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## Cancer Awareness For Firefighters

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## Snow Sculpture

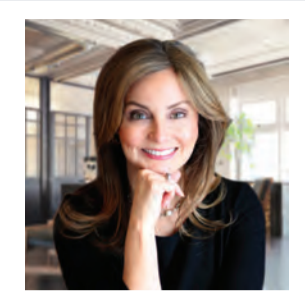
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January is Firefighter  
Cancer Awareness Month.

FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT 2022 ANNUAL REPORT SENIOR LIVING, PAGE 9 ♦ OPINION, PAGE 12 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 15

JANUARY 24-30, 2024

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10218 Forest Lake Dr, Great Falls \$1,750,000



10616 Good Spring Ave, Great Falls \$2,400,000



810 Hickory Vale Ln, Great Falls \$1,650,000



9507 Neuse Way, Great Falls \$1,650,000



11106 Rich Meadow Dr, Great Falls \$1,400,000



1112 Riva Ridge Dr, Great Falls \$1,080,000



616 Walker Hill Ln, Great Falls \$1,300,000



1131 Buchanan St, McLean \$3,250,000



1209 Alps Dr, McLean \$2,725,000



10624 Cavalcade St, Great Falls \$985,000



9471 Coral Crest Ln, Vienna \$1,830,000



981 Millwood Ln, Great Falls \$1,295,000



2048 Cobblestone Ln, Reston \$820,000



705 Crown Meadow, Great Falls \$1,483,500



45553 Whitcomb Sq, Sterling \$555,000



10605 Dogwood Farm Ln, Great Falls \$1,860,800



105 River Birch Dr, Great Falls \$2,025,000



7744 Legere Ct #33, McLean \$940,000



709 Miller Ave, Great Falls \$1,095,000



615 N George Mason Dr, Arlington \$910,000



18328 Fairway Oaks Sq, Leesburg \$1,510,000



2006 Pieris Ct, Vienna \$825,000



10445 New Ascot Dr, Great Falls \$3,550,000



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# NEWS

## January as Firefighter Cancer Awareness Month

Prevention, detection, badge-to-badge support, and data gathering.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**B**urning structures collapsing and trapping firefighters, wildfires killing hotshot crews and similar tragedies grab the public's attention. But a more significant threat is lurking, taking firefighter lives — the health effects of firefighter exposure to combustion byproducts of burning materials, including carcinogens.

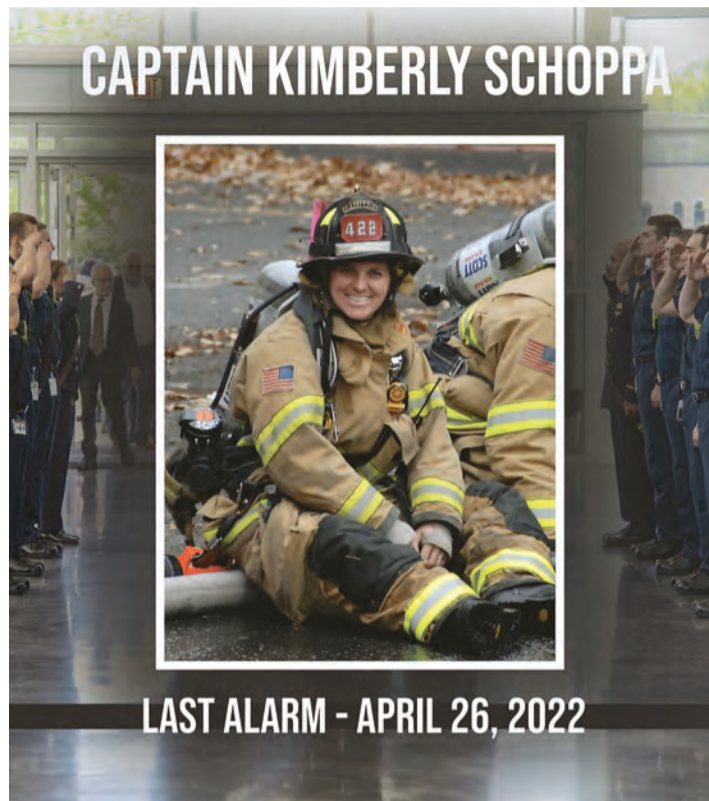
The impact on health can occur in everything firefighters do, from the knockdown when the fire is controlled and the overhaul when the structure is examined for potential areas that could reignite to their return to the station where particulate matter is carried in on gear, equipment, and bodies. In the course of their work, firefighters are frequently exposed to a variety of agents classified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) of the World Health Organization as known or probable human carcinogens.

Robert Young is the president of Fairfax County Professional Firefighters and Paramedics, International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) Local 2068. According to Young, the hazardous synthetic chemicals known as PFAS, or polyfluoroalkyl compounds, are released when firefighters douse blazes. Firefighters are exposed to toxic chemicals in the burning furnishings and building materials. They come into contact with the chemicals by breathing them in, getting them on their skin or in their eyes, or ingesting them. "They're even found in the gear we wear to protect ourselves," Young said.

Minimizing carcinogen exposure is crucial. Fairfax County and other departments encourage firefighters "to shower within the hour" to reduce exposure to carcinogens and potential carcinogens. Young said that the Fairfax County Fire Department and Local 2068 focus on decontamination, containment, including removing gear to minimize contamination and decontaminating and bagging their self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) for professional cleaning. All firefighters now have two turnout gear sets.

Fairfax firefighters are not wearing their gear as frequently as they have in the past to reduce exposure. Firefighters can determine the level of protection they require based on the information provided at the time of dispatch. "Fire in a house? We definitely put it on," Young said.

At the 2023 IAFF Fallen Firefighter Memorial Ceremony, nearly 66 percent of the names added to the wall between Jan. 1, 2021, and Dec. 31, 2022, were those who died from occupational cancers — pancreatic, throat and ovarian.



FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE DEPT 2022 ANNUAL REPORT  
**Captain Kimberly Schoppa, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Local IAFF 2068, died of service-related cancer (ovarian) on April 26, 2022. Her name was added to the IAFF's Fallen Firefighter Memorial at Pikes Peak in Colorado in 2023.**



RYAN MCGILL  
**Ryan McGill, master technician for Fairfax County Fire and Rescue, serves as director for IAFF Local 2068 and chairman of the Firefighter Cancer Reduction Committee.**

At the 2023 IAFF Fallen Firefighter Memorial Ceremony, nearly 66 percent of the names added to the wall between Jan. 1, 2021, and Dec. 31, 2022, were those who died from occupational cancers — pancreatic, throat and ovarian.

"Cancer caused 70 percent of the line-of-duty deaths for career firefighters in 2016.



FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE DEPT 2022 ANNUAL REPORT  
**Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department responded to 120,433 incidents in 2022, many with off-gassing of PFAS or polyfluoroalkyl substances and other substances classified by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) of the World Health Organization as known or probable human carcinogens.**

In partnership with the Firefighter Cancer Support Network (FCSN), the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) designated January as Firefighter Cancer Awareness Month.

### Cancer and Firefighters

In 2023 in Virginia, 57 firefighters were diagnosed with cancer; 16 in Fairfax County, one as young as 28, and some retirees. The average age of a firefighter dying of cancer last year was 57 years old. In Virginia, we had seven firefighters die of cancer, two from the City of Alexandria.

— STEVE WEISSMAN, VIRGINIA STATE DIRECTOR,  
FIREFIGHTER CANCER SUPPORT NETWORK

Firefighters have a 9 percent higher risk of being diagnosed with cancer than the general U.S. population. Firefighters have a 14 percent higher risk of dying from cancer than the general U.S. population," according to the nonprofit Firefighter Cancer Support Network.

