

CONNECTION

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



Plogging For Parks

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Volunteer Soumia Zeroual, of Lorton, regularly practices plogging to remove litter at Laurel Hill Park.

Small Business Saturday

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No Holiday For Issues

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Meet the Raptors

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PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

NOVEMBER 23-29, 2023

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Thank You and Big Challenges Ahead in the State Legislature

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL



On Nov. 7, 2023, the voters of the 34th Senate District cast 54,678 votes and elected me to a third term in the Senate of Virginia by a 40% margin (69.95% to 29.97%). Thank you for entrusting me to continue to serve as your state senator. For the full election results for our area, visit:

34th District Election Results

Here are some other statistics:

- ❖ 34th District voters supported me in 46 of 47 precincts, ranging from 81.59% of the vote to 48.16%.
- ❖ 19,311 people voted early. In my last contested election in 2015, 1,994 people voted early. Early voting this year represented a 1,000% increase from 2015.
- ❖ 1,917 voters had their votes counted after the polls closed by mailing their ballots before the polls closed because of the new law we passed in 2020.
- ❖ 697 new voters participated in this election because they used same day registration.

❖ Early voting was up over 800% statewide compared with four years ago.

❖ 63% of ballots in my race were cast on Election Day.

Expanding the time for early voting has been a resounding success, as evidenced by voters' use of it. It has fundamentally changed Virginians' ability to participate in our democracy.

My opponent ran a civil campaign, which I thank him for and 16,538 people voted for him. I recognize their values and concerns and hope to continue to listen to everyone, incorporate many views and earn the trust of those who may not agree with me on everything.

Statewide, voters also affirmed the Senate Democrats' Blue Brick Wall and maintained our Senate Democratic majority which has rejected attempts to repeal the progress we made in recent years. Virginia voters also elected a Democratic majority to the House of Delegates which will enable a more united front and ensure more progress.

Protecting Our Progress

In terms of policy, here's what the election

results likely mean, based on the Youngkin administration's initiatives reported in the media:

- ❖ No 15-week abortion ban or further restrictions on women's reproductive healthcare. We will try to start the process of amending the Constitution of Virginia to permanently protect women's reproductive healthcare rights.
 - ❖ Protecting our expansion of Virginians' ability and opportunities to vote.
 - ❖ More adequately funding K-12 schools and higher education as Virginians expect.
 - ❖ Protecting the progress Democrats made to address climate change and criminal justice reform.
 - ❖ Reaffirming and expanding protections for LGBTQ Virginians.
 - ❖ Protecting our progress and expanding our ability to prevent firearm violence.
 - ❖ Protecting minimum wage increases, employee protections and civil justice reforms.
- The state legislature could approve these policies because of your support.

In our community, Del. Mark Sickles will return as Vice Chair of the House Appropriations Committee. Del. Paul Krizek will also serve as a senior appropriator and chair important sub-

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CONNECTION

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NEWS



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX CITY GOVERNMENT

Mayor Catherine Read last week declared Nov. 25 Small Business Saturday in Fairfax City. Front row from left, Doug Church (CFCC), Tess Rollins, Tara Borwey, Read and City Economic Development Director Chris Bruno.



Support local merchants on Small Business Saturday.

Fairfax's Small Business Saturday Is Nov. 25

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

In Fairfax City, Small Business Saturday is an opportunity for area residents to embrace their community spirit, while discovering the products and services offered by local merchants. It also lets people show their appreciation for the hard working entrepreneurs who help make the City so special.

This year's event is this coming Saturday, Nov. 25, starting at 9:30 a.m., at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive. It's made possible by a partnership among Fairfax City Economic Development, the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce (CFCC) and the Old Town Fairfax Business Association. (OTFBA).

According to Tara Borwey, programs man-

ager with Fairfax City Economic Development, "Our City's Small Business Saturday celebration aims to emphasize the significance of supporting small and locally owned businesses during the holiday season."

At the event's Welcome Station, attendees may capture memorable moments of their children with Santa from 9:30-11:30 a.m. They'll also have the opportunity to pick up a list of Fairfax City's small businesses that are offering special deals that day.

In addition, shoppers will be offered small treats, coffee and cocoa to go, while supplies last, as well as free, Small Business Saturday tote bags to enhance their shopping experience. The Welcome Station will be open until 12:30 p.m., so people are encouraged to stop by it early.

Afterward, said Borwey, "We encourage

families to explore and shop small in Fairfax City." They may also compete for raffle prizes. Whenever people make a purchase from a participating business, all they need to do is submit one proof of purchase to have their name entered into a raffle. Prizes include 10 Fairfax City Flex eGift Cards, each valued at \$50 and redeemable at participating Fairfax City businesses.

Proofs of purchases should be emailed to economicdevelopment@fairfaxva.gov by Monday, Dec. 4, at 5 p.m. Winners will be drawn on Tuesday, Dec. 5 and notified via email. Added Borwey: "This is your chance to make a difference and support local businesses, while potentially winning some fantastic prizes."

Noting that small businesses are an integral part of neighborhoods and communi-

ties, OTFBA Executive Director Tess Rollins said these business owners "will do what they can for their customers, because they work and serve where they live."

"I have a passion for small businesses, entrepreneurs, makers, artisans and other creatives," she continued. "I believe that every person who has ever started a small business is brave. They're brave to try, to discover and to do more than dream. They're brave to show up."

Therefore, said Rollins, "My focus is on how to assist small business owners increase their visibility to become or remain viable." So on Small Business Saturday, she urges shoppers to "Give love to small businesses. They'll open their doors to you. Let's do our part by shopping and supporting them, so they can keep those doors open."

Fairfax High Seniors Create PERIOD Club

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

When Fairfax High seniors Valencia Rodriquez and Maisie Curtin were looking for some extracurricular activities, they knew they wanted to do something that would make a difference in their community. And although their school offered a variety of clubs and groups, nothing seemed like it would make the impact they wanted.

But then, in her junior year, Rodriquez read about another school's PERIOD Club and told her friend Maisie about it. PERIOD is a youth-led, global nonprofit that strives to end period poverty and reduce period stigma through advocacy, education and service.

With so many families in need nationwide – and

in Fairfax County, too – parents often must choose to spend what little money they have on either food or rent. Menstrual products for their daughters don't make the list of necessities.

Yet, of course, they are important necessities, and young women who lack access to them end up staying home and missing school during their time of the month, rather than being shamed or embarrassed in front of their classmates. Some haven't even been given information about why they have periods.

So, hoping to rectify this situation – at least in their corner of the world – Curtin and Rodriquez attended online meetings together with the national PERIOD organization and filled out the required paperwork to



PHOTO COURTESY OF CARRIE DORSEY

SEE PERIOD CLUB, PAGE 11

Maisie Curtin promoting the PERIOD Club at a school event.

Challenges Don't Take a Holiday

What about those experiencing hunger and homelessness?

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Thanksgiving marks the beginning of the holiday season and the countdown to a new year. On Thursday, many will gather with family and friends in a welcoming home. After the kisses, hugs and updates, and stories told once again that always bring smiles, conversations might shift to emerging issues that are on the horizon in Fairfax County — casinos or data centers, possibly — or those concerning the more local community.

Looking over at the tables and counters, groaning under the weight of food and drink, and feeling the home warm and toasty, perhaps thoughts of those less fortunate people experiencing homelessness and hunger will come to mind.

THE CONNECTION asked Fairfax County Board of Supervisors members to share their thoughts on some hot-button issues, the factors influencing them, and where they stand now.

