, Nov. 10 at 8 p.m.; Saturday, Nov. 11 at 8 p.m.; and Sunday, Nov. 12 at 2 p.m.

Route 29 Northbound Bicycle and Pedestrian Shared-use Path Opens

Improves safety, connectivity, and mobility.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

For Airu Bidurum, who uses a wheelchair, the new continuous shared-use path along northbound Route 29 between Vaden Drive and Nutley Street is a game-changer. It makes it easier and safer for him to reach his destination. "Before, I used to go to the other side, and it took me longer," Bidurum said. "I'm glad for this improvement that the county made."

The Virginia Department of Transportation and Fairfax County held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday, Nov. 3, at 11 a.m. to celebrate the new improved path.

"VDOT is proud to provide this key trail connection for bicyclists and pedestrians," said Bill Cuttler, P.E., VDOT's Northern Virginia deputy district engineer. "We are committed to improving transportation options in northern Virginia."

By filling in missing sections of the path, the project improved pedestrian, bicycle and wheelchair access to the nearby Vienna Metro station and connected to trails, including

Towers Park, along a one-third-mile stretch of northbound Route 29 (Lee Highway).

"We saw during the pandemic that we had so many residents walking from their residences at the end of the trail, and they had to go on the highway in order to reach the Pan Am Shopping Center," said Fairfax County Supervisor Dalia A. Palchik (D-Providence District). "That's the important thing about multi-modal transportation, especially focused on our pedestrians, those who have mobility concerns, and on our cyclists."

To accommodate the shared-use path, the project also extended the Route 29 culvert over an Accotink Creek tributary just west of Nutley Street.

Public input on the Route 29 bicycle and pedestrian improvements began in February 2019, with construction on the Route 29 Northbound Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements Project beginning in November 2022. The total project costs came in at \$3.8 million, preliminary engineering, \$1.2 million; right of way acquisition and utility relocation, \$1.2 million; and construction, \$1.4 million. The project is financed with Fairfax



PHOTO BY VDOT

Ribbon-cutting for the new Route 29 northbound bicycle and pedestrian improvement project held on Friday, November 3.

County funding and by part of the concession fee provided under the Transform 66 Outside the Beltway Project Comprehensive Agreement. The construction contractor was Ardent Company, LLC of McLean.

Nov. 19 is World Day of Remembrance 2023 for road traffic victims in the U.S. It is a day to acknowledge and remember Northern Virginia's victims of road traffic violence

and advocate for preventing and eventually stopping road traffic deaths and injuries. Since last year's event on November 11, 2022, there have been 17 pedestrian fatalities in Fairfax, Arlington, and Alexandria counties: the youngest victim, Luis Fernando Jimenez Rodriguez, 26 years old (Fairfax County, Bailey's Crossroads); and the oldest victim, Brigitte Forster, 86 years old (Fairfax County, McLean).

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NEWS



“The Snowman in Concert”

“The Snowman in Concert” is back at James Madison High School. Join us on Saturday, Dec. 9 from 10:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. when the JMHS Choral and Orchestra Departments will again host this magical family holiday event. LIVE choral and orchestra music accompaniment makes watching the film based on Raymond Briggs’ “The Snowman” book . It’s a winter holiday experience you won’t want to miss. After the film, walk through the winter wonderland and enjoy crafts and a chance to take pictures with the Snowman and Santa! It’s a special holiday event that is fun for the whole family. Purchase tickets on the Madison High School website using the link in the features section - or by typing Snowman into the search bar. Each seated attendee must have a ticket. Tickets will only be available at the door if the event isn’t sold out. <https://madisonhs.fcps.edu/features/snowman-concert>

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Westfield captains, Charles Beamon #65, Brendan Patridge #68, William Whitton #44, Matthew Jenks #6



South Lakes captains, Jack Schnable #1, Nick Harris #2, James Zschunke #3, Jacob Kyger #4

South Lake Seahawks Remain Undefeated

Westfield led with 4:30 to play in the 4th quarter, but South Lakes scored on a 65-yard TD and held off Westfield to take the 28-24 nailbiter.