According to IAFF in "Global Health Organization Links Fire Fighting and Occupational Cancer," the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the cancer agency of the World Health Organization, re-evaluated firefighting reporting in 2022. It stated, "For decades, the IARC had classified firefighter occupational exposures as Group 2B, meaning the exposures were possibly carcinogenic. The new classification, Group 1 — carcinogenic to humans, now puts firefighting on a par with tobacco and benzene." A summary of the final evaluations is published online in "The Lancet Oncology."

When these protective ensembles become readily available, I hope to see the fire service as a whole transition away from the gear that is laden with these carcinogens to something that is going to not only protect us from the products of combustion but also protect us from this gear that is also contributing to the occurrence of cancer in the fire profession," Young said.

Medical screening is vital because the sooner cancers are detected, the better the overall outcome. In January 2023, the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department (FCFRD) was awarded the Federal Emergency Management Agency Assistance to Firefighters Grant \$450,000 to provide ultrasound diagnostic scan screenings. The scans en-

SEE FIREFIGHTER CANCER, PAGE 14  
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## CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL

# Cupcakes and Candies and Cookies, Oh, My!

Fairfax City Chocolate Lovers Festival is Feb. 2-4.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**C**rab your tastebuds and head to Fairfax City – it's almost time for the 30th annual Chocolate Lovers Festival. Held in the City's Old Town area, it features chocolate in nearly every form imaginable – candies, cupcakes, ice cream, fudge, cookies, cakes and chocolate fountains – as well as adult beverages flavored with chocolate.

This three-day extravaganza of chocolate deliciousness is set for Friday, Feb. 2, from 6-8 p.m., and continues Saturday, Feb. 3, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Sunday, Feb. 4, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Taste of Chocolate opens at noon. A full slate of activities is planned for all ages, and every event location is accessible.

"The Chocolate Lovers Festival adds a bright spot on our calendar in the cold days of winter," said Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read. "Residents, visitors and participating vendors come together to celebrate chocolate and community. It's always a sweet way to kick off a new year here in Fairfax City."

The signature event is the Taste of Chocolate, where attendees purchase samples of mouthwatering, chocolate treats from two floors of vendors in Old Town Hall.

And since this year's festival will have a circus theme, a fun new addition will be roaming performers from Cirque de Sacrilosa. Stilt walkers, jugglers and other entertainers will break into impromptu performances throughout the downtown festival venues.

Children's entertainers Groovy Nate, Jonathan Austin, Mr. Lilo, KayDee Puppets and a balloon artist will delight children with their talents, including magic, juggling and singing. There'll also be cake walks, cupcake-decorating, make-and-take crafts and a mock trial involving Little Miss Muffet.

And adults may attend history-of-chocolate tours, as well as open houses in historic buildings, such as the Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center and the Ratcliffe-Allison-Pozer House. All festival venues are handicap-accessible, but only certified service animals are allowed inside any event site.

For specific times, locations and other details of all festival activities, see the Schedule of Events at <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/special-events/chocolate-lovers-festival/schedule-of-events>.

Besides at Old Town Hall and Old Town Square, activities will also take place at the nearby Fairfax Regional Library, Fairfax Ace Hardware and the historic courthouse.

All parking is free and accessible; to learn where it is, go to <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/special-events/chocolate-lovers-festival/directions-and-parking>.

## Liquid Chocolate

Featuring an exciting assortment of chocolate libations, this year's chocolate festivities kick off Friday, Feb. 2, from 6-8 p.m.,



Jessica Ostrowski-Wright (left) and Anh Pham enjoy, respectively, a chocolate hazelnut truffle drink and a cherry chocolate stout beer at 2023's Liquid Chocolate.



Leon Cui licks the chocolate off his lips from a strawberry covered in chocolate at last year's festival.

with Liquid Chocolate. It'll be held inside a heated tent at Old Town Square, 10415 North St. And because it's so much fun, it'll return Saturday, Feb. 3, from noon-5 p.m.

There'll be beverages for all ages, ranging from offerings such as chocolate soda, hot chocolate and milkshakes for children to chocolate wines, chocolate beers and dessert wine pairings for adults. Admission is free; in past years, alcohol tastings have cost \$2 each, non-alcohol tastings, \$1 each.

This year's participating businesses are Chubby Squirrel Brewing Co., Commonwealth Brewing Co., Fairfax Ace Hardware, Inside



Vendor Sarisa Vingpravat sold colorful mochi doughnuts last year.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Savoring a chocolate cupcake during last year's event was Dominik Radwanski.

Scoop, MurLarkey Distillery, Ornerly Beer Co., Scrummy Gorgeous and The Wine House.

❖ Then afterward, people may head to the Sherwood Center at 3740 Blenheim Blvd. to enjoy musical entertainment. There, the Bonita Lestina Performance Series will present Kadencia – Afro-Puerto Rican music – at 8 p.m. Friday.

## Taste of Chocolate

The festival's centerpiece, the Taste of Chocolate, will be held Saturday, Feb. 3, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., and Sunday, Feb. 4,

from noon-4 p.m., in Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, at the corner of Main Street and University Drive. Strollers may be left on the front porch; an ADA ramp is on the building's side.

Admission is free, and the event is on both floors. Visitors buy pogs for \$1 each and then browse vendors' tables to see the wide array of chocolate treats being offered. They purchase them with the pogs and may buy as many pogs as they want from roaming volunteers in red aprons.

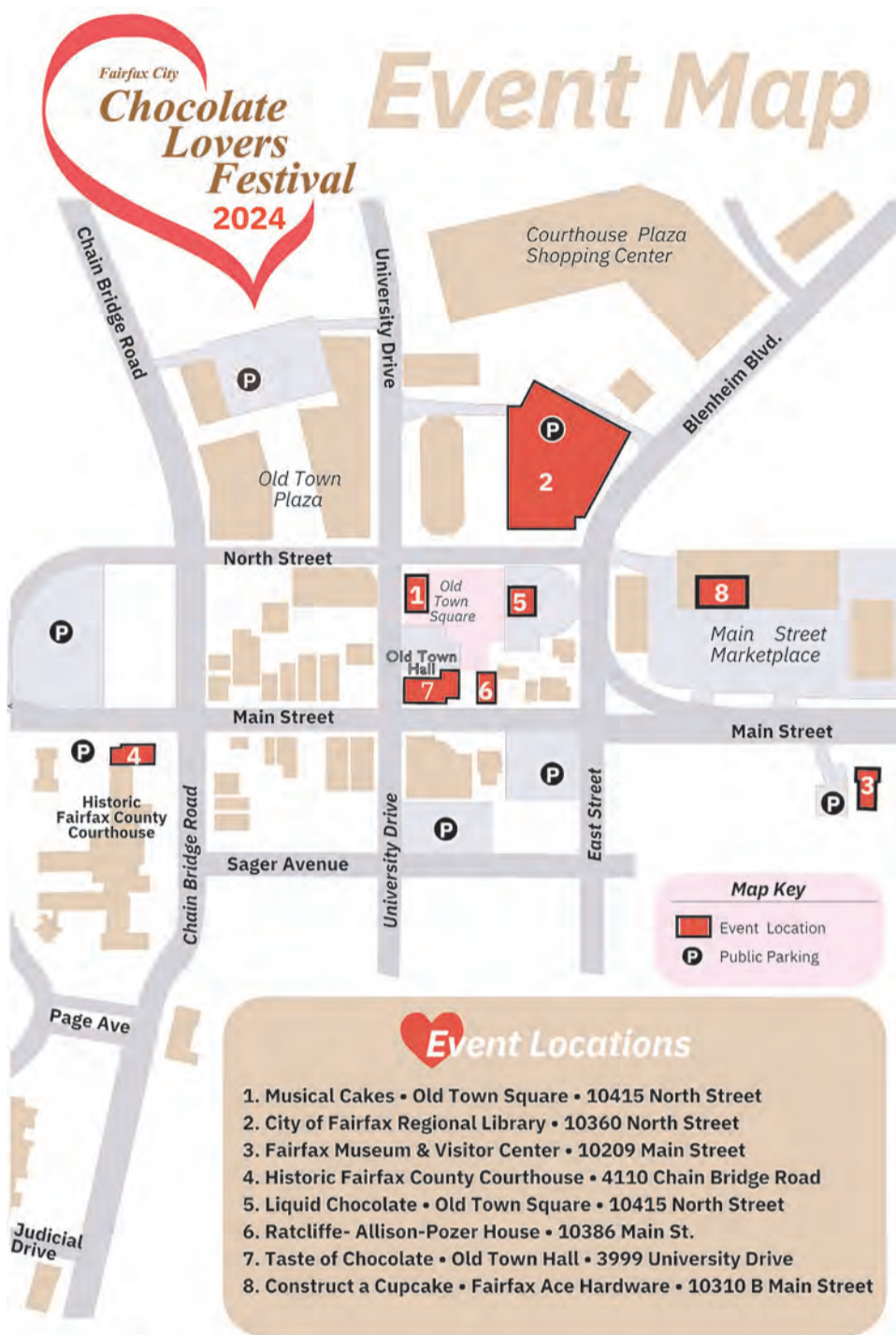
The large variety of goodies includes chocolate candies, bars, brownies, cakes and fudge, chocolate-covered strawberries and ice cream. And one of the biggest hits each year are the chocolate fountains into which customers may dip bite-sized treats such as fruit, doughnut holes or marshmallows.