- ❖ Possible casino along the Silver Line, especially if such impacts their districts

- ❖ Data centers in their district and elsewhere in the county

- ❖ Pending board item, consideration, or action proposed to come before the supervisors before January 1, 2024, that matters most to them and why

POSSIBLE CASINO along the Silver Line, especially if such impacts your district

James Walkinshaw, Braddock District Supervisor: I'm skeptical that a casino would make sense in Fairfax County and even more skeptical that it would have any hope of passing by referendum, as Virginia law requires. But if the General Assembly intends to consider legislation regarding a potential casino, it has to be a local option so that the decision is made at the local level with input from the community.

John Foust, Dranesville District Supervisor: We need to focus development along the Silver Line on creating communities where employers want to locate and families want to live. In my opinion, a casino would not be consistent with those goals. I believe that any net economic benefits to the county would be relatively insignificant and that any benefits that might be derived would be outweighed by the problems a casino could create.

Walter Alcorn, Hunter Mill District Supervisor: There has been a lot of discussion in the community and reported in local media regarding a gambling casino being built in Hunter Mill District along Metro's Silver Line. At [last week's] Board of Supervisors



James Walkinshaw



John Foust



Rodney L. Lusk



Walter Alcorn

meeting, I reiterated my opposition to the gambling casino proposed in SB 1543 and HB 2499 during the last session of the General Assembly. Organizations such as Reston Association and Reston Citizens Association have also voiced their strong opposition. While there is no active proposal on the table at this time, I asked the county executive for further information about the process for casino authorization that will be shared with the Board of Supervisors and the community before the beginning of the 2024 General Assembly session. (Oct. 25 Weekly Hunter Mill District News)

Rodney L. Lusk, Franconia District Supervisor: I have concerns about developing casinos in Fairfax County because they tend to attract patrons from the most vulnerable populations. These residents struggle to meet basic needs and are better served with support, resources, and opportunities instead of a casino and the distractions it may cause.

DATA CENTERS

James Walkinshaw, Braddock District Supervisor: Fairfax County currently has a modest number of data centers, and even with a handful of recent proposals, I don't expect that will change. Some of our neighboring jurisdictions have staked their economic development on hosting hundreds of

data centers can be eyesores, so we are looking at creating standards that regulate aspects of their appearance.

Walter Alcorn, Hunter Mill District Supervisor: Waiting for the staff report that was discussed at the Land Use Policy Committee meeting.

Rodney L. Lusk, Franconia District Supervisor: In Franconia District, we have one data center that is currently under construction, a 240,000-square-foot facility in an industrial area on Loisdale Road. This data center will replace two vacant office buildings built approximately eight years ago. The County should encourage data centers if they complement the proposed area and if they do not cause extensive negative environmental, energy or land use impacts to neighboring residential communities.

WHAT PENDING BOARD ITEM, consideration, or action proposed to come before the supervisors before January 1, 2024, that matters most to you and why.

James Walkinshaw, Braddock District Supervisor: Earlier this year, I asked the Board to support the creation of the Task Force on the Future of Lake Accotink to help us develop a sustainable path forward for one of Fairfax County's most treasured assets, Lake Accotink. For months, they've been working alongside a new consulting team to identify new options, including a hybrid smaller lake/wetland option I asked them to consider. They'll submit their findings to the Board of Supervisors on Dec. 5 and present them at an Environmental Committee meeting on Dec. 12.

John Foust, Dranesville District Supervisor: My focus over the next two months is to ensure a smooth and seamless transition to Jimmy Bierman, Dranesville District's Supervisor-Elect. I want to help with the transition as much as I can.

Walter Alcorn, Hunter Mill District Supervisor: Not at this time, but I will let you know if something comes up.

Rodney L. Lusk, Franconia District Supervisor: I am looking forward to the Data Center White Paper presentation and the Manufactured Housing Task Force Recommendations presentation, which are anticipated to be presented to the board before the end of the year.

HIGHLIGHT winter weather clothing, shoes/boots, food, and gift drives.

James Walkinshaw, Braddock District Supervisor: The Braddock District office hosts a year-round donation box for Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO). Donations of non-perishable items



SCREENSHOT VIA VOLUNTEER FAIRFAX
Stuff the Bus goes virtual

data centers. Here in Fairfax County, data centers are a small part of our broader economic development strategy, and we are updating our environmental standards to ensure that we continue to push the envelope on energy efficiency, the use of renewables, and water quality protection.

John Foust, Dranesville District Supervisor: Data centers have great potential to improve the County's commercial tax base while also having the potential to do much harm if not properly regulated. The revenues data centers can generate to fund services in our County are significant, and unlike most other types of development, the County's cost to service data centers is insignificant. I want to encourage data center development while being smart about how we do it. We are working with staff and the public to evaluate issues such as where data centers should be located and best practices for mitigating noise and water quality impacts. We also rec-

CHALLENGES



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

More than 1,300 people are unhoused in Fairfax county

FROM PAGE 4

and clothing help individuals and families in need in the Burke/Springfield area.

John Foust, Dranesville District Supervisor: The Victim Services Division is gathering pajamas to distribute to the children they assist who are most in need. Donate a pair of new pajamas for children aged infant to 17, Nov. 6 - Dec. 18. Drop off at McLean District Station, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean

Virtual Stuff the Bus https://www.fairfax-county.gov/neighborhood-community-services/news/2023/1106a?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social

Rodney L. Lusk, Franconia District Supervisor: Willie Bailey's Fire Station 11 Toy Drive will be held on Dec. 11 at 9:30 a.m.

Additional Giving Opportunities

The Adult and Aging Division of Fairfax County's Department of Family Services is seeking new throw/lap blankets to give to clients for this year's holiday project. If you wish to make a difference by buying one or more, please select this link <https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=y1Zhom9dckGdfZNOsKeydUZFGlv9kptPhJXVrc5PnMZUMkdbVF-BaSVM00DhEV0dNUdAyNDkyRVIXSy4u> and fill out the information. Delivery/drop off new blankets by Dec. 4, 2023, to the Area Agency on Aging

Get involved with the Fairfax Food Council and explore ways to improve our food system and support healthy food access.

You can also help unsheltered people by donating to Fairfax County's network of non-profit partners seeking donations of clothing, furniture, school supplies and more.

Job training, shelter support, fundraising, and other assistance are needed across the county. Volunteer opportunities can be found on the Volunteer Fairfax website.

Hunger and Homelessness in Fairfax County

Hunger and homelessness are not new problems in our community. As the holidays www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

and cold weather approaches, these issues are top of mind.

Fairfax County Health and Human Services reports, food insecurity impacts more than 60,000 people in Fairfax County, according to Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization.

According to Fairfax County Health and Human Services, during its 2023 Point in Time Count in January 2023, 1,310 people were unhoused in the county. Homeless numbers have increased. The 2023 Point in Time Count homelessness numbers represent an increase of 26 percent from 1,041 in 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic began, and up 36 percent from a historical low of 964 in 2017's count. The biggest increase is in the number of people residing in emergency shelters.

Five years ago, 686 people were in shelters, but this increased by 53 percent to 1,049 people in the latest Point in Time Count. Forty-three percent of people experiencing homelessness in the latest count were under the age of 24, including 463 children."

The Fairfax County 2023-24 Hypothermia Prevention Program will run from Dec. 1, 2023, until March 31, 2024. Allyson Pearce, Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority shared additional information about hypothermia in Fairfax County.

The faith community's compassion for Fairfax County's most vulnerable neighbors is at the heart of its Hypothermia Prevention Program. "Over 40 houses of worship around the county rotate through the hypothermia period to provide extra warm space when needed. They open their houses of worship to provide overnight shelter," Pearce said. They also volunteer their time and offer many in-kind donations, such as food.