BY WILL PALENSCAR
THE CONNECTION

The Westfield Bulldogs (7-2) took on the unbeaten South Lakes Seahawks (9-0) on Nov. 3 in Reston.

South Lakes would open by scoring 14 points in the first quarter. Isaiah Copeland ran in for a 5 yard touchdown. Later in the quarter with 3:48 to play South Lakes Nick Harris found Brian Kennedy on a 45 yard touchdown reception.

In the 2nd quarter Westfield would score 17 unanswered points. Westfield Zack Nicklas kicked a 40 yard field goal with 10:56 to play before halftime. Everett Sawyer pulled in a 10 yard touchdown reception with 5:59 left in the 2nd quarter. Kennedy Duda rushed in from 15 yards out with 1:34 to play.

However, the 3rd quarter South Lakes Brian Kennedy ran in from 17 yards out to once again give South Lakes the lead 21-17. But it was short-lived, Kennedy Duda would rush in from 70 yards out to electrify the Westfield crowd and give Westfield a 24-21 advantage with 4:30 to play in the 4th quarter.

Brian Kennedy would score on a 65 yard touchdown reception and the South Lakes defense would hold Westfield from scoring again to take a 28-24 nailbiter.

In the first round of the playoffs South Lakes (10-0) will play Yorktown (6-3).

Westfield (7-3) will take on Washington Liberty (9-1). In other playoff games the Madison Warhawks (9-1), twice state runners-up, will play Langley (5-5).



Isaac Copeland #22 is in for a South Lakes touchdown



Matthew Jenks #6 has a Westfield receiver open down the field



Everett Sawyer #87 beats South Lakes DB Brian Kennedy to the ball for a Westfield touchdown

SEAHAWKS UNDEFEATED

PHOTOS BY WILL PALENSCAR



QB Nick Harris passes the football



Eye-to-eye, South Lakes' JP Neaves #9 and Westfield player Jay Rennyson #22.



Landon Murphy #18 accelerates after a Westfield reception



Matthew Jenks runs with the ball



Nick Harris passes to running back Cody Wood #8



Brendan Partridge #68 harasses South Lakes QB Nick Harris #2

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**NOV
8**

Presented by The Alden

**Foreign Language Movie
Wednesday, Nov. 8, 6:30 p.m.**

Free admission



Community Events

**NOV
11-12**

**McLean Antiques Show & Sale
Saturday, Nov. 11, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sunday, Nov. 12, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.**

Admission: \$10
Free for children 17 or younger.
Admission price is good for both days.
Bring this ad for \$1 off admission.

**NOV
16**

Presented by The Alden

**Performing Arts Movie
Thursday, Nov. 16, 1 p.m.**

Free admission

Special Events

**DEC
1-3**

**McLean Holiday Art & Crafts Festival
Friday, Dec. 1, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.
Saturday, Dec. 2, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Sunday, Dec. 3, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.**

Admission: \$5, for all three days of the show.
Free admission for children age 12 or younger.



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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 Fairfax 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

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-restons-founding-2023-09-09-10-00>

BONITA LESTINA

FAIRFAX OLD TOWN HALL PERFORMANCE SERIES
Enjoy an evening of music showcasing a variety of genres in the elegant interior of historic Old Town Hall (3999 University Drive) in the heart of Fairfax City. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. and performances begin at 8 p.m. and run from October to April. Admission is free. Visit: www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts.

SCHEDULE

November 17: Graham Breedlove – Blues
December 8: Marcolivia – Classical String Duo



The McLean Antiques Show & Sale takes place Nov. 11-12, 2023 at the McLean Community Center in McLean.