This year's vendors will be: Cameron's Coffee & Chocolates, Capital Candy Jar, Capitol Chocolate Fountains, Chouquette Chocolates, Dilly Cakes, Great Harvest Bread, Le Papiyon Chocolateer, Mike's Fudge, Mochi Donut by Food Fest, Mother Clusters, River-Sea Chocolates, SamiChakra LLC, Scrummy Gorgeous, Sugar Mama's, The Sweet Life Bakery and Tysons Creamery.

## Chocolate Festival Souvenirs

Chocolate Lovers Festival Cookbooks (\$10) may be purchased at the Taste of Chocolate and at the Fairfax City Regional Library. Featured are recipes with chocolate as an ingredient in snacks, appetizers,

SEE CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL, PAGE 5  
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MAP COURTESY OF DEANNA PAYNE

### Map of Chocolate Festival activities' locations.

FROM PAGE 4

main courses, soups, salads and, of course, desserts. Other festival souvenirs for sale at both places will include light-up pens, notepads and blinking safety lights. Both adult and youth sizes of long- and short-sleeved commemorative T-shirts, ranging in price from \$5-\$15, will also be sold.

## Grant Recipients

Proceeds from the chocolate festival support many organizations, including Fairfax City's Independence Day Celebration Committee, Kiwanis Club of Fairfax, Friends of the City of Fairfax Regional Library, and the Fairfax Bar Assn. Making things even sweeter, part of the proceeds is also donated to nonprofit, charitable entities that directly benefit City residents. This year's recipients chosen by the Chocolate Lovers Festival Committee are:

❖ **FACETS** - In 1988, Linda Wimpey and the visionary volunteers who founded FACETS pledged that no neighbor would go unnoticed or unrecognized in Fairfax County. It was a promise to listen, help, care about and serve neighbors in distress. FACETS provides lifesaving and transformational services to those in crisis but can't do it without [www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

the community's help. Its hot meals program and food distributions are seeing increased attendees, and its family shelters are operating at 250 percent capacity. To donate, go to <https://facetscares.org/donate/>.

❖ **The Women's Center** - Since The Women's Center was founded in 1974, it's grown to include services to clients of all gender identities, families, young adults and children. It now serves more than 3,000 people a year. It also provides one of the largest, most prestigious and most competitive training programs for mental-health professionals in the region. And it, too, relies on philanthropic contributions to offer subsidized and free care and support to people in need in the community. Donate at <https://the-womenscenter.org/donate/>.

❖ **Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf** - The Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Persons serves a diverse range of people, including the deaf, deaf-blind, late-deafened, hard of hearing, parents with deaf and hard of hearing children, children of deaf and hard of hearing parents, educators, sign language teachers and students, hearing-aid users, plus people with cochlear implants, tinnitus and auditory-processing disorders. To donate, go to <https://nvrc.org/about/membership-donations/pay-online-for-donations/>.



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## NEWS

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Reston Association Board of Directors has authorized a referendum regarding the repeal of Reston Deed Section VI.2(b)(15) concerning RELAC and the prohibition on individual HVAC units.

Relevant members of the Association are invited to submit testimony at either of two virtual public hearings.

#### DATES

**Monday, February 5, 6:30 p.m.**

**Join Zoom Meeting: <https://bit.ly/491pLqJ>**

**Monday, February 12, 6:30 p.m.**

**Join Zoom Meeting: <https://bit.ly/47GL1B1>**



# Longtime RCC Executive Director Announces Retirement

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**L**eila Gordon, the longtime executive director of the Reston Community Center will retire at the end of 2024. The Connection spoke with Gordon about her nearly 17-year tenure at the center, which opened its doors in 1979 at its Hunters Woods location. Since then, RCC has grown tremendously at Hunters Woods and its second facility, Lake Anne (1999).

According to Gordon, as she moves toward retirement in the next 11 months, RCC's ecosystem will remain the same regarding what people expect and how it operates, building a community for all to enjoy.

First and foremost, Gordon wants to ensure the community, board, and staff have a smooth and

enjoyable transition. "I want the processes we undertake to help create confidence among those constituencies," Gordon said. She plans to address program delivery, off-site collaboration, and facility rentals over the next months, as they are critical to the center's relevance and sustainability.

Second, Gordon will work to ensure that RCC submits its application for re-accreditation from the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) in the 2024 fourth annual report. RCC earned accreditation in 2020 and must undergo a comprehensive, 5-year review in May 2025.

"I want to ensure that all of the documentation, policies, procedures, and strategic planning efforts required to undertake as an



PHOTO BY RESTON COMMUNITY CENTER  
**Leila Gordon, executive director of Reston Community Center**

accredited agency are in good order and ready for staff to compile and present," Gordon said.

"CAPRA is like the Good Housekeeping seal of approval," Gordon said. The designation assures policymakers, department employees, and the general public that an accredited park and recreation organization can provide programs, facilities, and services with integrity. According to Gordon, being successfully accredited also assures the community that their tax dollars are not being squandered or spent on items that do not meet their expectations.

Third, Gordon stressed the importance of understanding RCC programming and facility expansion expectations. She spoke passionately and advocated that they look into new space or facility alternatives to supplement what their current facility footprints can offer.

"We have waitlists against our visual arts and our fitness and well-being programs that we don't have the capacity to address. We already have an existing demand, and if we doubled the RCC Lake Anne footprint, we would be fulfilling that demand," Gordon said. "We do not have sufficient time on the calendar or capacity to support the existing demand for performing arts experiences."

With the Reston Arts Center proposition fulfilled and the offer accepted, Gordon added that Fairfax County, Supervisor Alcorn, and Boston Properties will collaborate over the coming years to see "if the vision for an arts venue can come true."

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SEE GORDON TO RETIRE.  
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## ROUNDUPS

### Reston Teen Succumbs To Crash Injuries

In the early morning hours of Jan. 2, Jose Armando Sanchez Aguilar, 18, of Reston, was involved in a single-car crash that left him in critical condition. Last Wednesday, Jan. 17, he succumbed to his injuries.