Virginia's Office of the Chief Medical Examiner provides some relevant data in its annual report. According to VDH's Office of the Chief Medical Examiner's most recent annual report (<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/medical-examiner/annual-reports/>) released July 2023, there were a total of 36 accidental deaths statewide in 2021 caused by exposure to cold.

Fairfax Water

NOTICE OF WATER RATE AND BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

December 14, 2023, at 6:30 p.m.

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 14, 2023, Fairfax Water will conduct a public hearing on its Proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges. The hearing will be held in Fairfax Water's offices at 8570 Executive Park Avenue, Fairfax, VA.

The proposed changes, to be effective April 1, 2024, include the following:

- An increase in the Availability Charge from \$4,640 to \$4,800.*
- An increase in the Local Facilities Charge from \$22,090 to \$22,910.
- An increase in the Service Connection Charge from \$1,790 to \$1,830.*
- An increase in the Account Charge from \$44 to \$47.
- An increase in the Quarterly Billing Service Charge from \$14.95 to \$15.60.*
- An increase in the base Commodity Charge from \$3.65 to \$3.84 per 1,000 gallons of water.
- An increase in the Peak Use Charge from \$4.00 to \$4.10.
- An increase in the Turn Off / Turn On Charge from \$53 to \$57.
- An increase in the Fees for Use of Fairfax Water Fire Hydrants to include the increase in the Commodity Charge and Peak Use Charge.
- An increase in the Overhead Charges for Labor from 102% to 104%.
- An increase in the Installation of Sewer Use Meter Charge Inspection Fee from \$42 to \$46.

*Charges reflect fees associated with a standard 5/8" residential meter. Changes in charges for larger residential and commercial meters are reflected in the Proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges.

Fairfax Water is also proposing a \$241 million budget for calendar year 2024¹. Water sales are expected to provide \$212 million, and the remaining \$29 million is expected from connection charges, investment income, and other sources.

The major areas of operation and maintenance expense are:

Category	-- \$1,000s --	
	2023	2024
Personal Services & Employee Benefits	\$ 63,208	\$ 67,746
Power and Utilities	14,457	15,190
Chemicals	12,068	13,625
Purchased Water	7,511	8,913
Supplies and Materials	5,591	6,449
Insurance	1,471	1,330
Fuel	821	930
Postage	602	620
Contractual Services	12,253	12,855
Professional Services	1,236	1,480
Other	2,295	2,739
Sub-Total	121,513	131,877
Transfer to Improvement Fund	(11,141)	(11,014)
Total	\$ 110,372	\$ 120,863

Net revenues are expected to be appropriated as follows:

Debt Payment	\$49,244,258
Improvement Fund	\$11,000,000
General Fund	\$58,974,000

¹ Fairfax Water's Board will continue to monitor economic factors and review revenues and expenditures at mid-year to determine if additional action is needed.

Visit fairfaxwater.org/rates to view a copy of the proposed changes.

Those wishing to speak at this hearing or desiring a copy of the proposed changes should call Ms. Susan Miller at 703-289-6018. Interested parties may submit written comments to PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org or mail written comments to:

Fairfax Water
Public Hearing Comments
8570 Executive Park Avenue
Fairfax, VA 22031

All written comments must be received by close of business on Wednesday, December 13, 2023, to be included in the record of the public hearing.

RAPTORS AT FORT HUNT

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Olive, a barn owl and her handler, Kathi



An Eastern screech owl named Little Voss.



A red shouldered hawk named Little Red



A male American kestrel named Pippin.

Enraptured by Raptors

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH

Four owls, a red-shouldered hawk and an American kestrel mesmerized 400 dotting human admirers who got up-close looks at these raptors on Nov. 5. People spilled out of Pavilion A at Fort Hunt Park on a balmy Sunday afternoon.

Liz and Tim Dennison from Secret Gardens Birds and Bees brought the birds to the park for a two-hour educational event sponsored by the Friends of Dyke Marsh and the National Park Service.

Raptors, also called birds of prey, have keen eyesight and hearing, sharp talons and a hooked beak. They typically eat meat. Diurnal raptors like hawks, eagles and vultures mostly hunt during the day. Nocturnal raptors like owls hunt at night. Many catch their prey with their feet.

Each of these birds was injured at some point and cannot survive on their own in the wild. The Dennisons have given each bird a name.

Pippin, an American kestrel, has two distinctive black vertical stripes on his face. The male kestrel has blue on the wings, but the female is mostly rusty brown, Liz Dennison explained. Someone found Pippin near Washington, D.C.'s National Mall, unafraid of people and appearing to beg for food. Because he had imprinted on people, he never learned to hunt or mate.

Little Red, a red-shouldered hawk, is blind in his left eye, probably because a great horned owl grasped its head in an attack. These hawks, between 17 and 24 inches in length, often perch on tree branches or utility wires. In the wild, they eat small mammals, amphibians and reptiles. Also birds.

One pair feasted on three of the Dennisons' chickens, Liz said.

Scarlet, a female barred owl, has a damaged beak from a vehicular collision. Her caretakers have to trim this bird's beak regularly which "she does not like," Liz said. In the wild, barred owls hunt mice, frogs, bats, snakes and other animals. From 16 to 20 inches in length, they fly almost silently because of their velvety feathers.

Olive, a three-year-old perky barn owl, seemed to zero in on her fans. Barn owls have a distinctive white, heart-shaped face and are around 16 inches long. These owls hunt almost exclusively at night and are a favorite of farmers because they eat mice, Liz Dennison commented. One young barn owl can eat eight to ten mice a day. A family can scarf up 6,000 to 10,000 mice a year, she offered.

More on Raptors

www.SecretGardenBirdsAndBees.com
www.fodm.org
www.nps.gov/gwmp

On the topic of mice, Dennison said, "There are no safe poisons." A raptor that eats a mouse that has eaten rat poison will not survive. She recommended a "good snap trap" and consulting Raptors Are the Solution, an organization working to eliminate rodenticides.

Owls eat the whole animal Liz Dennison explained, but they cannot digest bones and fur. They don't "poop them out," she said. Instead, they regurgitate pellets, a clump of indigestible items. She once found a crow's foot in a pellet.

Homer, the great horned owl, the largest owl at Fort Hunt that day, fixated on his many admirers with his big yellow eyes. His head tufts or plumicorns are not horns, Liz Dennison explained. Great horned owls are

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WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

NEWS BRIEFS

Fundraiser for Britepaths, Nov. 28, in Fairfax

Nonprofit Britepaths has just begun a Workforce Development Training initiative, Pathfinder Kitchen, in partnership with Mackenzie's Tunes & Tonics and Fairfax City Economic Development Authority. And it's holding a special event to celebrate its launch. Called "Giving TUNESDay," it'll be at Mackenzie's in Old Town Plaza, 3950 University Drive, Suite 210, in Fairfax City, on Tuesday, Nov. 28, from 5-7 p.m.

Attendees will be able to enjoy live music performed by Nashville recording artist and Washington Area Music Association award-winner Scott Kurt, joined by Sam Whetzel. There'll also be drink specials and a 50/50 raffle. During the evening, people are welcome to donate to help Britepaths provide food, stability and personal-empowerment services to local residents. Those unable to attend may also donate to Britepaths at <https://britepaths.org/donate/>.

Fairfax City's Holiday Market and Festival

With the holidays approaching, people may come to Fairfax City the first two weekends in December and do some shopping. A wide array of crafts vendors will be selling their products on Old Town Square at 10415 North St., with different vendors each weekend. The dates are Dec. 1-3 and Dec. 8-10; the times are Fridays, 5-8 p.m.; Saturdays, noon-6 p.m.; and Sundays, noon-5 p.m.