January 5: Baltimore Composers Forum – Modern
January 19: Navy Band Wind Quintet – Classical
February 2: Kadencia – Puerto Rican Orchestra (part of the Chocolate Lovers Festival!)
February 16: Matt Trkula – Classical Guitar
March 8: Mandoleers – Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra
March 22: James & Victor – Jazz Duo/Steel Pan
April 5: Francesca Hurst – Solo Piano
April 19: Sylvan Waters Duo – Harp/Brass

NOV. 3 TO FEB. 4

Eleanor Mahin Thorp: Metopic Ridge. At Tephra ICA at Signature. Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art (Tephra ICA) presents Metopic Ridge, a solo exhibition by artist Eleanor Mahin Thorp. Thorp's paintings take us on an immersive site visit to examine the Blue Ridge Mountains exploring stability and change, the seen and the hidden within rocks. Through her discerning gaze rocks are more than geological entities; Instead, they metamorphose into vessels of history and human connection. Drawing inspiration from the fascinating transformations depicted in Persian miniatures, Thorp traces the hidden figures and forms in the rocks. Her paintings reveal the duality of rocks' existence as both a firm witness to time and a medium for that which is intangible.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 8

Foreign Language Film. 6:30 p.m. Presented by The Alden at 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 you, our audience members! The series has a few surprises thrown in. The schedule is subject to change.

NOV. 10-11

Everything Christmas Sale. Friday 3-7 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. to noon. At The Closet of the Greater Herndon Area Inc., located at The Herndon Moose Lodge, Second Floor, 779 Center Street, Herndon. The Everything Christmas Sale offers seasonal items including toys, holiday décor, ornaments, villages, wreaths, dishes, Christmas trees, and much more. All proceeds from the event benefit the local community in the way of grants and

scholarships. The Closet welcomes volunteers to help make this event a success. Volunteers are needed prior to the event to organize items, during the event to help with the sale, and after the event to help with clean up. To register to volunteer, visit <https://tinyurl.com/6cautau5>. The Closet is open Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. through 5 p.m., and Monday and Thursday evening from 5 – 8 p.m. For more information about The Closet, visit <http://theclosetofgreaterherndon.org>.

NOV. 11-12

McLean Antiques Show & Sale.

Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Discover fine antiques, art and collectibles from scores of reputable dealers at this highly celebrated show of almost 50 years. The show features antiques, decorative accessories, furniture, folk art, porcelain, silver, jewelry, paintings and prints, glass, carpets, vintage clothing and more. Proceeds benefit the James C. Macdonald Scholarship Fund.



The Virginia Opera's "The Barber of Seville" can be seen Nov. 11-12, 2023, at GMU Center for the Arts in Fairfax.

NOV. 11-12

Virginia Opera: "The Barber of Seville." Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. At The GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Get ready to laugh and cheer for everyone's favorite barber in this beloved masterpiece. Figaro, wily barber and wingman extraordinaire, is determined to help the lovestruck Count Almaviva woo the beautiful Rosina away from her lecherous guardian, Dr. Bartolo. Visit cfa.gmu.edu.

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ENTERTAINMENT



A Veteran's Day Ceremony will take place on Saturday, Nov. 11, 2023 at Great Falls Freedom Memorial in Great Falls.

SATURDAY/NOV. 11

Veteran's Day Ceremony. 11 a.m. At Great Falls Freedom Memorial, behind Great Falls Library 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The ceremony will honor all who have served our country in the Armed Forces. The event will include a color guard, patriotic songs, and remarks by Great Falls native Bruce Fein, a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserves. In case of rain, the ceremony will be held at the Grange. Seating will be provided, but attendees are encouraged to bring their own portable chairs.

SATURDAY/NOV. 11

Santa's Arrival, PJ Parties. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Springfield Town Center, Springfield.