The day of the crash, police officers from the Fair Oaks District Station responded to the Fairfax County Parkway, south of Franklin Farm Road in Fair Oaks, at 5:05 a.m. There, they found a 2011 Honda Civic that had crashed into the sound-barrier wall. The driver, Sanchez Aguilar, was transported to the hospital with life-threatening injuries. His passenger, an adult woman, was also taken to

the hospital; however, her injuries were considered non-life threatening.

Detectives from the police Crash Reconstruction Unit determined Sanchez Aguilar was traveling southbound on the parkway when he lost control of his vehicle, and it left the road and struck the sound barrier. Preliminarily, police say "speed and alcohol are believed to be factors" in this crash.

Anyone with information about this incident is asked to contact the Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips may also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by calling 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477).

### Car Seat Inspections on Feb. 1

Parents may get their children's car seats inspected on Thursday, Feb. 1, from 5-8:30 p.m., outside the Sully District Police Station. It's at 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Inspections are done on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants should install the child safety

seat themselves so the inspection can be performed. The seat will be properly re-installed, if necessary, and parents will be taught how to install the seat properly. Everyone is eligible. Another car-seat inspection is scheduled for Feb. 15, at the same place and time.

### Opioid Overdose and Naloxone Education Classes

Fairfax County police are offering free, 15-minute, Opioid Overdose and Naloxone Education classes called Rapid REVIVE. They'll be held Wednesday, Feb. 7, at the Sully District Police Station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Classes will be offered at 6, 6:30 and 7 p.m. in English, and at 7:30 p.m. in Spanish, and attendees may choose which class time they'd prefer.

Each Rapid REVIVE class trains

individuals on what to do and not do in an overdose situation, how to administer naloxone, and what to do afterward. Each participant will receive a free

REVIVE kit, which includes all the supplies needed to administer naloxone.

Each class will run for 30 minutes to allow people to stay and ask questions after the training. Register in advance at <https://bit.ly/revivesully020724>.

### Britepaths' Emergency Pantry Needs Toiletry Donations

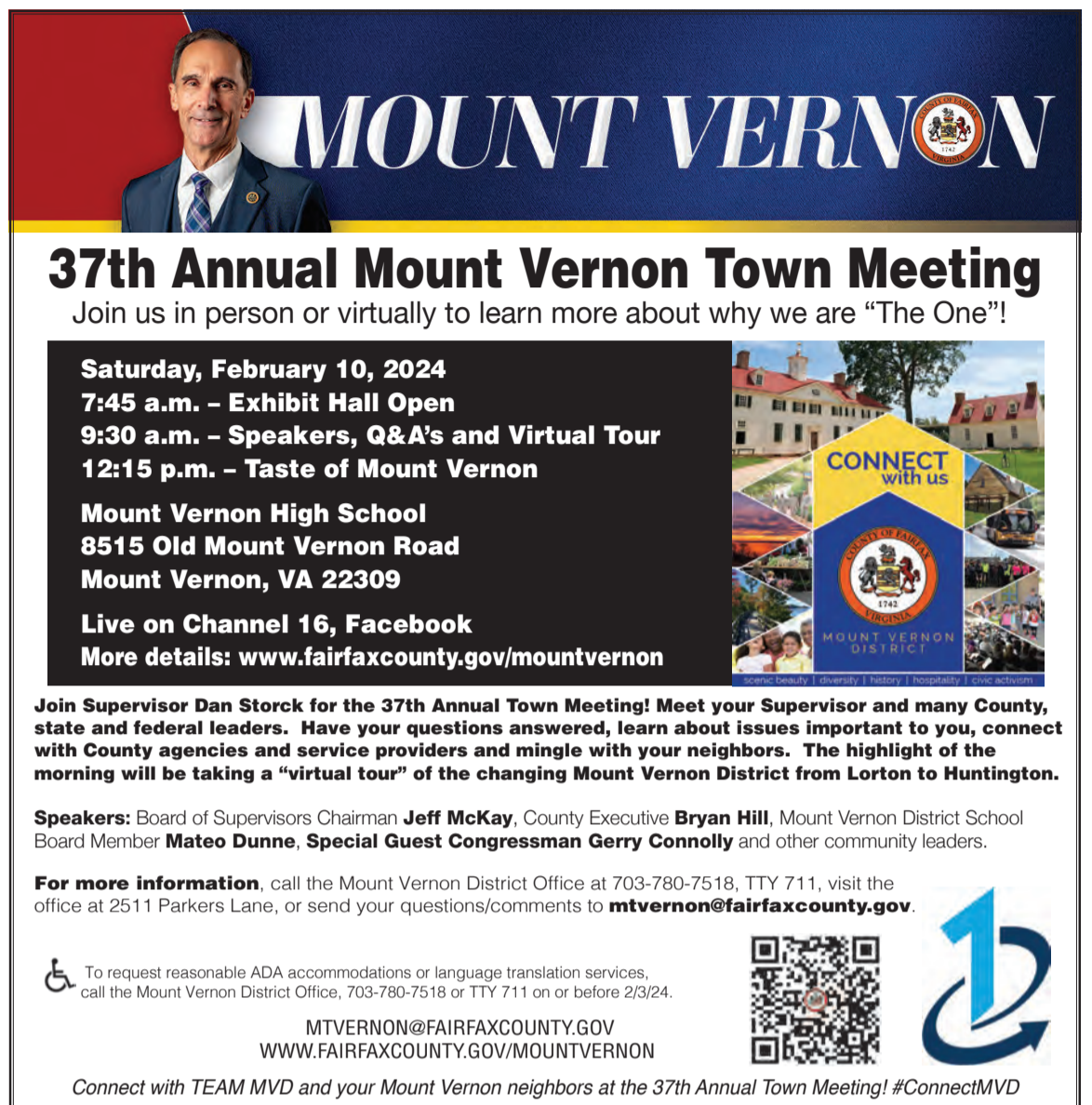
Britepaths' Emergency Pantry in Fairfax has an urgent need for many of the necessities it provides for its clients. Currently, its greatest needs are laundry detergent, toilet paper, shampoo/conditioner and deodorant. Donations of these items may be brought to Britepaths' office, Monday through Friday, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The office is at 3959 Pender Drive, Suite 200, in Fairfax. Please call 703-273-8829 or email [info@britepaths.org](mailto:info@britepaths.org) in advance to let them know you're coming. Or order through Britepaths' Amazon Wish List at: <http://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/30LSP2LL-WHRPV>.

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## 37th Annual Mount Vernon Town Meeting

Join us in person or virtually to learn more about why we are "The One"!

**Saturday, February 10, 2024**  
**7:45 a.m. – Exhibit Hall Open**  
**9:30 a.m. – Speakers, Q&A's and Virtual Tour**  
**12:15 p.m. – Taste of Mount Vernon**

**Mount Vernon High School**  
**8515 Old Mount Vernon Road**  
**Mount Vernon, VA 22309**

**Live on Channel 16, Facebook**  
**More details: [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon)**

**Join Supervisor Dan Storck for the 37th Annual Town Meeting! Meet your Supervisor and many County, state and federal leaders. Have your questions answered, learn about issues important to you, connect with County agencies and service providers and mingle with your neighbors. The highlight of the morning will be taking a "virtual tour" of the changing Mount Vernon District from Lorton to Huntington.**

**Speakers:** Board of Supervisors Chairman **Jeff McKay**, County Executive **Bryan Hill**, Mount Vernon District School Board Member **Mateo Dunne**, **Special Guest Congressman Gerry Connolly** and other community leaders.