Old Town Square will also be the place for the City's annual Festival of Lights and Carols. It's slated for Saturday, Dec. 2, from noon-6 p.m., and the fun will include live music, dancing, s'mores, hot apple cider and children's activities, plus the lighting of Fairfax City's Christmas tree at 5:30 p.m.

Supplies Needed at The Lamb Center

The Lamb Center in Fairfax City is a daytime, drop-in shelter that serves the homeless in a variety of ways. But the need is so great that it needs the generosity of area residents to help it continue helping others. This month, The Lamb Center needs the following supplies:

Paper plates and bowls (no Styrofoam), disposable cold-drink cups, ground coffee in canisters (no decaf), hot chocolate, ramen noodle cups, mayonnaise packets, salt and pepper packets, hot sauce packets, gift cards, men's jeans 28-38 waist, men's belts 30-48 waist, men's sneakers, men's winter coats, men's thermals (tops and bottoms, all sizes), hoodies (all sizes), sweatpants (all sizes), men's T-shirts (L-XL), men's boxer briefs (M-XL), wool or wool-blend socks, and thermal or fleece gloves (no cotton).

All supplies may be delivered to The Lamb Center at 3160 Campbell Drive, Monday-Friday, from 8 a.m.-3 p.m., and Saturday, from 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

AEROMEXICO TO LAUNCH NONSTOP SERVICE FROM DULLES INTERNATIONAL TO MEXICO CITY

The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority announced that Aeromexico will begin new nonstop service between Mexico City (MEX) and Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD) on July 1, 2024. Flights will operate daily year-round. With the start of this and other routes, Aeromexico will serve 36 U.S. markets by July 2024.

VIENNA TOWN COUNCIL ADOPTS REVISED ZONING CODE

After an extensive, three-year process to update the Town of Vienna's zoning code, the Vienna Town

Council adopted the revised plan at its regular meeting last week at Town Hall. The newly adopted ordinance will take effect on Jan. 1, 2024. The purpose of the project referred to as Code Create Vienna was to clarify, simplify, reorganize, and update key chapters of the Town code. Among other things, the update provides opportunities for residents to enhance outdoor living space to accommodate modern lifestyles, requires more green space in commercial areas and gives businesses greater flexibility to explore more commercial opportunities. To learn more about the recently adopted zoning and subdivision code, visit www.vienna.gov/codeupdates.

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Litter of a Few Impacts You

No one likes a litterbug.

By SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Our 420 Fairfax County parks, over their 23,000 acres, can be places of natural beauty, peaceful contemplation, healthy exercise, and opportunities to observe the natural behavior of wildlife. All those enjoyable pastimes can be tainted by litter. Littering, although with declining rates over the past 40 years, is a noticeable problem throughout the park system.

Littering is the careless and incorrect disposal of minor amounts of waste in public places, like parks and roadways. The waste is often bottles or cans, paper, food scraps, plastic containers and cigarette butts. Each item may be small, but has an outsized negative impact on the environment, society, and aesthetics. Researchers note, "as an environmental problem, litter is a substantial source of contamination. Misplaced plastics, Styrofoam, paper, glass, and many other commonly used consumer materials accumulate in the environment, posing a number of harmful environmental consequences. The social problems related to litter include safety hazards, fire hazards, human health hazards, and indirect health hazards from bacteria, rats, roaches, and mosquitoes that are attracted to litter. In addition, litter is predictive of changing crime rates in a community (Brown, Perkins, & Brown, 2004), and there is experimental evidence showing that the presence of litter results in an increase in other social transgressions, like theft (Keizer, Lindenberg, & Steg, 2008)."

Litter is a costly blight that impacts each of us, whether or not we visit parks. It is costly to clean up and taxpayers bear that cost. It impacts quality of life and litter ends up in our waterways and polluting our drinking water. It injures wildlife and pets (see Connection, Osprey in Distress Rescued, July 27, 2023; Kite Flying Fun But Brings Hazards, June 23, 2022).

Clean Fairfax shares, "Virginia spends about 5 million tax dollars annually; and nationally, the cost is 2.5 billion tax dollars a year for litter cleanup. Debris in the roadway causes approximately 2,500 vehicular accidents a year. Every year, motorists drop over 16,000 pieces



Litter plagues our parks like this piled outside trash cans at Laurel Hill Park in Lorton, attracting vultures, small mammals, and insects; creating a health hazard, burdening tax payers, and detracting from the enjoyment of the park.



Dealing with litter takes a small army, like this volunteer group, when each individual acting responsibly could eliminate the problem. Pictured: Crescenda Lewis, Ava McCullen, Dhietmar Herbas, Layla Mesfin, Karin Lehnigk, Acline and Justin Argentieri.

of litter on each mile of primary highway. Too much of that trash and litter is washed into storm drains and creeks and streams, and pollutes important watersheds and

ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay." person. Who are the litterbugs among us? Only a few litter and they are disapproved of by the majority. Why this lack of concern from



Kite string debris decreased when it was the recent target of Park Authority signage after the parks experienced a dramatic increase in littering related to kite flying.



Earning the nickname "Recycle," Beau Benison, of Springfield, has recycled more than 300 plastic bottles he found littering the trails, says his walking partner Kathryn Benison

some for each other and our environment? Researchers say there is little consistent evidence for the demographic characteristics of a 'litterbug'. Studies conclude that littering is more common among males; younger adults, age 18-29; and in rural communities. Littering is more common in sites that are already littered, in sites without trash receptacles, and in sites with no existing signage about littering.

Laws have attempted to solve the problem. Littering is illegal. Section 33.1-346 of the Code of Virginia makes littering or dumping trash a Class 1 misdemeanor, punishable by up to 12 months in jail and/or a fine of up to \$2,500. In 2020, to address the growing

amount of plastic litter, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation enabling local plastic bag tax ordinances. On Jan. 1, 2022, Fairfax County established the tax "to curb our collective use of disposable plastic bags, to reduce the amount of plastic waste in our local waterways, roadways, and open spaces and the damage it causes." Plastics are a particular problem as litter, since they do not biodegrade like wood or other natural materials. Instead, plastics break down into smaller and smaller pieces but never disappear. The County notes, "Pieces of plastic both large and very, very small can wreak havoc on our natural resources and can find their way into our food and

water." Plastic bag tax legislation mandates use of those collected tax funds for environmental clean-up, providing education programs designed to reduce environmental waste, mitigating pollution and litter, or providing reusable bags to recipients of SNAP or WIC benefits." In 2023, the General Assembly budget amendments included \$350,000 related to anti-littering for fiscal year 2024. Those funds focus on educating elementary school children on the problem of littering, and on supporting the Keep Virginia Beautiful program, to support its efforts to reduce litter, encourage recycling, and promote community beautification across the Commonwealth.

While litter is a problem in many public places, it hits hard in the parks where we expect beauty to prevail. Director of the Park Authority, Jai Cole, says, "Environmental stewardship is a shared responsibility. We all want to live in a clean and hospitable environment. Whether we're talking about our outdoor spaces or within the walls of our own home, the power to provide a safe, litter-free and enjoyable environment lies with each one of us and the individual choices we make whether or not to leave trash on the ground or throw it away properly. Leaving trash along the trail or in the parks is, firstly, illegal, and it creates all kinds of problems that impact wildlife and the quality of our land, forests and

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



Park Authority director Jai Cole, asks all to "...help us maintain a clean and welcoming environment..."

streams. Also, the inconsiderate trash left behind by others simply makes the parks less enjoyable for all of us. Currently, our park operations staff spend approximately 40 percent of their time on trash clean-up and removal. If we all could make an extra effort to dispose of trash properly, our staff could use that time for other park maintenance and beautification projects."