Santa arrives with lights and sirens blazing atop Greater Springfield Fire Department fire engines, accompanied by his friends from Fairfax County Police Department and Buddy the Elf, Ariel, Barbie, and Spiderman! Following his arrival, meet by the new light-up candy canes and holiday trees in the Grand Court on the Lower Level for a fun-filled PJ party. Put on your favorite holiday pajamas and enjoy the entertainment and activities!

Festivities include glitter tattoos, balloon twisting, holiday caroling, character appearances, and a pajama donation drive.

MONDAY/NOV. 13

MAM Dinner – Military Appreciation Monday. 5:30 p.m. or 7:30 p.m. At The Old Brogue Restaurant in Great Falls. To support the Navy SEAL Foundation. Call the Old Brogue at 703-759-3309 to make a reservation.

NOV. 13-14

Auditions for "Shakspear in Hollywood." 7:30-10 p.m. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. Vienna Theater Company will be auditioning for its winter show, "Shakspear in Hollywood" on Nov 13th and 14th. Callbacks: By Invitation Only: November 15 from 7:30 – 10 p.m.

TUESDAY/NOV. 14

McLean Historical Society Meeting. 7:30 p.m. At the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The program will feature noted professional archaeologist and historian Patrick O'Neill who will discuss George Washington's Mount Vernon. There is no charge.

Everyone is invited. Contact Carole Herrick at 703-356-8223.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 15

Visiting Filmmakers Series. 4:30 p.m. At GMU's Johnson Center Cinema, Fairfax. A free screening of the new documentary, "Bad Press," followed by a post-screening Q&A with the filmmakers, Rebecca Landsberry-Baker and Joe Peeler, and the film's subject, Angel Ellis. An enthralling tale that unfurls with the energy and suspense of a political thriller, "Bad Press" is a timely and unprecedented story about the battle for freedom of the press and against state-censored media. This event is free and open to the public. Register on Mason360.

THURSDAY/NOV. 16

Performing Arts Documentary. 1 p.m. At The Alden, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Learn a little about the performing arts through these one-hour (or so) documentaries. Join Performing Arts Director Sarah Schallern Treff for a discussion after.

NOV. 16-18

"Peter and the Starcatcher." Thursday to Saturday at 7 p.m.; Saturday at 2 p.m. Presented by Mount Vernon High School, 8515 Old Mount Vernon Road, Alexandria. The show tells the story of Peter Pan's origin story; appropriate for all ages. Tickets are \$10 General Admission, \$8 senior/military, \$7 students, and \$5 for children 5 and under. Tickets are available online, mvhstheatrearts.com.

NOV. 16-18

"The Descendants." Thursday to Saturday at 7 p.m.; Saturday at 2 p.m. At Hayfield Middle School, 7630 Telegraph Road, Alexandria. The Hayfield Middle School Dramahawks are producing Disney's "The Descendants." The show is appropriate for all ages. Tickets are available online, www.hayfield-drama.com, and at the door and cost \$10 each.

NOV. 16-18

"Almost, Maine." 7 p.m. and 2 p.m. on Nov. 18. At Lake Braddock Secondary School, 9200 Burke Lake Road, Burke. One deeply cold and magical Midwinter Night, the citizens of Almost -- not organized enough for a town, too populated for a wilderness -- experience the



"Peter and the Starcatcher" can be seen at Mount Vernon High School on Nov. 16-18, 2023.



The Hayfield Middle School Dramahawks are producing Disney's "The Descendants" Nov. 16-18, 2023.

life-altering power of the human heart. Relationships end, begin, or change beyond recognition, as strangers become friends, friends become lovers, and lovers turn into strangers. Tickets are \$12 for guests and \$10 for students, staff and military on lbtheatre.com.

