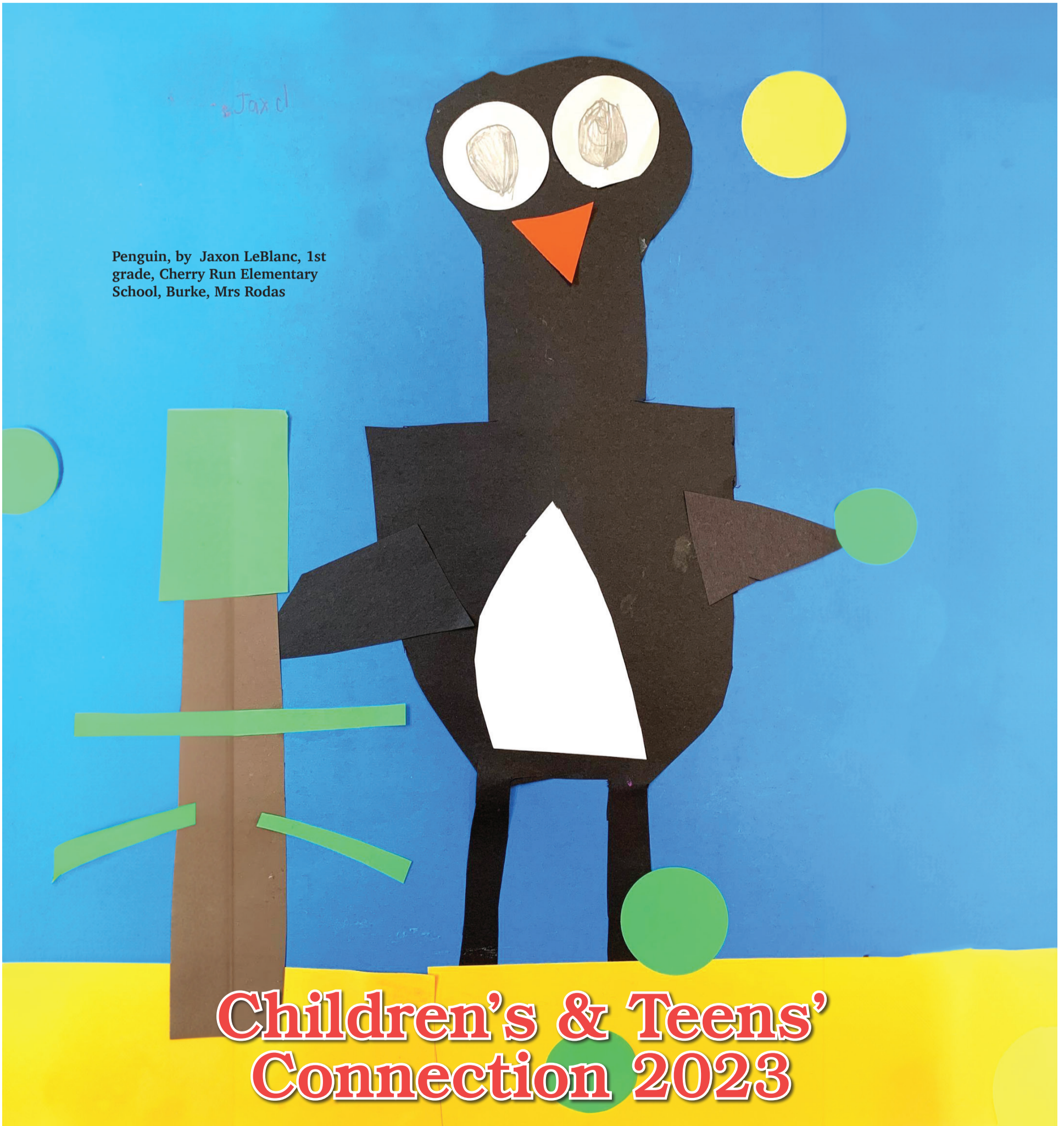


CONNECTION

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



Penguin, by Jaxon LeBlanc, 1st grade, Cherry Run Elementary School, Burke, Mrs Rodas

Children's & Teens'
Connection 2023

CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

Sixth Grade, Orange Hunt
Teacher: Brenda Patrick

The Fireball

By: Colin Clark

Colin Clark (memoir Fireball)
12 years old
Sixth Grade Orange Hunt
Teacher: Brenda Patrick

One time we were on vacation in a rental house in West Virginia. On one of the nights we had planned to have steak, corn and potatoes for dinner. We were all excited since we had been having fun and we all liked steak. I was also really excited because I liked grilling and was looking forward to making the steak with my dad.

While my dad and I were going to make the steak, my mom was going to cook the corn and potatoes. We liked grilling things and we had a charcoal grill at home. There was a gas grill on the back porch. My dad got the steak ready to cook by putting some spices on it. My two sisters were doing something in the house that didn't involve dinner.

Once we were ready, my dad and I went out to the back porch and went over to turn on the grill so that we could cook the steaks. He turned the knob and pressed the igniter. Nothing happened. He tried it again. Still nothing happened.

"Why isn't it working?" I asked.

"I Don't know," my dad said.

We were both confused as to why the grill wasn't turning on. My dad made sure the gas valve was open. It was at that point

we didn't know what to do, so we went back inside to try to figure out what was wrong and why it wouldn't light.

After a little while, we decided that we were going to get a lighter from the kitchen and use it to light the grill that way like we did at home, except that the grill at home was a charcoal grill and not a gas grill. My dad went to the kitchen and after a minute he found the lighter and went outside to light the grill.

"I hope this works, I say" .

"Me too." says my dad.

If it didn't work we wouldn't know what to do. We went back outside and moved over to the grill and we turned on the gas. My dad moved the lighter in position to light it. Then he lit the lighter and suddenly, a fireball erupted from the grill.... Later that evening we were eating dinner.

No one got hurt from the Fireball because it was small and had only lasted a second. The rest of the cooking had gone without incident and we had a nice dinner. The lesson I learned was to be patient, and persevere. Even if you don't succeed the first time, try again.

The End

The Big Match

By Caroline Rakip

Caroline Rakip (memoir/The Big Match)
12 years old
Sixth grade Orange Hunt
Teacher: Brenda Patrick

FWEEET!! The ref's whistle rang in my ear like the school bell. My legs were shak-

ing in the thought of losing. I heard whispers around me. "You got this!", "Let's go!", "Serve it!"

I looked over at my coaches who were signaling me to go. I looked over at the ref who was staring at me, basically telling me I only had ten seconds to serve the ball over the net. I looked straight ahead of me, just to see the other team staring me dead into the eye, their determination filling the room.

My heart sank. My throat burned. I felt my insides swell, and my vision started to blur. I wanted to sob. I wanted to run away and never return. The pressure was on me, me to carry this team to a win.

But I had to stay, so I threw the ball into the air and hit it. It went flying across the gym. I followed the ball with my eyes, it soaring through the wind. I watched as the other team swung their arms, trying to hit the ball, but missed! The ball fell to the ground, giving us a point.

My team clapped, and my coaches cheered.

"Just one more point!" My coach pushed.

"Just one more," I mumbled under my breath. "Just one."