Thousands of individuals, groups, and businesses assist with litter clean-up, recycling and beautification projects across Virginia each year. Earth Day, watershed clean-ups, and the Adopt-a-Highway program all take aim at the problem. Many individuals like Soumia Zeroual and Beau Benison regularly practice 'plaking' to help. Plaking or plogging is a Swedish term for picking up trash while walking or jogging. Zeroual says, "I workout here every morning [Laurel Hill Park] and it hurts to see all the trash left here and the workers struggling [to deal with it]." Three year old Beau, a Golden Retriever of Springfield, also regularly does his part. He has collected about 300 plastic bottles during his walks along the Cross County Trail, earning him the nickname "Recycle."

For our parks, Cole thanks those volunteers, saying "I would like to thank the hundreds of volunteers who have and continue to contribute thousands of hours of their personal time and effort in assisting the effort to help maintain our fantastic park system."

"We continue to rely on the partnership of our park guests in accepting their portion of the responsibility to help us maintain a clean and welcoming environment for the park guests that follow," says Cole.

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One-Man Show Tackles The Christmas Carol at the Workhouse



John Hardy does it all for this holiday production.



John Hardy brings his one-man show of the Christmas Carol to Lorton Workhouse Art Center.

BY MIKE SALMON
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

It takes a certain amount of skill and finesse to put on a production of “A Christmas Carol,” with only one person. John Hardy has been doing this for the past 12 years and is taking his play to the stage at the Workhouse Art Center this holiday season.

“This is a great production, I use my body and voice,” Hardy said.

He plays over 40 characters to put on the production including Scrooge, Tiny Tim and all the rest using just stage antics and voice depictions. At first, it might seem he’s up there throwing on outfit after outfit, running around like a madman, but that’s not the case. “That’s not at all what I do,” he said.

The voices and expressions tell the whole story.

In order to pull off something like this, it takes a good story and the well known Charles Dickens’ tale of Scrooge and bah-humbag has been used in many forms. The Grinch could be called a “Scrooge,” and even the Charlie Brown Christmas story is similar – they couldn’t be happy and were

looking for the true meaning of Christmas.

Hardy is into the story too, and the turnaround that happens to Scrooge is a favorite moment of his. “It surprises me and if it surprises me, it surprises the audience,” he said. “They’ll laugh and cry.”

Acting and Writing Career

Over 35 years onstage, Hardy’s career in the professional theater has taken him in all directions.

He has worked all over the country and overseas. Over the course of his career John has directed over one hundred professional productions including Macbeth, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Romeo and Juliet, Henry V, Julius Caesar, One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest, Oedipus the King, Man of La Mancha, The Taming of the Shrew and others. As an actor he’s played roles including Hamlet, MacBeth, Tom Wingfield in The Glass Menagerie, Teach in American Buffalo and many others. In 2009 John played George in a national tour of Of Mice and Men. As a playwright he has had over fifty productions

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 7

MCLEAN NEWCOMERS AND NEIGHBORS

The club was founded in 1969 to create new friendships, provide opportunities for socializing and acquaint residents with the community. It sponsors many group activities including: Anything with food, Armchair Traveler,

Book Club, Bunco, Canasta, Crafty Ladies, Genealogy, Golf, Let Us Lunch, Mah Jongg, Mah Jongg NY Style, Movie Lovers, Museums/House and Garden Tours, Nature Walks, Restaurant Critics, Sing for Fun and Tech Forums. Application forms may be mailed to: Membership McLean Newcomers and Neighbors, P.O. Box 6166, McLean, VA 22106. Visit the website: www.mcleannewcomers.org.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthy-mindsfairfax or www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html.

The Shepherd’s Center of Northern Virginia Caregivers’ Support Group takes place the first and third Tuesdays of each month, 10-11:30 a.m. via Zoom. This group is for caregivers of family members with dementia. Meetings are gently facilitated. For more information

and to get the Zoom link, contact Jack Tarr at jtarr5@verizon.net or 703-821-6838.

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, www.havenofnova.org or havenofnova@verizon.net.

Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group Meets from 1:30-3 p.m. the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Ka-

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Fairfax High Seniors Create PERIOD Club



FROM PAGE 3

start a chapter, themselves. As a result, Fairfax High has become only the second high school in the country to have a PERIOD Club.

“The club’s goals and mission really aligned with what we were trying to do to give back to our school and our community,” explained Rodriquez. “It was great connecting with other women and students across the country, and they made it really easy to start our own chapter at Fairfax.”

Now in its first full year, the PERIOD Club has garnered 15-20 active members and a solid leadership team to make sure it continues into the future. This was particularly important to Curtin and Rodriquez, since both are in their last year at Fairfax.

The club meets after school and works on projects

together. The members have already organized a fundraiser to donate menstrual supplies to Bethany House, a nonprofit that provides services to survivors of domestic violence and their families.

Club members have also been active in Fairfax High events, getting out the word to fellow students about their goals and initiatives. And next month, the group will visit young students in nearby elementary schools.

“We want to be a safe place for them to ask us about any possible scenarios and to answer any questions they may have about what it’s like in middle and high school,” said Curtin. “We want them to feel good and secure about themselves, and we hope to help ease any fears they may have.”

— CARRIE DORSEY CONTRIBUTED TO THIS STORY.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CARRIE DORSEY
From left are Maisie Curtin and Valencía Rodriquez.

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ENTERTAINMENT



The Reston Holiday Parade will be held on Friday, Nov. 24, 2023 at Reston Town Center.

THREE FARMERS MARKETS REMAIN OPEN INTO DECEMBER

Enjoy the extended season at the Reston, Burke and McCutcheon/Mt. Vernon farmers markets.

Starting Nov. 25, each market will welcome a handful of new vendors in addition to the ones you know and love. Expect new products, such as bagels, hot biscuits, pho, fresh cheese and more! The Extended Season will continue each week until market closing dates, which can be found below.

Burke Farmers Market. April 22 – Dec. 16, 8 a.m. to noon. VRE Parking Lot, 5671 Roberts Parkway, Burke
Reston Farmers Market. April 29 – Dec. 2, 8 a.m. to noon. Lake Anne Village Center, 1609-A Washington Plaza, Reston

McCutcheon/Mt. Vernon Farmers Market. April 19 – Dec. 20, 8 a.m. to noon. Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria

NOV. 9 TO DEC. 24

Photo with Santa. At Tysons Corner Center. Lower Level – Fashion Court/Nordstrom Wing. Mon.-Sat. 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. / Sun. 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. Tysons Corner Center's Santa Claus will arrive on November 9th, and be available for photos and personal time daily through December 24th.

STARTING NOW

Sip & Stroll. At Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Shopping with a Twist will be in effect daily during center hours (10 a.m.-9 p.m. Mon.-Sat. /11 a.m.-7 p.m. Sun.), although individual restaurant hours may vary. Adult beverages must be in a logo'd disposable cup provided by the restaurant where the drink was purchased. Only alcoholic beverages purchased from participating restaurants may be taken outside the restaurant and into the shopping center. No outside alcohol is permitted.

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. 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>

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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

December 8: Marcolivia – Classical

String Duo
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.

FRIDAY/NOV. 24

Reston Holiday Parade. 11 a.m. At Reston Town Center, Reston. Celebrating its 32nd year, the one-of-a-kind, one-hour, half-mile parade along Market Street also welcomes the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus in a horse-drawn carriage. Since 1992, rain or shine, the parade has been an annual tradition on the day after Thanksgiving. After the parade, the Clauses will return for the Tree Lighting at 6:00 p.m. on Market Street. Bring your parade bells and join us for a day full of holiday cheer!