SATURDAY/NOV. 18

St. Timothy Craft Fair. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. At 13809 Poplar Tree Road, Chantilly. Featuring 50-plus vendors: jewelry, fine art, religious, pottery, fashion, home decor, Christmas, raffles and more. Admission: bring a canned good item to help support our St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry. <https://sttimothyparish.org/craft-fair/>

SATURDAY/NOV. 18

FSO with Renee Fleming. 8-10 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Renée Fleming, one of the most celebrated singers of our time, joins the Fairfax Symphony for an exclusive evening featuring the exquisite Four Last Songs by Richard Strauss. Cost: \$100, \$75, \$50; half-price for youth through Grade 12. Call 703-993-2787.

SATURDAY/NOV. 18

FallFest. 12:30 to 5 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Come for the day and join FSRM as they host the original Bavarian Dance Group of Washington 'Alt Washingtonia' for

dancing, yodeling, cowbell ringing, Alphorns, and traditional German Food and Crafts. 'Alt Washingtonia' will provide entertainment in the true Bavarian style, come and watch, but come to learn and participate. Performances are at 1 p.m., 2 p.m., 3 p.m., and 4 p.m.. You can join in the dancing, try your hand at blowing an Alphorn, ringing a cowbell, and more. Enjoy German food and snacks (extra fee) and create and learn about traditional German Holiday Crafts. One craft per person (a ticket will be provided at admission). If you wish to make additional crafts purchase, tickets for \$1 each (all while supplies last). www.Fairfax-station.org, www.Facebook.com/FFXSRR, 703-425-9225.

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Obituary



Clarence Matthew Owens Sr (1938-2023) of Culpeper, Virginia went to be with the Lord on October 29, 2023. He was born in Dickerson County, Virginia. He was preceded in death by his parents (Walter Garfield and Pearl Owens), his sister (Gay Web-ley), and his brother (Larry Owens). He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Shirley Owens; 3 daughters Brenda (John) Croston, Cathy (Eric) Knutson, Velvie (Terry) Cunningham; 1 son Clarence Matthew Jr (Ingrid) Owens; 2 grandsons (Eric Knutson Jr and Ayden Owens); 1 granddaughter (Rylee Owens); 3 step-grandkids; and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. He worked on W&OD railroad; then as a carpenter; before working at Arlington Armature as a machinist rebuilding alternators, generators, and starters. He was devoted to God and his family. He always liked to stay active and being outside enjoying all of God's creations. He was a kind and gentle soul who would help anybody in any way he could. He is loved and will be greatly missed until we all meet again in Heaven. The family received friends at Moser Funeral Home, 233 Broadview Avenue, Warrenton, VA, 20186 on Thursday, November 2, 2023 from 6 to 8pm. A Funeral Service followed at Moser on Friday, November 3, 2023 at 12:30 pm. Interment was at Stonewall Memory Gardens, 12004 Lee Highway, Manassas, VA, 20109. Online condolences may be expressed at www.moserfuneralhome.com

Employment

ENGINEERING

Lookout, Inc. has openings in Reston, VA. Product Mgr [Req #M020]: Perf mkt res, dev strategic rmap, write det specs w/engg to dev cld-based security platform fxs. 100% telecommuting permitted. Mail resume to: Lookout, Inc. 2570 N. First St, Suite 200, San Jose, CA 95131 Must include Req# to be considered.

Employment

Lead Backend Developer; Reston, VA: Develop and support back-end systems; continually develop technology-forward, cutting-edge software solutions to address the backend and the downstream systems, including website and mobile app goals; create and manage APIs that work across devices and multiple external partners; among other duties. Min. BS +7 years of experience. Travel up to 20%. Send resume to D. Taube, Sr. Manager Global Mobility, VW/Electrify America, 1950 Opportunity Way, Suite 1500, Reston, VA 20190. Ref. LBD-VA. No phone calls please.