The whistle was louder than the last. My heart beat in my chest, making it feel like a drum circle. I shut my eyes hoping it would end, and we won, all because of me. I knew that I would have to serve it in order for that to really happen, so I threw the volleyball up and served, better than ever. The adrenaline pounded in my head, making my blood boil. I stared down at the ball, praying it would hit the ground, leading to a win. Then there

were the dreaded words, the words that made me feel sick, "OUT! OUT!" Someone on the other side yelled.

Oh no. I thought, Out of bounds, now how will we win?

The ball came swooshing down, as everyone leaned to the side, watching for the ball to be out. I held my breath, as if it would affect the movement of the ball.

I turned around just in time to miss the land. Just to hear my coach scream and cheer for joy.

"You did it!" She called. She was jumping up and down in excitement. My entire team came up to me and we all exchanged high-fives.

We won! I thought. I could not believe it. My team had never won any game, we were used to losing. My shoulders felt like a giant weight got lifted off. My happiness flooded through me, into my face, stretching a smile across my face. We had just earned our first win, and it was because of me.

I learned that day that no matter what, your team will always be there for you. Wins or loses, your peers care about you just as much as anyone else.

Wave

By Josephine Gibbs

Josephine Gibbs (Memoir/Wave)
11 years old
Sixth grade Orange Hunt ES
Teacher: Brenda Patrick

We walked down to the water with my brother Beau. I heard the waves crashing on

SEE SIXTH GRADE, ORANGE HUNT, PAGE 7

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CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION



Emma Yuan, Exploring the Future

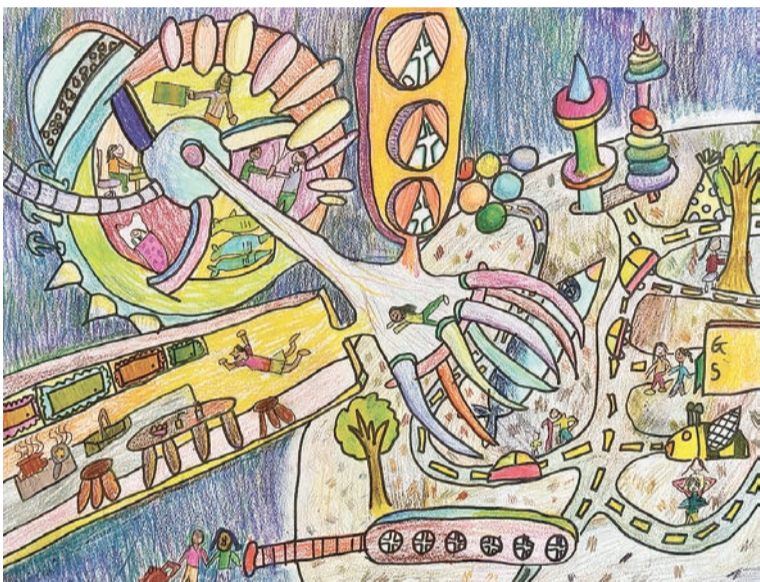
Welcome the the Children's and Teens' Connection 2023

The art and writing of local students is always a bright spot. We offer many thanks to the art teachers who guided these artists and compiled the art to appear here. You can find the other Children's and Teens' editions by going to <http://www.connection-newspapers.com/PDFs/> and then scrolling down to Children's. Thanks for reading.

Now the Connection will be on a break until after the New Year, with our next publication appearing the week of Jan. 10.

In the meantime contact us, for advertising, contact debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com or sales@connectionnewspapers.com. For the newsroom, contact editors@connectionnewspapers.com.

Emma Yuan, 10 years old, 5th grade, City of Fairfax
Mosaic Elementary School, Vienna, Mr. Guzman, Art Teacher



Emma Yuan, Space Station



Emma Yuan, Roaming Giant



Emma Yuan, Carnivorous Plant

Nora Yuan, 8 years old, 3rd grade, City of Fairfax,
Mosaic Elementary School, Vienna, Ms. Kwon, Art Teacher



"The Giant" by Nora Yuan



"Kitchen Time" by Nora Yuan



"My Library" by Nora Yuan

Blue and Pink Poem

BY KOWKAB S MAHBOOBI, G, GRADE 2,
CLIFTON,
WILLOW SPRING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, CLIFTON
VA, ALISON WILLISON, ENGLISH TEACHER

BLUE

The horizon is blue
When the sun is new
I was eating stew at the zoo
As the animals flew
Until they came and ate the stew

PINK

My pen's out of pink ink
I'm about to blink
I'm thinking how will I blink
As a pink pig is snorting

CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

Cherry Run Elementary School

Burke

MRS. RODAS



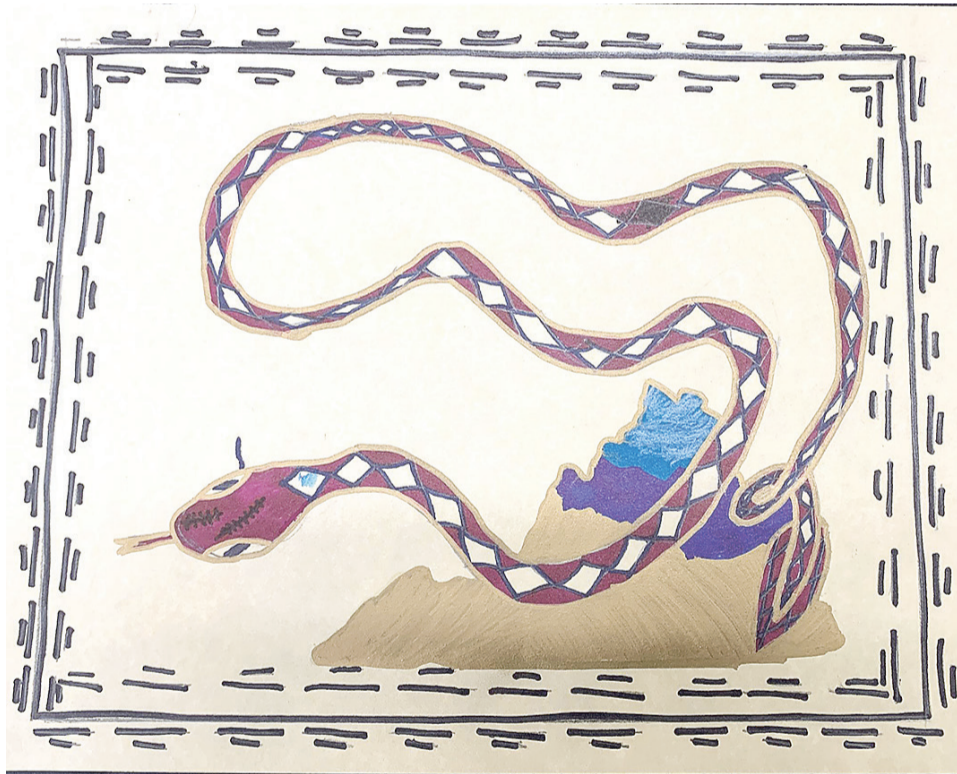
Hummingbird by Esther Nobles, 5th grade



Snowman by Isla Wong, 1st grade



Snowman, Penelope Fattahi, 1st grade



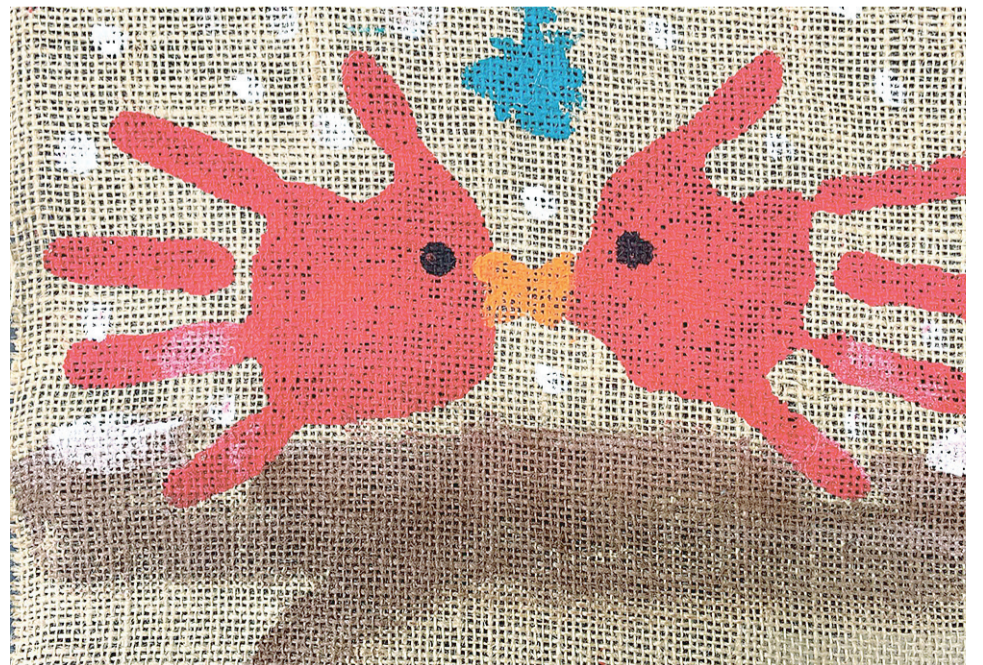
Snake, by Cody Kerr, 5th grade



Instrument, by Grant Rooney, 5th grade



Cardinal hand prints by Beatrice Roraff 2nd grade



CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

Cherry Run Elementary School
Burke

MRS. RODAS



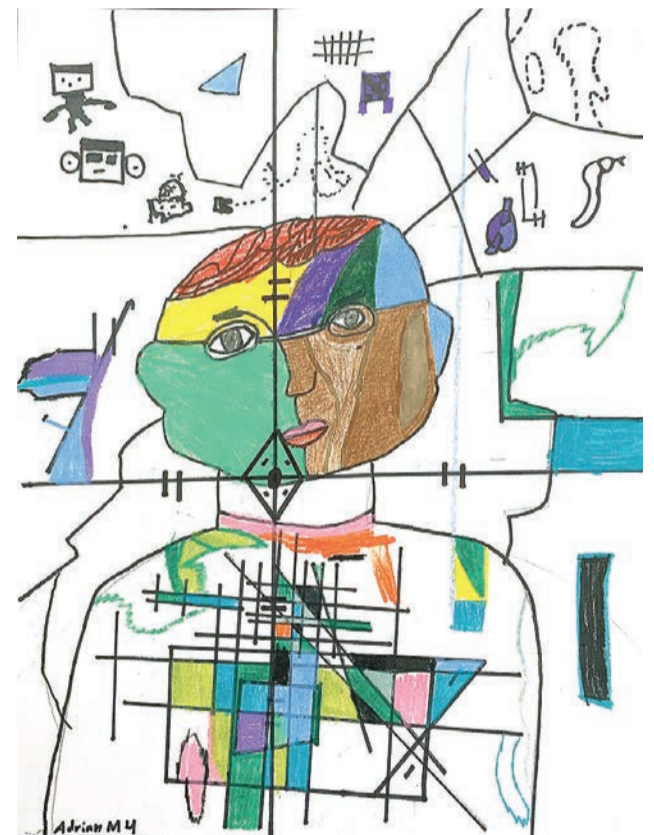
Cat face portrait by Kaia Bentley, 4th grade



Music machine by Matthew Soltren, 5th grade



Bird on a branch by Claire Giacomazzi, 5th grade



Male portrait, Jameson Horner, 4th grade



Penguin, by Jaxon LeBlanc, 1st grade



Abstract art, by Izzy Ruocco, 3rd grade



TOY DRIVE



Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck, left, and State Senator George Barker (D-39) help children from Gum Springs Head Start select toys as part of the 25th annual Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue toy distribution Dec. 11 at Station 11 in Penn Daw.



Firefighter Lt. David Saunders as Santa greets a child at the Firefighters and Friends toy distribution Dec. 11 at Station 11 in Penn Daw.

Making Spirits Bright

Firefighters mark 25 years of toy donations.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE CONNECTION

Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue marked its 25th year of serving families in need with a toy distribution day Dec. 11 at Station 11 in Penn Daw.

"This is one of my favorite events of the year," said Bruce Witucki of Union Street Public House. "It's hard to believe this was our 25th year of providing for the community."

Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue was founded by Willie Bailey, recently retired as Deputy Chief of the Office of the Fire Marshall with the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department. Bailey credits Witucki with generating significant early support for the organization.

"Bruce has been a sponsor since the organization was founded," Bailey said. "He was instrumental in building support for us, through his own donations and with introductions to his wide circle of friends and businesses in the community."

The annual event has grown from serving the Route 1 corridor to helping families, schools and nonprofits throughout Northern Virginia.

"This year we gave away over 3,000 toys, 50 bikes, and \$3,000 in gift cards to over 50 schools and nonprofits," Bailey said. "For 25 years individuals like Bruce and our many business sponsors have helped us provide for those less fortunate in the community."

Children from the Gum Springs Head Start program selected a toy of their choice while having the opportunity to visit with Santa and interact with Caring Angels Ther-

apy dogs. Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storck and State Senator George Barker (D-39) were among the volunteers helping distribute toys.

"It's important to be involved in helping people, particularly children," Barker said.

Sponsors for the event include: Ken and Kelly Savittiere Foundation; Apple Federal Credit Union; Progressive Firefighters of Fairfax; Local 2068; Fire and Rescue Retirement Association; Nationwide Credit Corporation; John and Jack Taylor; Chadwick's Restaurant; Union Street Public House Restaurant (Bruce Witucki); Alexandria Toyota; Andrew Mitchell; Daniel Rowe; Bernie Cabral; Energesco Solutions LLC (William Bennett); Modern Technology Solution,

Inc.; Medocracy, Inc.; DWCNV; PROMAX Realtors; The Movement Studios; Accenture Federal Services; Five Guys (Sam Chamberlain); FRANS MART; FCAC Delta Sigma Theta Sorority; Mount Vernon Gazette; Rotary Club of Tysons Corner; Caring Angels Therapy Dogs; Kelly's Irish Times Restaurant; Fairfax County Police Department; Walmart (Store #2258 - Richmond Hwy.); and Primo Family Restaurant.

"It's hard to believe but we have been providing gifts during the holidays for a quarter-century now," Bailey said. "I am so thankful to our sponsors and supporters for making this a special time of year for so many families."

This is one of my favorite events of the year."

— Longtime toy drive supporter
Bruce Witucki



Firefighters and Friends founder Willie Bailey, right, and longtime supporter Bruce Witucki enjoy a visit with Santa, aka firefighter Lt. David Saunders, Dec. 11 at Station 11 in Penn Daw.



Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue founder Willie Bailey, third from right, poses for a photo with retired firefighter volunteers Dec. 11 at Station 11 in Penn Daw.

CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

Sixth Grade, Orange Hunt Teacher: Brenda Patrick

FROM PAGE 2
the shore and laughter and giggles from the people.

"Let's go see how big the waves are up close" Beau said. I felt excited as we put our toes in the water. I loved the water. A gentle breeze ruffled my hair. The water was extremely cold but I knew I would get used to it.

"Brrr it's cold" I said
"I know," Beau replied.

We took a moment to get used to the water. I jumped in it's icy cold like I was jumping into a bucket of ice cream. "Ahhh" I yelled. "It is colder than I expected," I said, as I headed towards Beau.

We turned around to see if we had drifted off too far. We saw Mama sitting in the tent. Suddenly we turned around and saw an enormous wave. It was as tall as a two story house, and it was all icy water that was headed towards us!

I tried to get out of the way but I couldn't. The wave hit me with such force it knocked me over and I did somersaults under the water. I tried not to taste the salty water. I opened my eyes and saw brown murky water. It did not hurt my eyes because I had goggles on. Then I noticed I was running out of air. I frantically tried to get out of the water but the wave was too strong. It kept me

there like I was chained. All of a sudden the wave receded and I was on the beach. I quickly got out of the way for the next wave. I breathed a sigh of relief.

Then I remembered Beau. Where was he? I looked around frantically then I saw him lying on the sand heaving. I quickly ran over. "Are you okay?" I asked as I helped him up. "Ya that was super scary". "I know", I said.

We ran back to tell our mother.

The lesson I learned was to never underestimate the power of WATER!

Transported in Paint

At The Smithsonian
American Art Museum
By: Ella Esposito
(Field trip article/Journalism/The Smithsonian American Art Museum D.C.)
12 years old

Sixth grade Orange Hunt
Teacher: Brenda Patrick

The hum of the bus welcomed you for a ride. You made your way to the back of the bus and found your selected seat. For forty five minutes you bounced and balanced yourself on a cold vinyl cushion. You bobbed around chatting with your friends, your back rubbing on the used, remembered surface, while watching the highway pass and come again. Driving

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into Washington D.C. was exciting, colorful, and active. Each monument, restaurant and person you saw made you more excited for the upcoming event.

We arrived early so we walked around D.C. Christmas lights and decorations set the mood for a good experience. The smell of french fries, tiptoed to everyone's nose as we walked by Five Guys. We took a quick snapshot to savor the moment and continue our adventure. Next we sauntered in the joyful ambience of China Town.

Pockets of drippy teens were taking up sidewalks and roads could be seen ablaze with red fire engines. Sirens followed us as we explored D.C. We made our path across the street one more time, to arrive back at the tall Ionic marble pillars, and a multitude

of steps. We peeked into the portal that took us back in time but only in disguise as a museum.

Finally we were invited into the building buzzing with excitement. When we entered it was fancy like a hotel, twisted stairs, and endless gift shops. Then we floated into a giant room with delicate glass ceilings, greenery, flowers, and an "in progress" stage. We met our tour guide, and began our journey in the building of wonders.

As we entered the first room we arrived at a piece of art. Our group viewed many paintings that were all so detailed. We gazed at a beautiful, heartfelt, touching, painting of sailors during the Revolutionary War. It was an amazing, eye-catching canvas of a landscape with few animals, which caught everyone's eye. It pulled you in like a storybook. If you looked at it long enough you could be transported into the painting. Its gold frame made it like a fairytale photo. It was skyrocketing over most of the paintings down the hallway. You felt as if you were on the top of one of the mountains gazing down at the horizon.

Our group had the privilege to view about eight pieces of art and our tour was an hour long. At some points you had the opportunity to make up your own story about the art if the guide didn't explain it for you.

The floors varied in different galleries, and so did the paint. The staging set the mood extremely well. Overall it was an entertaining experience. The docent told you how to stand and how to observe, so it clearly was not a free for all. Without our tour guide we wouldn't have discovered as much as we did.

As we departed the portal of wonders we took in one last breeze of D.C. and the painted canvas. We left with amazing Art in our minds that we couldn't see anywhere else.



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LIVING NATIVITY

Kissed by a Camel, Nibbled on by a Goat

St. Christopher's Episcopal recreates the nativity, live.

By SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

St. Christopher's Episcopal Church in Springfield, locally nicknamed "the camel church" held its 5th Annual Living Nativity on Saturday, Dec. 9. Described by Reverend Elvira Beracochea as "both reverent and fun," the event recreates the birth of Jesus with music, readings and costumed actors. Rev. Beracochea also says it "gives people of all ages, faiths, ethnicities, and whatever other human distinctions there may be, the opportunity to be kissed by a camel, pet a donkey, and be nibbled on by a goat."

That's likely a suitable celebration for a 2,300 year birthday.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME



St. Christopher's Mary, Joseph and Jesus, played by Christina, Matthew & Nicholas Leuthy



Delilah in the role of Camel (she's a natural) with Magi Jennifer Caton, of Bar C Ranch



This goat, and a sheep, cow, and donkey rounded out the animal cast



Delilah is a gentle and patient camel



Only Delilah has a chance of upstaging the very adorable Nicholas as star of the nativity



Soft camel nose.

CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

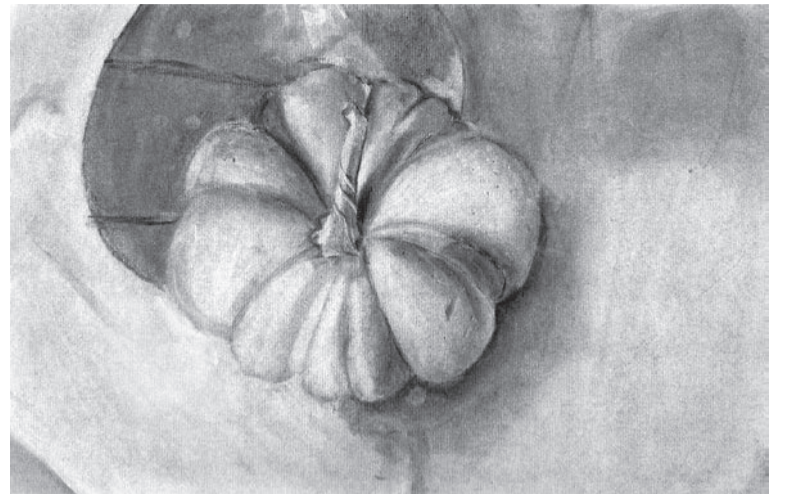
St. Stephens and St. Agnes School



Yabsra Tewodros, Grade 2, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Lower School, Cindy Heid, art teacher.



Sophia Voudouris, Grade 2, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Lower School, Cindy Heid, art teacher.



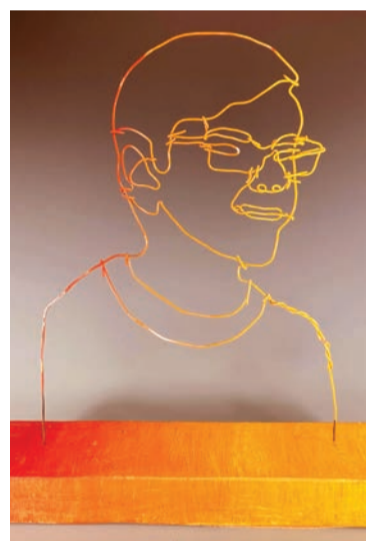
Everly Kunz, Grade 8, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Middle School, Ida Fehrenbach, art teacher.