FRIDAY/NOV. 24

Black Friday at Tysons Corner Center. Many mall retailers have



A Chanticleer Christmas takes place on Saturday, Nov. 25, 2023 at GMU Center for the Arts in Fairfax.

extended their Black Friday sales by starting them earlier this holiday season, so shoppers don't have to wait until Black Friday to score those once a year deals. The mall will be closed on Thanksgiving Day and will be open from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Black Friday.

SATURDAY/NOV. 25

Langley Crew Turkey Trot 5K Fun Run/Walk. 9 a.m. At Langley High School in McLean. The Langley Crew Booster Club invites the community to join us for a fun-filled event that combines fitness and festivity while supporting the dedicated rowers of the Langley High School Crew Team. Whether you're an experienced runner or looking for a leisurely stroll, this event is perfect for everyone. Registration is now open, so don't wait to secure your spot! Participants and supporters should assemble in the Langley High School parking lot beginning at 8:00am. They can pick up their t-shirts and race packages at the racer check-in desk. Register now at <https://potomac.enmotive.com/events/register/2023-langley-crew-turkey-trot-5k> and be a part of this amazing event!

SATURDAY/NOV. 25

A Chanticleer Christmas. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. A Chanticleer Christmas showcases an inspired and far-ranging repertoire full of new a cappella arrangements of well-known tunes—from Renaissance music to Gospel hymns, Christmas carols from all around the world to songs from the "Great American Songbook." With 12 expressive voices ranging from soprano to bass harmonically melded for unparalleled beauty and clarity, Chanticleer has impeccable style and has amassed a huge following.

NOV. 25-26

"The Nutcracker." At Fairfax High School, Fairfax. The Fairfax Ballet Company presents a full-length production of "The Nutcracker."

Two show times include: Nov. 25 at 4 p.m. and Nov. 26 at 4 p.m. Fairfax Ballet Company members, along with guest professional artists and students from the Russell School of Ballet, join Clara and her Nutcracker Prince in this journey through a winter wonderland of dancing snowflakes, twirling candy canes, and an epic battle between heroic toy soldiers and mischievous mice. Chloe Shulsinger, a senior at Westfield High School in Chantilly and member of the Fairfax Ballet Company, dances the role of Clara, and professional guest artist Philip Smith-Cobbs, previously with the Atlanta Ballet, portrays the Nutcracker Prince. For tickets, visit www.fairfaxballetnutcracker2023.bpt.me. Tickets are also available at the door one hour before each show. For group discounts, email events@rsbdance.com

SUNDAY/NOV. 26

Keyboard Conversations with Jeffrey Siegel. 7 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Enjoy a feast of magnifique French music in this sumptuous Keyboard Conversations® with Jeffrey Siegel. In Festive French Fare, Siegel showcases Debussy's beloved Clair de Lune, Ravel's enchanting Sonatine, Saint-Saëns' devilish Danse macabre, and two tuneful Novelettes by Poulenc.

SUNDAY/NOV. 26

Beaver Boogie 5K. 10 a.m. At Lake Accotink Park, Springfield. Lace up your running shoes and join the Friends of Lake Accotink Park (FLAP) for a wild, fun-filled adventure at the first-annual Beaver Boogie 5K Fun Run/Walk. Get ready for a memorable 5K race through picturesque Lake Accotink Park – a perfect way to spend a day with family and friends. The Beaver Boogie is more than just a fun run; it's an opportunity to support the mission of the Friends of Lake Accotink Park (FLAP), a certified 501(c)3 organization dedicated to "protect, restore, preserve, and educate all concerning the natural, historical, and cultural resources of

ENTERTAINMENT



The Church Street Stroll takes place on Monday, Nov. 27, 2023 in the Town of Vienna.

Lake Accotink Park.” Registration is \$25 for each participant through Eventbrite.

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS AT THE WORKHOUSE ARTS CENTER

The Workhouse Arts Center will present several holiday events and activities in November and December for visitors to give back to the community, shop for holiday gifts, attend performances, take a class, and more. For more information, visit workhousearts.org.

Toy Drive – Now through Dec. 11 The Workhouse Arts Center is partnering with OAR NOVA, a local non-profit restorative justice organization, to give back to our community. Join us in helping families impacted by the criminal justice system by donating a new, unused toy in its original packaging. Toys can be dropped off in the Workhouse Visitors Center.

Small Business Saturday - 20% Off All Items – Saturday, Nov. 25, 11 am-6 pm

Celebrate Small Business Saturday by supporting artists at the Workhouse Arts Center and get a 20% discount on all items in gift shops, galleries, and artist studios! Shop for one-of-a-kind gifts and save big!

Thanksgiving Weekend Comedy Showcase – Saturday, Nov. 25, 8 pm

The Workhouse Arts Center presents, in collaboration with Rahmein Mostafavi, some of the funniest comedians in the DC area including Dewayne White, Jared Stern, Olivia Vida, Benny Nwokeabia, and Jason Weems for this special holiday weekend of comedy! Tickets are \$20. McGuireWoods Gallery in building W-16.

Creating Beautiful Ornaments with Lightbulbs - Saturday, Dec 2, 10:30 am

In this workshop participants will transform used lightbulb into festive holiday ornaments. Participants will be shown how to paint, collage and add glitter for a beautiful transformation. Cost, \$70. Building W-3, room 305.

Theater Performance – A Christmas Carol - Saturday, Dec. 2, 7 pm and Sunday Dec 3, 1 pm

Get into the holiday spirit with this season favorite presented in a whole new light. Through the magic of theatre, John Hardy

single-handedly performs over 40 roles to bring Charles Dickens’ classic holiday perennial tale to life at the Workhouse Arts Center. Tickets, \$25. Building W-3 Theater.

WinterWorks - Season Celebration - Saturday, Dec. 9, 6-9 pm

Our festive WinterWorks event will feature holiday merriment, fun photo opportunities, carol singers, a Raku ceramics activity, dance demonstrations, hot chocolate bar, smores by a fire pit, and more! Admission is free. Art activities, food, and beverages available for purchase. Workhouse Arts Center Campus.

Holidays...Hallowdays Movie Screening - Sunday, Dec. 10, 2 pm

While incarcerated at the Lorton Correctional Complex in the 1960s and 1970s, Rhozier “Roach” Brown led the prison theatrical troupe THE INNER VOICES. They performed original plays, skits, and social dramas at a variety of venues including the Apollo Theater and the Smithsonian Institution. Cost: In place of an admission fee, guests are asked to bring a new unused toy to donate to the Workhouse Toy Drive. Building W-3 Theater.

New Year’s Eve Musical Theater Performance – The Who’s Tommy Sunday, Dec. 31, 8 pm

Based on the iconic 1969 rock concept album, The Who’s Tommy is an exhilarating story of hope, healing, and the human spirit. The story of the pinball-playing boy who triumphs over his adversities has inspired and amazed audiences for more than 40 years. The New Year’s Eve show includes a post-performance reception with midnight champagne. Tickets \$50. Building W-3 Theater. See the website for ticket prices for additional dates and times. Show runs through Feb 11. Fridays and Saturdays 8 pm and Sundays, 2 pm.

New Year’s Eve Comedy Show with Antoine Scott – Sunday, Dec. 31, 8 pm

The Workhouse Arts Center presents, in collaboration with Rahmein Mostafavi, a special New Year’s Eve comedy celebration. Time to laugh off 2023 and bring in 2024 with an abundance of joy! Join headliner Antoine Scott and a host of other hilarious comics for a one-show-only New Year’s Eve comedy event.

Tickets are \$50; \$60 front row reserved seats. McGuire-Woods Gallery in building W16.