Employment

Network Engineer (Herndon, VA) Analyze, monitor, & maintn all U.S. point of presence (POP) facilities includg HVAC, AC, UPS, DC powerplant, & fire pre-action system. Coord transprt netwrk, IP netwrk, & voice netwrk monitorg. Perfrm co-location service testg, commissiong, & delivery. Reqs: MS info tech, info security, or smlr field rtd to comp & info sci +1 yr exp in implementatn, monitorg, & maintenance of IT infrastructure or IT systems admin. Exp w/ IT goods, services design, & productn; transmission, broadcastg, switchg, control, & operatn of telecom sys. Prof w/ performg routg inspectns & updatg routg policies; OS instalatn & config; installatn, modificatn, maintenance, & troubleshootg of server & netwrk equip; & transport & IP netwrks. Mandarin fluency. Res: China Telecom (Americas) Corporation, jobsatcta@ctamericas.com.

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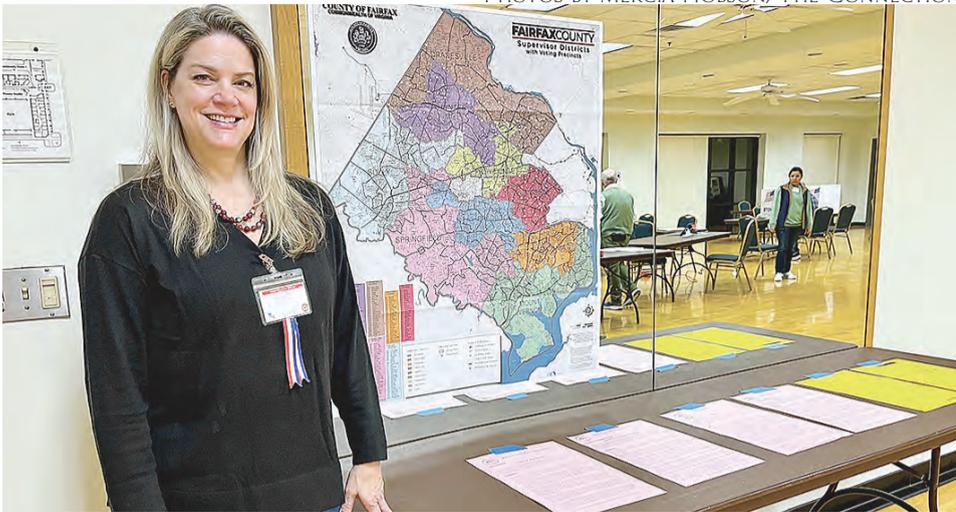
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Let us know about an upcoming event

connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

ELECTION

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



“Happy to serve on the front lines of our democracy in this way,” says Chief Election Officer Kristin O’Brien, standing in front of the Fairfax County map depicting the Supervisor Districts with voting precincts.



“I think it is a wonderful thing we, as U.S. citizens, can do,” says Mary Drum, a Fairfax County officer of election, when asked about spending the day at the polling location. A homemade morning snack sweetens the deal.

FROM PAGE 3

both the Virginia Senate and House. If Republicans manage to take control of both chambers, this would grant them a GOP trifecta, whereby the same party controls both chambers of the state legislature and the governorship. This would ensure that Governor Youngkin could move forward with his conservative agenda.

The Wason Center opined, “A strong showing for Republicans could provide a blueprint for the party nationally around how to discuss abortion and how to highlight K-12 education issues successfully. Some suggest that if Republicans have a particularly strong showing in the state’s elections, Governor Youngkin may consider a late entry to the Republican presidential primary.” The Wason Center reported the margin of error for the survey is +/-4.0 percent at the 95 percent level of confidence.

At 11:15, 333 voters from precinct 320 at Herndon Community Center had voted, according to Kristin O’Brien, chief election officer.