**For more information**, call the Mount Vernon District Office at 703-780-7518, TTY 711, visit the office at 2511 Parkers Lane, or send your questions/comments to [mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:mtvernon@fairfaxcounty.gov).

To request reasonable ADA accommodations or language translation services, call the Mount Vernon District Office, 703-780-7518 or TTY 711 on or before 2/3/24.

[MTVERNON@FAIRFAXCOUNTY.GOV](mailto:MTVERNON@FAIRFAXCOUNTY.GOV)  
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# FCPS Proposed Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan

Climate change, gerrymandering, and inequitable funding discussed.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

The newly elected Fairfax County School Board heard public testimony on the proposed Fiscal Year 2025-29 Capital Improvement Program Thursday evening, Jan. 18. Ryan L. McElveen, school board member at-large, and Robyn A. Lady, Dranesville District representative, served as meeting managers. McElveen said if anyone wishes to provide additional feedback to the board before they vote on the CIP, which is scheduled for Feb. 8, to do so by sending comments to [communityparticipation@fcps.edu](mailto:communityparticipation@fcps.edu)

The school board heard from eight of the ten registered speakers, each having two minutes.



The Fairfax County School Board, from left, Mateo Dunne, Mount Vernon; Melanie K. Meren, vice chair, Hunter Mill; Ryan McElveen, At-Large; Iryong Moon, At-Large; Ricardy Anderson, Mason; Karl Frisch, chair, Providence; Robyn Lady Dranesville; Kyle McDaniel, At-Large; Seema Dixit, Sully; Sandy Anderson, Springfield; Marcia St. John-Cunning, Franconia; and Rachna Sizemore Heizer, Braddock.

Samad Quraishi, a member of the 2025 class at George C. Marshall High School in Falls Church, testified as a student representative of the Voters Initiative. Quraishi urged the board to prioritize sustainability and infrastructure renovations in the CIP and continue collaboration with students. "Climate change cannot be under-

scored enough, and as the impact on the next generation of students grows, it's imperative that FCPS fund programs like this one."

Robin Olsen, team lead of Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, acknowledged that the CIP for FY 2025-29 includes the central components that are making progress on the Joint Environmental Task

Force, or "JET," such as energy-saving performance contracting, the expansion of Get2Green, an FCPS environmental stewardship program, and the launch of an electric school bus fleet. Olsen pressed the school board for a more coordinated plan among the various school system elements to meet the JET mandates outlined in the CIP

"Budget targets for carbon reduction are substantial and require a change in the way FCPS does business," Olsen said.

Robert "Bob" Jordan spoke for the Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions. Jordan emphasized to school board members the importance of addressing funding limitations for energy efficiency upgrades to meet climate goals. He said the CIP only applies to new school construction and renovations, greatly limiting progress toward meeting energy mandates.

For instance, "many electrical energy and management goals for HVAC systems in FCPS are past their useful lives. ... They can and should be replaced with much more energy-efficient systems. These upgrades will generate substantial savings in energy costs," Jordan said.

Jordan proposed several funding solutions to meet the energy efficiency and renewable energy mandates by 2040. They include "aggressive use of the Inflation Reduction Act Tax Credits, rebates of up to 40 percent of the eligible cost for global energy projects, and

SEE FCPS, PAGE 13

PHOTO BY FCPS

## Make a Difference in Your Community! Run for a Seat on the McLean Community Center Governing Board



### PUBLIC NOTICE OF ELECTION

MCLEAN COMMUNITY CENTER GOVERNING BOARD  
SMALL DISTRICT 1A—DRANESVILLE  
FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA



McLean  
Community  
Center  
*The Center of It All*



This OFFICIAL NOTICE of election to select members of the 2024-2025 Governing Board of the McLean Community Center (the Governing Board) is given to residents of Small District 1A—Dranesville, Fairfax County, Virginia (referred to as "Small District 1A"). The McLean Community Center (MCC) operates as a Special District Agency of the Fairfax County Government through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Governing Board. On February 8, 1984, the Board of Supervisors approved the Memorandum of Understanding, which authorizes the election. MCC is funded by residents of Small District 1A in Greater McLean for their use through a real estate tax surcharge, the result of a 1970 Small District 1A bond referendum.

**Absentee Voting (ballots for your own household available in person at MCC, online or by U.S. mail upon request via U.S. mail—requested online, or by phone, or by e-mail) will be from 9 a.m. on March 27, through 5 p.m. on May 13, AND in-person voting will be available from 4-8 p.m. on Friday, May 17 (T.G.I.F. Carnival Rides), and 11 a.m.-5 p.m. on McLean Day (May 18, 2024) at Lewinsville Park.**

#### Candidate Qualifications:

Each resident who lives within Small District 1A is eligible to run for a seat on the all-volunteer Governing Board within the appropriate category. If you need help determining whether you reside in Small District 1A,

please contact MCC at 703-790-0123, TTY: 711, or by email at [elections@mcleancenter.org](mailto:elections@mcleancenter.org).

**ADULTS:** Candidates must be residents of Small District 1A and must be at least 18 years of age on or before May 17, 2024.

**TEENS:** Candidates must be 15, 16, or 17 years old on or before May 17, 2024 (born May 18, 2006 to May 17, 2009), live within Small District 1A, and live in the boundary area for either Langley or McLean high schools. You **do not** have to attend either high school. You may attend another school, including one that is outside of Small District 1A, or you may be home schooled. You can only run for the seat representing the high school boundary area where you live.

#### Available Governing Board Seats and Terms:

Four (4) adult Governing Board seats will be filled through the election. The candidates who receive the three (3) highest numbers of votes will serve three-year terms on the Governing Board. The candidate who receives the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) highest number of votes will complete a one year unexpired term.

One (1) Governing Board youth seat representing the Langley High School boundary area will be filled for a one-year term.

One (1) Governing Board youth seat representing the McLean High School boundary area will be filled for a one-year term.

#### Candidate Petitions Requirements:

**ADULTS:** Must collect the signatures of ten (10) residents of Small District 1A who are 18 years old or older on or before May 17, 2024.

**TEENS:** Must collect the signatures of ten (10) residents of Small District 1A who are 15, 16, or 17 years old on or before May 17, 2024 (born May 18, 2006 to May 17, 2009), and live in their respective school boundary area (McLean H.S. or Langley H.S.)

Candidate Packets containing a petition, instructions and all pertinent paperwork may be obtained at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean, Virginia, 22101, **starting on Wednesday, Feb. 7 at 9 a.m.** Candidates must pick up and return their own petitions in person.

**DEADLINE:** Each resident seeking election to the Governing Board shall file a completed Candidate petition with MCC at the address shown below **by 5 p.m. on Monday, March 11, 2024:**

McLean Community Center  
1234 Ingleside Ave.  
McLean, VA 22101

For more information about the election, please call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711, go to [mcleancenter.org](http://mcleancenter.org), or email MCC at [elections@mcleancenter.org](mailto:elections@mcleancenter.org).

Kristina Groennings, Chair  
Elections & Nominations Committee  
McLean Community Center Governing Board



# Preserve Access to Telehealth for Seniors with Medicare

**Current flexibilities will end on Dec. 31 unless the Biden administration and Congress take action.**

U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-VA) joined U.S. Sens. Brian Schatz (D-HI) and bipartisan, bicameral lawmakers to urge the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to work with Congress to ensure Medicare beneficiaries maintain access to telehealth. Current pandemic-era flexibilities will expire on Dec. 31, 2024 without further action, forcing seniors to adapt to new care routines. In a letter to HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra, the lawmakers underscored the urgent need to make pandemic-era telehealth flexibilities permanent.