Anabel DeLucia, Grade 4, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Lower School, Jade Xia, art teacher.



Brody Hark, Grade 4, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Lower School, Jade Xia, art teacher.



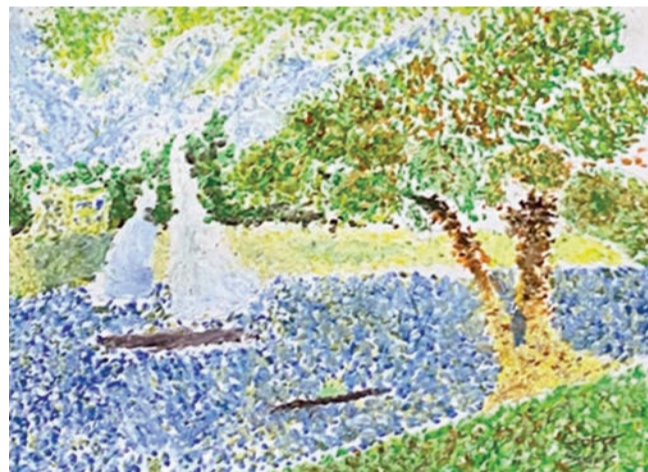
Cecil Gregg, Grade 9, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Upper School, Tom Bunnell, art teacher.



Caeli Boris, Grade 9, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Upper School, Kate Elkins, art teacher.



Alex Blaker, Grade 6, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Middle School, Kati Towle, art teacher.



Cooper Spies, Grade 8, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Middle School, Brandon Royal, art teacher.



Addy Petron, Grade 6, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Middle School, Ida Fehrenbach, art teacher.



Augusta Jay, Grade 9, St. Stephens and St. Agnes Upper School, Sean Riley, art teacher.



Michael Hu, Grade 9

CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION



1. Construction

In the first frame, construction workers are shown building a Threshold.

Five Frame Story, A Diorama in Minecraft

Peter Scoma, 14, Grade 9, Mount Vernon, 5 Frames in Time, (Five Frame Story || A Diorama in Minecraft), Global STEM Thomas A. Edison High School.

Starting with a blank slate in the Minecraft computer application, Peter Scoma built all of the functional diorama and manipulated the people to communicate a story in 5 frames.



4. Colonization

A large base is being constructed to harness the unique materials on the other side of the portal.



2. Ignition

The threshold is seen "igniting", opening a portal to a different dimension, as a scientist looks on with awe.



3. Exploration

A new dimension is being explored and mapped by researchers in hazmat suits.



5. Destruction

In the final frame, it is clear that the researchers probed too far into the unknown, waking something dark. As scientists flee the scene the technicians on the other side attempt to close the threshold to contain the destruction.

Burke CAP Cadet Commander Change

BY CADET AIRMAN FIRST CLASS
BEYZA KAL
SPECIAL TO THE CONNECTION

In a change of command ceremony on Dec. 7, the Burke Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol celebrated the end of a term under the leadership of Cadet 2dLt Kyle Morrison, who has shown outstanding work throughout the term, and welcomed the new Cadet Commander 2dLt Lorenzo Feline. The squadron recognized not only the seamless transition in command but also the remarkable growth in the number of new enthusiastic cadets joining their ranks.

The Cadet Commander holds a crucial leadership role, responsible for guiding and inspiring cadets within the squadron. As the highest-ranking cadet in the squadron, the cadet commander is responsible for directing the unit and leading by example. Morrison has demonstrated exceptional performance as the Cadet Commander and the squadron has grown under his leadership. Similarly, Feline has shown remarkable leadership in his previous positions and has consistently exhibited dedication for the Cadet

values and therefore has earned his role as the new Cadet Commander.

Feline, who has been in multiple leadership roles such as Flight Commander, shared his thoughts on his new Cadet Commander position.

"I am honored to have been selected for this position," remarked Feline, "and I hope you all will help me make Burke Composite Squadron the best it can be." There is no doubt that the new term in Burke Composite Squadron will be as successful as the last one.

Excitingly, there has been a recent surge of new cadets within the squadron. Burke Squadron has grown to be over 120 members, adding fresh perspectives and energy to the squadron. With the growing number of cadets, Burke Composite Squadron recognizes the need for expanded leadership opportunities and encourages all cadets to embrace leadership opportunities in areas such as the Cadet Staff, Emergency Services, Aerospace and Cybersecurity.

As Burke Composite Squadron moves forward, the squadron anticipates another successful term under the leadership of Feline and the dedication of its members.



PHOTO BY CADET CMSGT JACK BOHANAN

Burke Composite Squadron Commander Capt. Sara Demyanovich, left, passes the squadron guidon to incoming Cadet Commander Cadet 2d Lt Lorenzo Feline at the Dec. 7 Civil Air Patrol change of command ceremony.

Detectives Investigate Fatal Shooting in Franconia

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

Detectives from the Fairfax County Police Department's Major Crimes Bureau are investigating a shooting in Franconia that left a Woodbridge man dead.

On Tuesday, Dec. 12 at 1:47 p.m., officers responded to reports of a shooting in the 5300 block of Harbor Court Drive in Franconia. After an extensive search of the area, no victims or suspects were located at the scene. Prior to police arrival, witnesses described hearing a gunshot, and observed a suspect fleeing the area in a black Dodge Charger, with a gun in hand, FCPD said.

Around 2:30 p.m. officers were notified by Prince William County Police that a black Dodge Charger had arrived at a local

hospital with a victim suffering from a gunshot wound. Bryant Anthony Gillis, 23, of Woodbridge was pronounced deceased at the hospital.

Detectives determined a friend who was with Gillis at the time of shooting drove him to the hospital. They continue to investigate the circumstances surrounding the shooting. Preliminarily, the shooting does not appear to be a random act, FCPD said.

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

BULLETIN BOARD

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

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.viennava.gov/codeupdates.



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Tommy Can You Hear Me?

The Who's rock opera hits the Workhouse this winter.

By MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

When English rock legends "The Who," took on the story of "Tommy," to create the first rock opera, it blossomed into a play, a movie with Elton John wearing a huge pair of boots, and a story of a deaf, dumb and blind kid playing unbelievable pinball. It was the 1970s, but "Tommy" saved The Who's career as part of the British Rock phenomena and now has landed at the Workhouse Art Center's stage in Lorton.



Jackie Madejski



Movie poster

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION



Cast of Tommy

"Based on the iconic 1969 rock album, the story of the pinball-playing boy who triumphs over adversities has inspired and amazed audiences for more than 40 years," the Workhouse description reads.

Fairfax resident Jackie Madejski has the role of Tommy's mother and at the age of 29, she wasn't around in the mid 1970s but remembers a car trip with the family to Disneyland. "My brother sang The Who the whole time," she said. Her father didn't threaten to stop the car on the roadside either. "My dad was a really big Who fan."