As The Connection is going to press as voting is underway. Check our website at www.ConnectionNewspapers.com and our

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Virginia Department of Elections will report results at <https://enr.elections.virginia.gov/results/public/Virginia/elections/2023-Nov-Gen>

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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 our 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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Bucket List-less



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As you regular readers have no doubt read in a previous column (or 500) I have cancer. I was first diagnosed with non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV in late February 2009. When I didn't die within my "13 month to two years" prognosis, my oncologist was surprised; nevertheless, he didn't pursue any medical explanation. He just characterized me as his "third miracle" and my treatment continued relatively unabated. It wasn't for another seven years or so that my diagnosis changed to papillary thyroid cancer. Whether my oncologist made an error in my original diagnosis or was slow to change/update my diagnosis, we'll never know as my original tissue sample/slide has been lost (I won't say conveniently). Moreover, the statute of limitations has expired so any incentive to research/investigate was lost in the figurative rubble. No real worries though. I have learned to live with it (live being the operative word) and besides, my life would have changed little since the damage was long since done, and likely would have stressed me out more.

But I must confess, living with incurable cancer is all it's cracked up to be. Meaning it's not exactly a picnic. If you've read any my last umpteen columns on the matter, cancer does more than just invade your body, it affects you emotionally, almost subconsciously, as it re-wires your brain, sort of. And there's not a thing you can do about it. What you value, what you can tolerate, what motivates you; anything you want to say or do is filtered through this imaginary prism called cancer. And what goes in doesn't always come out as you expected, or have heard yourself saying, or seen yourself doing, or had expressed an interest in saying or doing like you had for the entirety of your previous life. This the new you, like it or not.

It is in this context that us cancer (or any other terminal-type situation) survivors are regularly asked what we want to do with the rest of our lives - or a reasonable facsimile thereof. Specifically, this awkward conversation inevitably veers into whether we have a "bucket list:" a list of sorts of the things you want to do before you die, places you want to visit, people you want to see, et cetera; and maybe even the songs you want to hear: "Live Like You're Dying" by Tim McGraw comes to mind.

When the opportunity (more like misfortune) presents itself at your ground-zero-type meeting with an oncologist when you hear the words "You have cancer" for the first time, you are changed forever, and not just physically, but every which way - and some you never imagined as well. Invariably, what is asked and/or what you think about your new reality as a "terminal" cancer patient, your answer is the framework of the all-too-familiar bucket list: the things/choices/places you want to do/say/go; presuming/understanding that you no longer have as much time as you thought you did - before this appointment. There's no future "woeing" is me, there's only the present and accepting/assimilating your new circumstances into your routine. Fighting it is one thing, but embracing it is quite another. Unfortunately, the odds/statistics are against you, but so what? Cancer may be the big dog, but if I want to get on the porch, I'm going to do so. Because even though cancer and all its insidious ways likely has other plans for you, plans you probably need to agree and proceed to, as we say in the sales world, standing pat ain't gonna cut it anymore. And cancer is as big a hurdle as there is. All you can do is learn to roll with the punches and put one foot in front of the other. And more often than not, my bucket-list answer surprises.

I want to live life like I'm living, not live like I'm anticipating dying. I don't want to fill up this hypothetical bucket, I want to empty it. Furthermore, I'd rather enjoy and appreciate what I have - and had, not think about what I don't have/didn't do.

After hearing what I heard - out of the blue no less, at that initial meeting with the oncologist, about my abbreviated life expectancy; to say it knocks you for a loop is to minimize loops everywhere. This 'loop' is more like the roller coaster from hell. Up and down and all-around is just the beginning. And one ride is more than enough. But you're going to be on this ride for the rest of your life so hunker down and buckle up. Eventually, at least I did, you get it sorted in some way which enables you to live life forward. I felt that if I was doing something on my so-called "bucket list," the reason for doing that thing was because I was dying and I wanted to do it before I died. To me, that would be reinforcing a negative. That's not how I want to decide that whatever it is I'm doing. I want to decide based on the merits/intrinsic value of the thing. To me, the 'bucket list' concept is too negative. I want to do things because I want to do them, not because I have too not because of some theoretical list of do-or-die experiences/accomplishments. Reinforcing a negative didn't/doesn't feel like a very positive thing to do. And here I am, nearly 15 years post-diagnosis.

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

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