“We urge you to work with Congress to ensure that all Medicare beneficiaries have permanent access to telehealth services before the temporary waivers expire on Dec. 31, 2024,” the lawmakers wrote. “Enacting permanent telehealth legislation will require collaboration between HHS and Congress in the year ahead. We urge you to communicate to Congress and the public the authorities, appropriations, resources, and other supports needed to achieve this goal.”

“Telehealth is a cost-effective way to improve access to care, especially for rural and underserved communities,” the lawmakers continued. “Telehealth also allows patients to choose a medical provider that best suits their personal medical needs. Medicare beneficiaries

have come to rely on expanded access to telehealth and are satisfied with the care they have received.”

Sen. Warner has consistently led efforts to expand telehealth accessibility. He is an original cosponsor and a tireless advocate for the Creating Opportunities Now for Necessary and Effective Care Technologies (CONNECT) for Health Act, legislation that would expand coverage of telehealth services through Medicare and make permanent COVID-19 telehealth flexibilities. He has also introduced bipartisan legislation to increase access to telehealth services for individuals with substance use disorder and repeatedly pushed on the DEA to institute long-term flexibilities for the prescription of controlled substances via telehealth.

Joining Sens. Warner and Schatz in sending the letter were U.S. Sens. Roger Wicker (R-MS), Ben Cardin (D-MD), John Thune (R-SD), and Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS), and U.S. Representatives Mike Thompson (D-CA-04), David Schweikert (R-AZ-01), Doris Matsui (D-CA-07), and Bill Johnson (R-OH-06).

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# SNOW



Light ice formed in patches on area ponds and lakes, and snow covered the ground this week, leading water fowl, like these Mallards, to swim through remaining open water channels, and song birds in numbers to area bird feeders in search of food.



Neighbors, like Wilson Muscadin, of Springfield, broke out shovels and blowers to uncover area sidewalks and driveways after the area saw 3 to 5 inches of snow fall.



Brothers DeClan and Davin Taylor, of Springfield, enthusiastically created a traditional snowman with knit hat, carrot nose, and coal buttons; loaning a park of gloves to the little man to complete his look.



Grace Bacarrea, age 9, of Springfield, went with a Snow-woman, complete with stylish head bow, scarf, and belted skirt with a fancy buckle, though staying with the traditional carrot nose and stick arms.

## Residents Enjoy a Snow Day ... or Two

### Local man turns 'snowmen' to snow sculptures.

By SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

Area residents had a rare opportunity to break out the sleds, snowshoes, and snowboards, get out of school, and retry the old cold arts of making snow angels and snowmen — to enjoy a snow day. Although temperatures were bitter with a chilly wind accompanying the first storm, snowball fights could not be resisted by many. Perhaps carried on between the onerous chores of shoveling sidewalks and driveways, and cleaning windshields and car tops, a chance to stretch cramped muscles. Battle winners and losers, and shovelers alike, could be rewarded with the season's traditional steaming mug of hot chocolate.

Not only did northern Virginia get its first significant snow since January 2022 on Jan. 15, but the added storm on Jan. 19 brought the total snow yield for the week to an impressive three to five inches for the immediate area.

With that amount of snow, and its powdery quality, the urge to make snow art was hard to resist. Drawn into the moment, were both beginners and accomplished snow artisans. Richard Cotton, of the Springfield Glen neighborhood, falls into the later category. He has been sculpting snow for fun, when snowfall permits, since he moved to his house in the early '90's. His first creation was a larger than man-sized bear that lounged between his garage doors. The retired program security professional has no formal art training but enjoys making snow sculpture.

While more than doing chores in the house when storms keep him home. Starting with his first bear, his creation subjects have covered a wide gambit, including hearts with a built-in surrounding snow slide, a president, leprechaun, car with seating, dragon, train, a Japanese bridge with lanterns - everything and anything, except a traditional snowman. Cotton says, "Why be typical?" He shares that one of his favorites was the Statue of Liberty, complete with a candle lighted torch, so tall he needed a ladder to compete construction. Unfortunately Liberty's arm succumbed to gravity soon after completion.

This storm Cotton's first creation is a pair of birds, inspired by his son's inside pets. For the second storm, his daughter, a teacher at a Loudon County elementary school, urged him to create a Cardinal to represent the school's mascot. He worked about five hours to form, and then color, the cardinal that now joins the original bird pair keeping watch over his front lawn, with the pet birds inside adding sound effects from time to time.

While warmer temperatures inevitably will claim this art, and all the other area snowman efforts, the cold is lasting long enough to keep those ice birds sentries in place for several days. Light ice is forming on area ponds and lakes leading nature's real waterfowl to swim between ice patches. Feathers protect their bodies and their circulation system sends warm blood from their hearts to their feet in arteries surrounding the veins returning cold blood, keeping them warm, even on the icy ponds. Walkers braving the trails near them in sub-zero wind chills can



PHOTO PROVIDED R. COTTON

Richard Cotton, of Springfield Glen, got hooked on creating snow sculptures over 30 years ago with his first, a large bear.

watch with envy. With enough snow to cover seeds and nuts on the ground, song birds flocked to feeders, making observation of several species in a short period a snowy day pastime.

Will the winter bring more snow to our area in the remaining winter months? The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts "wetter-than-average conditions" for the Southeast from December through February, in part because of the El Niño in place for the first time in four years. Snow sculptor Cotton may need to come up with more ice subjects soon.



PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Cotton's creation of a Japanese garden was possible after a larger than usual snowfall in 2019.



For the back-to-back storms, Cotton, first created the two birds on the right, inspired by his son's pet birds, then after the second snowfall two days later spent nearly five more hours adding the cardinal sculpture, coloring and lighting.



Cotton, who has created dozens of unique snow sculptures over 30+ years, says, "Why be typical?"



The cardinal snow sculpture requested by Cotton's daughter represents the school where she teaches, lit at night to show off its perch on Cotton's front yard.



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# Airplane Lands on Public Road Near Dulles Airport



PHOTO FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

Southern Airways Express flight 246 on Loudoun County Parkway.

## Snow on Friday may have been a factor.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE GAZETTE

**O**n a snowy afternoon at Dulles Airport, Southern Airways Express flight 246 had to abort flight shortly after takeoff, landing on the Loudoun County Parkway near “a Wendy’s

and Aldi’s,” the pilot said. There were five people on board, two crew members and 1100 pounds of fuel, but all were undisturbed in the mishap and the plane was towed back to the airport by the Loudoun Emergency Crew.

“Mayday, mayday,” the pilot said, “we’re landing on the street here,” she said.

This was heard the ADSP Exchange and captured by a nearby monitor and converted to a YouTube video. “246, we’re on the ground,” the pilot said. The flight was on its way to Lancaster Airport



PHOTO BY MWAA

A takeoff at Dulles resulted in the airplane landing on a road near a Wendy’s and Aldi’s right near to the airport.

in Pennsylvania.

According to Dulles Airport officials, Southern Airways Express flight 246 took off from Dulles after noon on Friday, ran into trouble and landed on a nearby roadway about 12:50, airport officials said.

Responders from Loudoun County managed the scene, and Dulles Airport remained open Monday for takeoffs and landings, officials said.

The mishap is under investigation by the FAA.

# RCC Leila Gordon To Retire

FROM PAGE 6

Looking back on her tenure, Gordon considered that the best thing RCC accomplished was the culmination of efforts to commemorate Bob Simon’s 100th birthday in 2014. For example, filmmaker Rebekah Wingert-Jabi, who grew up in Reston, collaborated with her Storycatcher team to produce the award-winning legacy documentary “Another Way of Living: The Story of Reston,” which RCC helped fund.