MONDAY/NOV. 27

Church Street Stroll. 6 p.m. At the Town of Vienna in front of Freeman Store and Museum. Includes musical entertainment from local school groups and holiday greetings from Mayor Linda Colbert, the Vienna Town Council, and other elected leaders. New this year is a tree lighting ceremony with a traditional, decorated evergreen tree on the Freeman Store lawn! Santa will make his grand entrance down Church Street aboard the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department’s antique fire truck. After the official ceremony, participants can visit with Santa, stroll down historic Church Street, enjoy the festive lights, enjoy hot chocolate, warm up by a bonfire and explore the holiday shopping specials inside local Church Street businesses. Revelers can also enjoy tours of the nearby Caboose, the Vienna Train Station, and the Little Library for a trip down memory lane. For more information: call Historic Vienna at 703-938-5187 or visit www.viennava.gov/stroll.

NOV. 30 TO DEC. 2

Winterfest. 5-9 p.m. At Brown’s Chapel Park in Reston. Reston Association is proud to announce Winterfest, a new three-day family festival that’s perfect for the holiday season. Winterfest will feature a ‘Light up the Park’ walk, a Santa meet and greet, an ‘Enchanted Forest’ filled with decorated trees from the community, local vendors for holiday shopping, bonfires and smores, a pop-up bar, food options and more. A unique aspect of the event is the Enchanted Forest, which will feature up to 50 holiday trees individually decorated by sponsoring businesses, families or groups. Guests will be able to share in the holiday celebration as they walk through the Enchanted Forest and can vote for their favorite tree theme, most creative tree or most originality. Following the event, all trees will be donated to less fortunate families in the Reston community. The event is free for all Reston Association members; admission is \$8 for non-members ages 3-17, and \$18 for non-members 18+. Registration is open at <https://www.reston.org/winterfest-2023>.



Winterfest will take place Nov. 30 to Dec. 2, 2023 at Brown’s Chapel Park in Reston.

NOV. 30-DEC. 3

Tysons Library Quarterly Book & Media Sale. At Tysons Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church.

Thursday, 30 November, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Friday, 1 December, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saturday, 2 December, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Sunday, 3 December, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.:

Bag sale. \$10 for a full grocery sack or half price if less

Large selection of books and media for all ages and interests. Visit <https://www.tysonslibraryfriends.org/>. Call 703-338-3307 for additional information. Proceeds benefit the Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library and related activities.

DEC. 1-3

Holiday Book Sale. At Centreville Regional Library, Centreville.

Dec. 1, Friday, 1-5 p.m.

Dec. 2, Saturday, 10-5 p.m.

Dec. 3, Sunday, 1-4 p.m.

Bag sale on Sunday. Fill a grocery bag with books for \$10.

Fiction, nonfiction, gift baskets and stocking stuffers

SATURDAY/DEC. 2

Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy – A Celtic Family Christmas. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy return to the Center for the Arts for a Celtic experience like no other. In A Celtic Family Christmas, the charming duo invites you and your family into their holiday traditions on Cape Breton Island with charming stories of family, farming, food, and plenty of music. Even their talented children will join in the foot-stomping jigs, dizzying fiddling, soulful ballads, and spirited two-stepping. Fiddle masters in their own right, when MacMaster and Leahy combine their talents and magnetic chemistry, the stage crackles with electric energy.

SATURDAY/DEC. 2

Puzzle Swap. At Reston Museum in Reston. Visitors are encouraged to bring a puzzle and leave with a “new to you” puzzle! The event will take place during Reston Museum’s open hours until all puzzles are gone. Visitors can also purchase Reston-themed puzzles from the gift shop. The gift shop (excluding consignment) is 10% off the day of, with an extra 5% for museum members. Proceeds support Reston Museum a 501c3 nonprofit. Learn more at: <https://www.restonmuseum.org/event-details/puzzle-swap>

SATURDAY/DEC. 2

Breakfast with Santa at Tysons Corner Center. 8:00am – 9:30am Food Court, Level 3. ‘Breakfast with Santa’ is a popular family tradition, involving a special and up close interaction with Santa and a complimentary catered breakfast. Upon Santa’s arrival, all can enjoy family friendly entertainment, holiday music, face painting, coloring activities, and more. This annual event presented by Tysons Corner Center is free for families, with no additional costs for the breakfast or activities.

SATURDAY/DEC. 2

Model Train Show. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. The Herndon Historical Society’s annual Model Train Show will take place. N-Scale Operating Layout by the Northern Virginia NTRAK. The Herndon caboose will also be open that same day from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

SATURDAY/DEC. 2

Lake Anne Jingle on the Lake Christmas Festival. 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Lake Anne Plaza, Reston. Join the Lake Anne and Reston Community for a day long holiday celebration, starring Santa himself! Santa will arrive along with the Vienna Singing Princesses on a decorated boat parade, and accompanied by Santa’s elves on paddleboards! Calling on kids of all ages to greet Santa and enjoy hot chocolate, food and gifts at our Christmas Market, as well as children’s choirs and ballet, Ukrainian Christmas songs, and children’s activities and ornament making.

Schedule:

12 p.m.:	Boat Parade and Santa arrival
12:45 p.m.:	Vienna Singing Princesses
1:30 p.m.:	Sunrise Valley Elementary School Choir
2:15 p.m.:	Reston Conservatory Ballet
3:00 p.m.:	Lake Anne Elementary School Choir
3:30 p.m.:	Ukrainian Christmas songs

THURSDAY/DEC. 14

Winter Wonderland 2023. 6:30-8:30 p.m. At The Lake House, 11450 Baron Cameron Ave., Reston. Proceeds will benefit Fellowship Square, an organization improving the lives of older adults who struggle to make ends meet by providing affordable housing and supportive services.

Children's And Teen's Connection

Our annual Children's Connection, including the Children's Gazette and Children's Almanac, has been a long-standing tradition. We are once again welcoming contributions from children, youth, and teens in public and private schools, as well as homeschool, after-school care, and other programs, art and writing classes, and from individuals.

We publish images of all types of visual art forms, from drawing, painting, printmaking, and graphic design to sculpture, extended media, crafts, and more. We welcome written works such as poetry, essays, opinion pieces, and short stories.

Visit <http://www.connection-newspapers.com/PDFs/> and scroll down to the Children's Edition to see last year's editions. Our plan is for the Children's Connection/Gazette to publish the week of December 20, 2023, with overflow possible in January 2024.

Submission Directions

Artwork should be photographed or scanned and provided in jpeg format. These can be submitted via Google Drive. Writing should be submitted in text format (docx or Google Docs) or pasted in the body of an email. We ask that all submissions be digital so they can be sent through email.

Identify each submission as follows:

<First Name> <Last Name>, <Age>, <Grade>, <Residence Location (Reston Herndon, Springfield, etc.)>, <Title of the Work>, <Medium or Type of Writing> | <School/Center Name>, <School Location>, <Teacher Name>, < Title>

Artwork example

Sean Murphy, 12, Grade 7, Springfield, Summer Morning, watercolor on parchment | Irving Middle School, Springfield, VA, Elizabeth Carr, art teacher, MS

Writing example

Martina Alvarez, 17, Junior, Alexandria, I'm Not Just a Teen, essay | Mount Vernon High School, Alexandria, VA, Gratia Rodriguez, English Teacher, HS

Please email your submissions by 6 p.m. on Monday, December 11, 2023, [Earlier is Better] to Editor and Publisher Mary Kimm at kimm.mary@gmail.com and fill in the Subject Line as Children's Connection 2023

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OPINION

Big Challenges Ahead in the State Legislature

FROM PAGE 2

committees. Del. Kathy Tran is returning and was just elected to serve in the number three leadership position, to head the House Democratic Caucus. Delegate-elect Rozia Henson brings new perspective as the newest member of the Eastern Fairfax and South County legislative team. All of this means that we will have numerous seats at the table to help our area.