SUN DEC 31, 2023 – SUN FEB 11, 2024

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*Sun Dec 31 tickets are priced higher, and include a post-performance NYE reception with Midnight Champagne toast to welcome in the New Year

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Lorton, VA, 22079

In the movie, Ann Bancroft plays Tommy's mother who has an extra marital affair, leading to murder and there's a song for the peaks and valleys of the theatrical presentation. At the Workhouse, there's more

music than anything, and it carries the story through the ups and downs of Tommy's life. Juliana Cooper plays Tommy, and "she's really grounded in her part," Madejski said.

Madejski has been in a couple of Workhouse productions and jumped into the role without seeing Ann Bancroft playing her evil mother part, or Elton John's oversized boots as he hammered out his version of the "Pinball Wizard," song in 1975. The movie and album have history, but that was years ago and Madejski is now. "I want to come at it from my own place," she said. Since it's

all singing, it has its own stress for the cast. "I am trying to match the intensity of Roger Daltry singing," Madejski said. Daltry played Tommy in the movie and is lead singer of the Who.

Pinball Wizard was a hit by The Who in 1969 and again by Elton John in 1975, reaching the top 40 with Casey Kasem back in the day. In 1975, the film won the award for Rock Movie of the Year in the First Annual Rock Music Awards. Jack Nicholson and Tina Turner were in the film also, and Mick Jagger tried out for one of the parts.

The Future of Lake Accotink is Still In the Crosshairs

Everything is on hold this winter though.

By MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

As the colder weather envelopes the area, going out to the parks in Fairfax County is a little tougher but the folks involved with saving Lake Accotink seem to be accepting the fact that life at the old lake will ever be the same.

Sure, the county can dish out taxpayers money to try to save the lake, and keep this Springfield amenity alive, but will it be the same fishing spot that many remember from years ago? A place to rent paddle boats and watch the waterfowl on a warm summer evening? A spot for the cardboard boat race that many enjoyed through the years?

The folks at "Save Lake Accotink," seem a little discouraged. The sediments keep piling up in the lake are getting into the creek and traveling downstream which is not environmentally sound, but that's what's happening. The Board of Supervisors does not seem willing to dedicate millions of dollars to dredging either.

"We don't know which way to go," said Allan Robertson, one of the voices calling to "Save Lake Accotink." There is a report on the condition of the lake and what's possibly in store for the future but it's not

solid about what's ahead, he says. "The report doesn't have any recommendation," Robertson said.

Braddock Supervisor James Walkinshaw (D) seems to be open to ideas behind saving the lake, but in mid-December with the holidays coming, the winter isn't a good time to make Lake Accotink decisions.

"It will take some time to digest, I don't expect any decision before April," Robertson said. "No one knows."

The winter seems a good time to put it all on a shelf but with the heavy rains and possible melting snow, more sediment will flow downstream. "As much as it pains me, Save Lake Accotink is calling for an immediate scalable dredging project while scientific field studies develop the data the BOS needs for an informed decision," Robertson wrote in a release. He even drafted a sample letter for lake supporters to use as a basis for a letter they can send to the surrounding supervisors. "I strongly urge you to allocate the necessary resources to dredge and clean up the lake and restore its ecosystem," read part of that letter.

Supervisor Walkinshaw has a sunset picture of the lake on his supervisor website and a link to the ongoing discussion.

Currently the lake is still there, even though it's only about two feet deep, and the creek still carries a certain amount of sediment downstream but it's on hold for now. Seemingly, the future of Lake Accotink is still at large.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION



It's been a while since the lake hosted fun times like this.



Paddleboats once were in great need for the fans of Lake Accotink.

ENTERTAINMENT

HOT WHEELS

CHAMPION EXPERIENCE

Hot Wheels Champion Experience, a new interactive event with immersive digital and physical play, has opened at Tysons Corner Center for a limited time. The Hot Wheels Champion Experience is a 16,000-square-foot experience for the whole family based on Hot Wheels brand that has been influencing car culture for 55 years. Combining cutting-edge technology and innovative design, SEE Touring Exhibitions Inc. has tapped the XSpace platform developed by Smart Entertainment Ltd to power this new attraction. XSpace combines immersive video projection and “phygital” systems that control sound, light, video, and personalized interaction into one experience that can react and change in the blink of an eye. Visit hotwheelschampion.com

ONGOING

Bull Run Festival of Lights. At 7700 Bull Run Drive, Centreville. Drive through 2.5 miles of festive light displays. Open from now until just past New Year’s Day. Drive the festival route from the comfort of your car; turn off your headlights and follow the magical glow. Hours are Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Holidays from 5:30-10 p.m.; Monday to Thursday 5:30-9:30 p.m.

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/>

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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

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.

DEC. 7-31

“Quilters.” At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 and 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. Set on the American frontier, this moving musical tells the story of a group of women who come together to create a quilt that reflects their shared history, struggles, and triumphs. Visit www.1ststage.org or call 703-854-1856.

DEC. 7 TO FEB. 17

McLean Project for the Arts’ Winter Exhibitions. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. McLean Project for the Arts will open its winter exhibitions—Moving Beyond Beauty: Reverence and Reclamation (Emerson Gallery) and To March is to Love: Weavings by Janel Leppin (Atrium Gallery)—on December 7, 2023. Both shows will run through February 17, 2024, with an Opening Exhibition Reception on Thursday, December 7, 2023 from 7-9 p.m. Bringing together five artists—Adjoa Jackson Burrows, Jacqui Crocetta, Maggie Gourlay, June Linowitz, and Elzbieta Sikorska—Moving Beyond Beauty features work that is at once aesthetically pleasing and philosophi-



The McLean Project for the Arts’ Winter Exhibitions will run now through Feb. 17, 2024 at the McLean Community Center.

cally compelling.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 20

Old Firehouse Center, Winter Break Trip to Dave & Buster’s. 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eat, drink, and play games! Dave and Buster’s offers one of the best dining and entertainment experiences around. Buffet lunch and a \$25 game card with unlimited arcade game play are included. Bring additional money for ticketed arcade games as desired.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 20

Longest Night Service of Worship. 7:30 p.m. At Lewinsville Presbyterian Church 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. If you have experienced loss in the last year all the holiday festivities can make your grief even more poignant. Grieving the loss of a loved one or coming to terms with so much loss happening in our world will be centered in this worship service. This service will intertwine music with scripture, candlelight and reflection. This event is free and open to the public, and all are welcome!

THURSDAY/DEC. 21

The Old Firehouse Winter Break Trip: Hershey’s Chocolate World. 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Enter a chocolate utopia at Hershey’s Chocolate World as we create our own Hershey Bar, become an official Hershey Tasteologist in the taste lab, try to solve the 4D Chocolate Mystery and hop on the trolley as we stroll down Hershey’s Candyland Lane to see more than five million holiday lights. Admission to all activities and lunch is included in the fee. Participants are required to bring at least \$20 for dinner. Bring additional money for snacks and souvenirs as desired.

FRIDAY/DEC. 22

Virginia National Ballet’s The Nutcracker. 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. At Capital One Hall, Tysons Corner. Don’t miss VNB’s new Nutcracker! You’ll love the new characters including The Rat King, The Nutcracker, the Chinese Lion, and many new costumes for Flowers, Mice, and more. You’ll also see gorgeous new backdrops that are 30 x 50 feet with legs (matching side curtains) and borders across the top, and

many new props and scenery. Much of the choreography has also been upgraded to match all of the new scenery, sets, and costumes.