It established an intimate “foundational blueprint” for how the community’s businesses, organizations, and individuals, including Bob Simon, tell Reston’s five-decade-long story.

Requested to describe an RCC event that inadvertently deviated from its intended course but triumphed at an even higher level, Gordon said that this year’s snowy weather on Martin Luther King Day delayed the arrival of Rev. William J. Barber featured speaker at the Reston Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration’s Keynote Ad-

dress and Community Lunch. Not only did the audience wait in their seats for 20 minutes for his arrival, according to Gordon, but last-minute changes required adaptability because there was no time for a sound check. However, the unexpected elements heightened anticipation and connected the sold-out audience and the speaker.

Gordon gave her thoughts on RCC’s partnerships. She emphasized the importance of confidence, self-awareness, and integrity in developing them, leading to collaboration and shared values.

Such is the bedrock of Reston’s success.

When asked for a single word to describe her legacy, Gordon responded, “Love.”

“I love Reston; I love my job; and I love what the community has meant to the people who live here. I love what has been given to me — a program that has been incredibly satisfying, rewarding, and emotional. I love the people I work for, what we get to do together, and how strong this community’s foundation is.”

## BULLETIN BOARD

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

### WINTER GEAR CLOTHING DRIVE FOR HOMELESS ADULTS

Recovery Program Solutions of Virginia, a nonprofit that supports adults with mental health, substance use, and/or homelessness challenges is hosting a Winter Gear Clothing Drive for homeless adults in Northern Virginia. The items can be new or gently used. This initiative is a simple yet powerful way to make a big difference in your community. This Winter has been harsh for those without a place to call home. Those we serve are urgently in need of items such as wool or thermal

socks, heavy gloves, hats, coats, scarves, hand/feet warmers, and mylar blankets. Additionally, they are seeking tarps, waterproof tents, sleeping bags, and waterproof rolling backpacks for the homeless as well. The Drive will continue throughout the winter months. Individuals can drop donated items off at any of RPSV’s five Recovery Centers (in Annandale, Arlington, Merrifield, Reston, and South County Alexandria) during operating hours. You can find a list of the centers here: [rpsva.org/recovery-centers](http://rpsva.org/recovery-centers).

## Submit a Letter to the Editor

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An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by  
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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WWW.FCPS.EDU/CAPITAL-IMPROVEMENT-PROGRAM

Hybla Valley Elementary School celebrated the completion of its capital improvement project on May 22, 2023. The project by Fairfax County Public Schools “was identified according to the Renovation Queue, approved in 2009.” The project ranked 33 of 63 schools in the queue; was completed in the spring of 2023 and funded by the 2017 and 2019 bonds, according to FCPS.

## FCPS Proposed Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan

FROM PAGE 8

contracts with energy efficiency companies that can receive substantial tax deductions and pass the savings on to FCPS.” He proposed that FACS meet with school board members to discuss this in greater detail.

Melissa Morrison, a parent with a student at Herndon Middle School and a PTA board member, spoke out about gerrymandering, overcrowding, and inequitable funding in the county schools. She said affluent homeowners and developers requested students be bused to Cooper Middle School and Langley High School rather than attend Herndon Middle School. Cooper and Langley are in McLean. According to Morrison, the result is lopsided demographics at Herndon Middle School, with economically disadvantaged students accounting for 55 percent and English learners accounting for 32 percent. “Thirty-six percent and 62 percent, respectively, above the next closest middle school.” Morrison testified that the boundaries have not been redrawn “in over two to three decades.”

Morrison questioned why Armstrong Elementary School in Reston should receive a \$40 million renovation when it is projected to be at 44 percent capacity and meet or exceed its academic metrics.

“It’s a case of the haves and have-nots in the CIP, and boundary lines are where FCPS needs to start treating all schools more equitably.”

David Conover, representing the Great Falls Citizen Association, said that the county is responsible for providing a proposed CIP in a more timely manner in the future. Conover requested “more transparency in the development of the renovation queue to gain a better understanding of how facilities are selected for renovation and the range and relative importance of the criteria driving those renovation decisions.”

According to Jo Doumbia, vice chair of the Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, the CIP needs to specify what schools identified in the report will undergo either modifications of buildings or renovations. They should specifically indicate energy efficiency and all clean energy standards.

Patty Karchner said she is the parent of a twice-exceptional student. Twice-exceptional students are intellectually gifted individuals who have learning disabilities.



FCPS SUPERINTENDENT WEEKLY REFLECTIONS  
Michelle Reid, Ed.D., superintendent Fairfax County Public Schools visits with students.

Some may be over sensitive to stimuli. She discussed the importance of supporting sensory-friendly design in county schools at all levels during construction and renovation. According to Karchner, FCPS currently needs a consistent method of providing alternative environments to the cafeteria.

“The cafeteria, holy moly ... Have you been in the cafeteria recently? It is loud — the noises. There are smells, there are commotions, and it should be a fun break for students, but it is overwhelming for some of our students.”

Karchner said there are county schools with students eating in libraries. “There are kids eating in the hallways, outdoor courtyards, and classrooms if they can find a teacher who will let them in the classroom or in the main office. ... We need a plan to sort this out.”

What is Fairfax County Public Schools Capital Improvement Program (CIP)? In her “Superintendent’s Weekly Reflections,” dated Jan. 22, 2024, by Dr. Michell Reid, she said that on Thursday evening at Luther Jackson Middle School, there was a public hearing for the Capital Improvement Plan. “Funded through taxpayer-approved bond referendums, the CIP is how we strategically build and renovate facilities across our 199 schools and centers. Through this work, our students can learn and grow in safe, healthy, up-to-date buildings.”

Visit FCPS Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to learn more.

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# Firefighter Cancer Awareness

FROM PAGE 3

compass an echocardiogram, carotid doppler, abdominal aorta, thyroid, liver, gallbladder, spleen, bladder, and kidney scans, as well as testicular scans for men and exterior pelvic scans for women. It allows for the early detection of cancer and other health conditions. All current firefighters and those who have retired within the last five years are eligible for free cancer detection scans.

Steve Weissman is currently serving as the Virginia state director for the Firefighter Cancer Support Network. Wiseman said they ensure that when members are diagnosed, they don't fight that fight alone. Support is there if the firefighter wants it. Weissman retired as a deputy fire chief with the Stafford County Fire and Rescue Department and started his career with the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department.

Diagnosed in 2016 with prostate cancer through early detection, Weissman said he turned to the Firefighter Cancer Support Network for assistance. "Lo and behold, I'm part of the group that grabbed me, brought me, and supported me. Now I'm giving back." Weissman said that numbers put things in perspective, and not all firefighters diagnosed with cancer reach out to them because "it's personal."

"So last year [2023] in Virginia, we had 57 firefighters diagnosed with cancer, 16 for Fairfax County, one as young as 28, and some retirees. The average age of a firefighter dying of cancer last year was 57 years old," Weissman said. "In Virginia, we had seven firefighters die of cancer, two from the City of Alexandria."

The Fallen Firefighter Memorial is in the shadow of Pikes Peak in Colorado Springs. It honors the sacrifices made by IAFF members who died in the line of duty. Among the names added in July of 2023, the wall bears the inscription "Kimberly A. Schoppa, IAFF Local 2068, Fairfax County, VA, 04/22/2022." The fatal injury cause, according to the IAFF, is "contact or exposure." Schoppa died of ovarian cancer at 49.

Ryan McGill is a master technician for Fairfax County Fire and Rescue. He serves as director for IAFF Local 2068, chairman of the Firefighter Cancer Reduction Committee, and is on the board of directors for the Virginia Professional Firefighters Charitable Foundation. McGill urges current and former career and volunteer firefighters to take the foundation's survey.