Elected Majority Leader, Judiciary Chairman

I am humbled that my colleagues in the Senate Democratic Caucus selected me as their Majority Leader for the next four years. Succeeding retiring Senator Dick Saslaw, who has led our caucus since 1995, leaves huge, historic shoes to fill. Our caucus will be reinvigorated with nine new members

and a majority of 21 members who have served with us fewer than eight months. I look forward to harnessing their ideas and energy and the strengths of the new House Democratic majority to make lasting progress in our state.

Finally, I am honored that my colleagues selected me as the next chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Reforming Virginia's civil and criminal justice policy has always been a passion for me. This committee has primary jurisdiction over Virginia's firearm violence prevention laws.

It is an exciting time to be helping make our community a better place and I especially appreciate the confidence you as my constituents have placed in me. I look forward to your involvement and guidance.

Please share your views at scott@scottsurovell.org and thank you again for your support.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 10

plan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW. 703-532-4892.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

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

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

RSVP a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvpnova.org.

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

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

Master Gardener Training. The Fairfax County Master Gardener Association offers plant clinics, home turf training or speakers for homeowner's meetings. Fees vary. Visit fairfaxgardening.org or call MG Help Desk at 703-324-8556 for more.

Volunteers Needed. PRS is looking for empathetic and caring volunteers to make phone calls to older adults who may be feeling socially isolated. The commitment is one 3-hour shift per week for one year. Located in Arlington. Ages 21 & up. Intensive training provided. Learn more and apply: prsinc.org/caring-volunteering/. Questions? Email lpadgett@prsinc.org.

The Northern Virginia Long Term Care Ombudsman Program needs volunteer advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Contact Lisa Callahan at 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov. Also visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/ltombudsman/.

Fairfax County needs volunteers to drive older adults to medical appointments and wellness programs. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

Respite Care volunteers give family caregivers of a frail older adult a well-deserved break so they can go shopping, attend a doctor's appointment or just have coffee with a friend. Volunteers visit and oversee the safety of the older adult for a few hours each month. Support and training are provided. Contact 703-324-7577, TTY 711, or Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov.

The Lewinsville Senior Center in McLean needs a Certified Arthritis Exercise Instructor. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

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

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CENTRE VIEW

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.

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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October 28, 2023
(In Case Anyone Missed it)



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As I sit and write this column on Saturday, Oct. 28, 2023, I do so with a heavy heart, heavier than usual I should say. And it is heavier than usual because today is my recently deceased brother's 74th birthday – or rather it would have been. We won't be celebrating it this year – or ever again. In fact, this is his first birthday since he died semi unexpectedly last Dec. 3rd. Another one of those firsts that survivors everywhere must endure when a significant person in their lives dies. And my brother Richard's death was very significant. A huge loss. He leaves a gaping hole in my life, as he does for his widow, Vanessa, and hundreds of his clients for whom Richard was more than simply an insurance broker. He was, as Father Mulcahy was on M*A*S*H, a caretaker of souls, sort of.

Do any of you remember where you were on Oct. 28, 2022? It was a Friday night. Ordinarily, recalling a random-ish day a year or so ago, maybe even a few months ago, is challenging as so often the days, weeks and months tend to blend and it all becomes a blur. Well, this is one date that will never be a blur to me. That's because the Friday night to which I refer was the last night I saw my brother, Richard alive. My wife Dina and I and Richard's wife Vanessa gathered at Richard's home for a surprise birthday dinner for him.

Back home finally, after two months in the hospital (six weeks of which were in the I.C.U.), followed by another two weeks in the adjacent rehabilitation center, Richard was thin and weak, understandably. But he was home at last and happily making progress rehabbing in his in-house exercise room. Slowly but surely becoming even ambulatory. If I'm not mistaken, Richard was driving a bit, with the help of a caregiver, of course. He boasted about walking around the Costco on South Dakota Ave, NW – with a walker. But he was up and at'em generally and improving. When he came down the inclinator (the stair lift), that early evening from his upstairs' bedroom and got into his downstairs' wheelchair, he then rolled into the dining room to his right, where we all were sitting at the dining room table eagerly awaiting his arrival: "Surprise," we all yelled. He had a huge smile. It was his birthday after all. But considering his month's-long ordeal, he wasn't quite ready for prime time. Nevertheless, we forced the issue and there we all were. That evening was the last time I saw my brother alive, and it's a memory that will never blur. I'll always know where I was on that date, his 73rd birthday. Though we spoke regularly over the phone in the weeks that followed, the timing hadn't presented itself to visit him again as he was busy with his rehab, - and tired from the exertion, and going to sleep early. And besides, he was home, having survived all those weeks in I.C.U., and was even receiving infusions for his colon cancer again. In naive truth, we all sort of figured he dodged/survived a bullet – figuratively speaking. And he did survive sepsis after all, as serious as that is, (as we learned from his physicians), so his progress was encouraging/ almost amazing. Though we all anticipated a long, slow recovery; all signs, generally speaking, were positive.

He was eating. He was walking. He was exercising/ rehabbing at home in his home gym. He was out driving occasionally. He was investigating buying a scooter so he would more mobile, and on the "q.t." on his phone, he was researching cruise lines as he was thinking about travelling with Vanessa in the spring. And then on the Sat. morning Dec. 3rd at 8:30 am, I received a call from Vanessa, crying, frantic, having found Richard laying on the floor by his bed, telling me he was "gone." Impossible for me to process, on such short notice, especially considering he had been doing so well that his doctor had restarted his colon cancer infusions to once and for all knock the remaining colon cancer out of his body. After two bi-weekly infusions, he seemed to be on track to a miraculous recovery which, given Richard's personality and determination, was what we had come to expect.

The few days after were a blur. Meeting with funeral parlor people, coordinating with Vanessa about an obituary, deciding the date and place for the memorial service, calling friends and relatives. The following Friday, we had Richard's service at Judean Gardens in Silver Spring. The packed house was a testament to the kind of person my brother was. I thought I knew him. But after hearing so many kind words from so many people in attendance, most of whom, I had never met before, I knew him even better. I realized Richard's loss even more than I had realized, and it made me proud to be his brother. RBL, we miss you terribly. Rest in peace, and please come to me in a dream. I want to see how you're doing. Love, KBL.

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

RAPTORS AT FORT HUNT

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Tim Dennison and a barred owl named Scarlet.



An owl's eyes are large. Here, using two plastic oranges, Colin Surovell shows the size of an owl's eyes in proportion to its head.



PHOTO BY DEBORAH HAMMER

Homer, the great horned owl



The National Park Service and the Friends of Dyke Marsh had children's activities. Here Jonathan Molineaux shows a youngster animal pelts.

FROM PAGE 6

18 to 25 inches in length, "at the top of the food chain," she noted, and have a grip of 200 to 400 pounds per square inch. They can "carry away a five-pound chicken," but she reassured, probably not a pet dog or cat. They may take over other birds' nests and live 12 to 15 years in the wild.

Smaller but equally impressive, Little Voss, an eastern screech owl, about 10 inches in length, evoked many oohs and ahs and comments like, "He's so cute!" Little Voss also has a damaged eye from a collision. Eastern screech owls are experts at camouflaging, blending into tree bark. They can even make themselves skinny, sit still and close their eyes to resemble a tree branch, Liz Dennison said.

The audience members, from one-year-olds to octogenarians, were totally enraptured by raptors.



Pavilion A was full, with people gathered outside as well.



A Friends of Dyke Marsh banner.