SUNDAY/DEC. 24

Christmas Eve Service. 11 a.m. At Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. The youth and young choirs will present “The Light Before Christmas,” featuring the music from the Joseph Martin musical. Enjoy cocoa and cookies before and following the service and feel the warmth of Christmas. This event is free and open to the public, and all are welcome!
The traditional Candlelight Communion Christmas Eve service will begin at 6:30 p.m. and will feature a baroque orchestra and the Chancel Choir performing Johann Sebastian Bach’s “Wachet Auf” Cantata. The service of worship featuring beautiful music of the season will begin at 7:00 pm.

If you want a different kind of Christmas Eve service, perhaps you would like to come to our Jazz Christmas Eve service which begins with festive music at 9:15 p.m. This service, also a candlelight communion service, will feature a jazz quartet and our young adult alumni choir.

TUESDAY/DEC. 26

The Old Firehouse Center Winter Break Trip: “Aquaman” Day. 8 a.m.- 6 p.m. Arthur Curry is back patrolling the land and seas. Join us as we watch Aquaman 2.” Prior to the movie, we’ll play some laser tag and get some lunch. A signed waiver is required to participate. Lunch, laser tag games and a movie ticket are included in the fee.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 27

The Old Firehouse Center Winter Break Trip: Indoor Trampoline. 8 a.m.-6 p.m. They’ll be heading to one of the most unique trampoline parks in the area. With the opportunity for casual jumping, testing your bouncing dodgeball skills or your ninja abilities, this trip has something for everyone. A signed waiver is required to participate. Lunch and admission are included in the fee. Appropriate exercise clothing required.

THURSDAY/DEC. 28

The Old Firehouse Center Winter Break Trip: Ice @ Gaylord National Winter Event. 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Join us for some holiday fun as we do some gingerbread decorating, ice skating, tubing, ice bumper cars and more. A signed waiver is required to participate. Admission to all activities and a BBQ lunch is included in the fee. Bring additional money for snacks and souvenirs as desired.

DISCOVER THE JOY OF THE HOLIDAYS IN A PARK

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and events throughout the holiday season.

IONA Holiday Concert

Friday, Dec. 29. Spots available 1-1:45 p.m., 2:15-3 p.m. or 3:15-4 p.m., Sully Historic Site, \$15

One of the top-rated pan-Celtic groups in the world treats its audience to high-energy entertainment featuring Scottish fiddling, percussion and vocals. Refreshments served in the 18th century kitchen.

Puppet Show at Frying Pan Farm Park Friday, Dec. 29. Spots available 10:15-11 a.m. or 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m., Frying Pan Farm Park, \$15

Join Master Puppeteer Bob Brown in a jolly, fun-filled romp through a winter wonderland as his delightful, trick marionettes perform incredible feats of skill and daring that will leave your young audience shouting with laughter! Fun and fantasy, mirth and merriment, giggles and amazement all mixed together to the sound of your favorite holiday music! He will be retiring after 60-plus years, so come and enjoy his final performance.

To find out more, or to register for programs, visit the Seasonal Events in the Parks website.

SUNDAY/DEC. 31

‘Noon Year’s Eve’ Event. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Town of Vienna and Cedar Park Shopping Center, 260 Cedar Lane, Vienna. Town of Vienna in partnership with Cedar Park Shopping Center will host a daytime celebration for family and kids to ring in the “noon” year as we say goodbye to 2023 and celebrate the arrival of 2024. This family-friendly event features a pop-up artisan market, live music, games, giveaways, face painting, crafts, and a noon countdown celebration. Some activities will take place under a heated tent. Free. Rain or Shine.

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.

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 15

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**PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE OF VOLUNTARY REMEDIATION**

Pursuant to the Virginia Voluntary Remediation Regulations, Virginia Administrative Code section 9VAC20-160-120, Ahold USA (Participant) with an address of 1385 Hancock Street in Quincy, Massachusetts 02169, hereby provides notice of voluntary remediation at the following site (Site):

Annandale Shopping Center (aka Annandale Center)
7140 Little River Turnpike
Annandale, VA 22003
VRP Number VRP00619

The Site is approximately 5.7 acres and is used as a shopping center. Sampling on the Site detected the presence of volatile-organic compounds from a past dry-cleaning solvent release in soil, ground water and soil gas on the Site, and in ground water and soil gas offsite. The Participant applied to and was deemed eligible to participate in the Voluntary Remediation Program (VRP) in order to assess and address any environmental risks associated with the detected dry-cleaning solvent constituents. A site characterization report, risk assessment and remedial action plan have been reviewed and accepted as complete by DEQ. The risk assessment includes an assessment of the risks to human health and the environment that were evaluated in accordance with DEQ guidelines. The risk evaluation found that the following deed restrictions placed on the future use of the Site pursuant to the VRP will be protective of human health and the environment: (1) groundwater beneath the Site will not be used for any purpose other than environmental monitoring and testing, dewatering in compliance with law or geothermal energy production; and (2) the existing sub-slab depressurization at the Site will be operated and maintained in accordance with an operation and maintenance plan. Risks to offsite properties are adequately addressed by local ordinances prohibiting potable groundwater use and by vapor barriers and a sub-slab depressurization system installed below the offsite buildings. A Certification of Satisfactory Completion of Remediation will be requested from the VDEQ VRP for VRP Site 00615 after the close of the public notice period.

Persons wishing to comment on the voluntary remedial action or request additional information should contact the following person who is familiar with the Site:

Noel Simmons
ECS Mid-Atlantic, LLC
14026 Thunderbolt Place, Suite 100
Chantilly, VA 20151-3232
703-471-8400 (for inquiries only)
nsimmons@ecslimited.com

Written comments will be accepted until 30 days from the date of publication of this notice.

ALL COMMENTS MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING.

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First Night Alexandria takes place on Sunday, Dec. 31, 2023 in Old Town Alexandria.

FROM PAGE 13

New Year's Eve Musical Theater Performance – The Who's Tommy Sunday, Dec. 31, 8 p.m., Workhouse Arts Center
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.

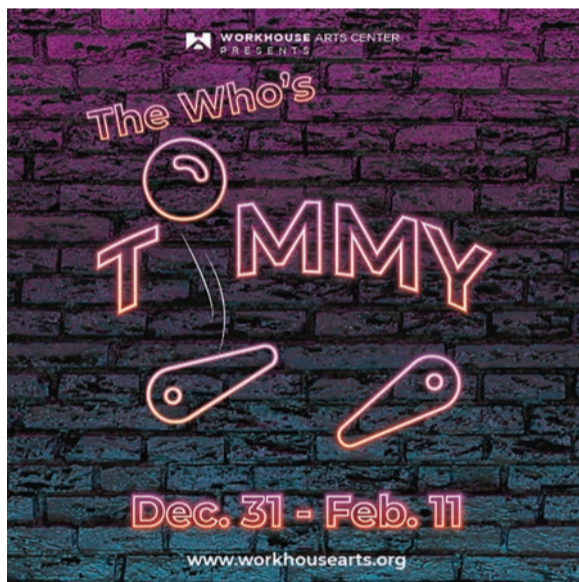
New Year's Eve Comedy Show with Antoine Scott – Sunday, Dec. 31, 8 pm
The Workhouse Arts Center presents, in collaboration with Rahmein Mostafa-vi, a special New Year's Eve comedy celebration. Time to laugh off 2023 and bring in 2024 with an abundance of joy! Join headliner Antoine Scott and a host of 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.

SUNDAY/DEC. 31

First Night Alexandria. In locations around Old Town Alexandria. First Night Alexandria, known as the largest family-friendly and affordable New Year's Eve festival of music and more event in the region, returns with its day into night of celebration showcasing performing arts throughout Old Town. The annual event (in its 29th year) will feature a variety of activities, activations, dance parties, live music and more. The festivities kick off at 2:00 p.m. and conclude at midnight as thousands welcome in the New Year. A tradition that started in 1994, First Night Alexandria has become a staple in the region to bring in the New Year as an affordable event filled with a lineup of entertainment and activities. Proceeds from the event supports Alexandria's middle and high school students' activities with a musical background in choir, orchestra, and band.

New this Year:
Twilight Fireworks - This year's celebration will feature a twilight fireworks display at 6 p.m.

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The Who's Tommy will appear at Workhouse Arts Center on Sunday, Dec. 31, 2023.

on Alexandria's waterfront geared to families who want to enjoy the show with their kids and loved ones. First Night Alexandria will also still host an abbreviated encore display of the New Year's fireworks at midnight on the waterfront.

Fun Hunt - Add adventure, exploration, and education to the last day of the year! After 5 years, the Fun Hunt returns with new ways to enjoy an afternoon in Old Town Alexandria. Ticketed guests have the opportunity to turn a day of Fun and entertainment into potential prize winnings. The adventure concludes at the Block Party at Market Square just prior to the Twilight Fireworks.

Daytime Block Party – Join us at Market Square from 4 – 6 p.m. for a time of music, a “Cool Happy New Year” demonstration and special fun just prior to the new Twilight fireworks display.

For more information visit www.firstnightalexandria.org.

THURSDAY/JAN. 4

Foreign Language Film, “Kon-Tiki.” 1 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Norway, Denmark, Germany,

Sweden, United Kingdom. Directed by Joachim Rønning and Espen Sandberg. Shown in Norwegian with English subtitles. A dramatized story of Thor Heyerdahl and his Kon-Tiki expedition of 1947. Heyerdahl, an ethnographer and explorer who was convinced that the Polynesian islands were colonized by pre-Columbian South Americans, sets out to prove his thesis by sailing on a balsa wood raft from Peru to the South Pacific. Rated PG-13. Oscar and Golden Globe award nominee.

SATURDAY/JAN. 6

Winter Block Party. 1-4 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Join MCC for its 3rd Annual Winter Block Party. Participants will enjoy entertainment, games, food and a wide variety of outdoor amusements, crafts and more.

SATURDAY/JAN. 6

Furia Flamenca “Nevada Flamenca”. 7 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Come celebrate the holidays the Spanish way by commemorating Día de Reyes (Epiphany). This festive program will take you on a journey of some of the merriest holiday traditions as celebrated in Spain and Puerto Rico. Enjoy an evening of Spanish holiday music and song (villancicos) alongside flamenco dancing.

FRIDAY/JAN. 12

The Yale Spizzwinks Perform. 7:30 p.m. at St. Luke's Catholic Church, 7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean. America's oldest underclassman a cappella group featuring local Langley High School alumnus Tavian Jones, will be performing. Since their founding in 1914, the Spizzwinks have released several dozen albums and performed around the globe, bringing their diverse repertoire of over 600 arrangements everywhere from local New Haven elementary schools, to concert halls including The Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall, special events, businesses, and universities. Every year they take an international tour, most recently to Ecuador, Chile, New Zealand, South Africa, and they are headed to Asia next summer. Check out their website: www.spizzwinks.com or follow them on Instagram @spizzwink. Tickets \$15 adult, \$10 child/student can be purchased on spizzwinks.ticketbud.com or at the door.

A Complete Whiff



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As a longtime married man, I can speak to the various responsibilities that one another has to help nurture/maintain the framework that “Keeps Hope Alive,” to invoke Jesse Jackson – out of context, that any relationship needs to thrive. For my wife Dina and I, as it pertains to the subject matter at hand/inner workings of our marriage, one very clear delineation exists: Dina handles the social, I handle the business/money. Sometimes however, the twain can be on different twacks (as my later father would always joke), even with the best of intentions. Getting the tracks to coalesce into one takes patience, courage, conviction, and most importantly, accommodation.

And it was in this context that I prepare you readers for something specifically to do with yours truly. What I am about to divulge is/was 100% my fault. Being responsible for the business/money side of the marriage means that I am expected to be organized concerning how much money is coming in, and most importantly, how much is going out, and moreover, when pay or play options are feasible/prudent. Meaning, I know how much money is due when certain relatively important bills arrive. In addition to the monthly recurring obligations, this also means I'm to be aware of the ones due less frequently (quarterly, semiannually, and of course, annually). And then there's other category of bills which require not so much payment as they do require a renewal. The renewal that I refer to now is for our health insurance, a special health insurance that because of means and/or seriousness of condition (cancer qualifies) enables me to not incur any costs for drugs, co-pays, co-insurance et cetera. As you might imagine for a cancer patient nearing his 15th year under the proverbial gun so to speak, there are regular/recurring costs associated with my care and now is no time to decide care options based on money/ability to pay, instead of what the doctor recommends. Simply stated: my life might very well be at stake, certainly it might be at risk. And yet, this is exactly what I did. I completely forgot to submit our annual renewal due Sept 1-ish for an Oct. 1-ish restart date. It didn't hit me until I went to check in with the receptionist for the PET scan, I had scheduled for Nov. 27 that I was told I had a co-pay due. (The other part of this story being the anxiety about the results and all I wrote about in the column entitled: “Uncertainty.”) “Co-pay due? I just signed up for this in September,” I said. That's when I was told that my plan had expired in Sept. because I hadn't renewed it for the '23-'24 year. I was off by three months or so. I totally missed the deadline. I don't begrudge the health insurance for not reminding me. Nor do I think Dina should have said something. This was on me, totally. There's no more important business in a family than its health insurance, particularly when one of its payors/covered individuals has been diagnosed originally with “terminal” cancer. I mean cancer is not exactly the kind of thing that goes away on its own. Often, when it goes away, it takes the patient with it.

Moreover, as a former insurance broker, I am aware of the costs and consequences of neglecting one's insurance responsibilities. And if one is not an experienced agent as I was, there's plenty of news stories and articles available online about devastating decisions that some families have had to make between rent, food, and buying drugs needed to keep them alive. And when the receptionist advised me of my plan's expiration (or my participation in it, I should say), it was the furthest thing from my mind. I was not thinking at all about having to renew/re-apply at all. Not that I thought for second that it was an automatic self-renewing kind of coverage (I knew it wasn't). It was just as we used to say in the back yard, whiffle bat in hand after missing the whiffle ball: “a complete whiff.”

It's not exactly a total disaster, I/we still have health insurance, And I can re-apply for this special plan at any time; I will just have incurred unnecessary expenses in the interim. Hopefully, there won't be too many cancer-related decisions that cost us money until I'm able to re-qualify (it's hardly guaranteed). I just hope that Dina stays in her lane and doesn't veer from the social lane into my business lane. I never really planned it this way. I tried in the early days of our marriage to never make the decisions without consulting the manual (my wife). However, over time and over wrought, it became clear to me that since she was minding her business, I should be minding mine, except her business was social; mine was business – with some potential real world consequences, unfortunately.

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

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