The purpose of the survey is to generate data to identify the number of Virginia firefighters with cancer, the types of cancers they have, and ways to mitigate cancer risk among Virginia's firefighters. The data provided will also help with legislative initiatives to reduce exposures, provide early detection screenings, and fund firefighter cancer research.

McGill said Local 2068 did an internal survey. "[It was] the first in the state to conduct a survey of their membership to determine the scope of cancer," McGill said. "We had about 457 people take our survey, and we have 96 people reporting having cancer," McGill said. "It's a big number — active and



FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

January is Firefighter Cancer Awareness Month



FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE/RESCUE @FFXFIRERESCUE

Over 80 #FCFRD members gathered at Inova Fairfax Hospital to support Tech Chris Welch (FS40, Fairfax Center, B-shift), who is having his thyroid removed after cancer was detected through FCFRD's Ultrasound Diagnostic Scan Program.

retired members. However, in many recent cases, they were caught early through ultrasound screenings."

Through legislation, more compensable cancers are covered. During the last legislative session, thyroid cancer screening was added. "Virginia Professional Firefighters are bringing forward legislation this session, in 2024, to ensure that every firefighter career or volunteer can get early detection cancer screening," McGill said.

McGill said they are working with the

Inova Schar Cancer Institute, to greet their members on their cancer journey as they arrive for surgery.

Ray Lankin, CEO of United Diagnostic Services, LLC, said in an email that, in addition to the direct exposure risks, lifestyle factors can potentially undermine the effectiveness of protective gear and decontamination procedures. According to Lankin, promoting a healthy lifestyle in fire departments, including regular exercise and a balanced diet, is essential to reducing firefighter cancer risk.



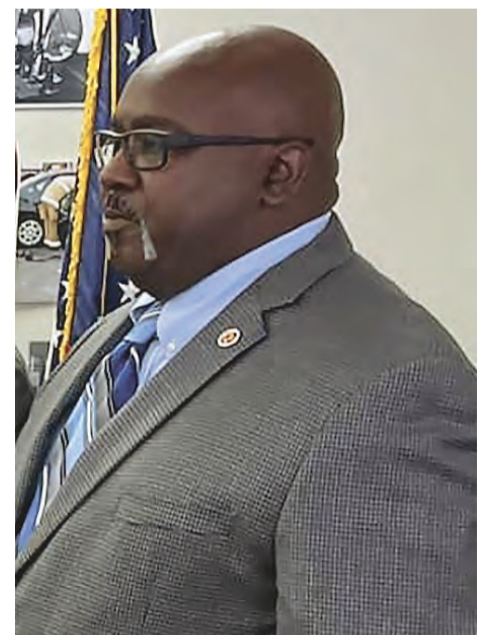
PHOTO / LINKEDIN

Ray Lankin, CEO of United Diagnostic Services, LLC



FIREFIGHTERS FOR HEALTH

Steve Weissman, junior state director for the Firefighter Cancer Support Network



Robert Young, president of IAFF Local 2068

Educational programs addressing lifestyle factors are crucial to comprehensive cancer prevention efforts in the firefighting community and beyond.

# Modern, All-Female Play Full of Laughter and Joy

City of Fairfax Theatre Co. presents the comedy, 'POTUS.'

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

When a public-relations nightmare at the White House turns into a huge mess, seven brilliant and beleaguered women must risk life, liberty and the pursuit of sanity to keep the commander-in-chief out of trouble. That's the premise behind City of Fairfax Theatre Co.'s new production, "POTUS," a bawdy and irreverent look at sex, politics and the women in charge of the man in charge of the free world.

"It's about the seven women who really run the White House, and it's their job to contain and handle all the craziness of the president," said Director Jack Lockrem. "It's not about a specific person but about the much-larger topics of democracy and leadership. It's a very funny comedy, and we're the first community theater to put on this show in Northern Virginia."

"POTUS" will be performed at Katherine Johnson Middle School, 3801 Jermantown Road in Fairfax. Shows are Friday, Feb. 2, at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 3, at 2 and 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, Feb. 4, at 3 p.m.; Friday, Feb. 9, at 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, Feb. 10, at 2 and 7:30 p.m.; and Sunday, Feb. 11, at 3 p.m.

Tickets are \$25, adults; and \$15, students. The Feb. 9 show is "pay what you can." Because of mature themes and strong language, it's not recommended for those under 17.

The cast and crew of 20 have been rehearsing since November. And, said Lockrem, "I'm so lucky to have such amazing actors who breathe life into this show. Every night at rehearsal, they find new ways to make me laugh – and that's the sign of a strong group of performers."

The story is set in modern-day, with scenes taking place at various locations within the White House. "It shows how the system of power pits women against each other," said Lockrem. "But through a series of events, the characters must learn to work together. I love collaborating in rehearsal with some of the funniest and most creative women. And I really feel like we've got such an exciting show to share with everybody."

Portraying Stephanie, the president's secretary, is 2018 Chantilly High grad Caroline Woodson. "Stephanie's an anxious, intelligent perfectionist," said Woodson. "She speaks five languages and is a people-pleaser. In the first act, she has very little power, but that gets flipped in the second act."

"I love playing her because she's goofy but smart," continued Woodson. "It's a physical role because she runs around a lot, doing all her tasks. And as the story goes on, she's running everybody else's lives – and messing things up."

Woodson said audiences will enjoy "a behind-the-scenes look at what's really happening in the government and in women's lives. And I think it's probably truer than they want us to know. I encourage people to come have a giggle and a gander at what could be happening in Washington, D.C., just a few miles away."

Heather Plank plays Harriet, the president's chief of staff. "She's power-hungry and has sacrificed her personal life in pursuit of her own ambition to be president," said Plank. "As a result, her humanity's become a little warped. "As chief of staff, she runs everything. She's also known the president, his sister and wife for more than 20 years – and they have a long, dark history together. And Harriet helped press-secretary Jean get her job."

Plank enjoys the challenge of playing a character so different from herself. "I treasure friendship, hobbies and sleep, whereas Harriet is singular in her focus," she said. "And in a play where we never see any men, the women treat each other differently than I think they might if men were present. There's more honesty and less diplomacy in their interactions with each other. Audiences will love this show because it's a wild ride full of inspiring, feminist rage."

Portraying Jean is Carolyn Young, who describes her character as "a little tense and high-strung, at times, and focused on getting the job done. She's super-fast-paced, direct and no muss, no fuss. Most of the time, she's good at her job. But she has a lot to deal with professionally, with the events happening around her, so it's becoming a struggle. She's an idealistic person trying to figure out what the heck is going on in this administration – and how the heck she ended up here."

Young loves her role because she's similar to Jean in that she, too, doesn't mince words. "Jean's funny, too, and comedy's my thing. And this play's so well-written that all the parts are fabulous. It's also hilarious; the opening line sets the tone, and it takes off from there."

"Women are often cast into supporting roles in life when, in fact, as Ginger Rogers said, they can basically do everything men can, but 'backwards and in high heels.' Women working harder than men – and sometimes accomplishing more than they do, but for little or no credit – is a significant theme of the play."

Aja Goode plays Chris, a reporter covering the White House for Time magazine. "Chris is ambitious and trying to re-establish herself after taking some time off to be with her kids and while going through a divorce," said Goode. "She's writ-



Rehearsing a scene are Caroline Woodson (left) and Heather Plank.



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

From left are Carolyn Young, Juanisha Brooks and Aja Goode.

ments from all the characters, in both their lines and physicality," continued Goode. "This is a feminist show that's unique in that women are telling this story about the presidency – which we normally think of as more influenced by men. There's a line at the end hopefully predicting that women throughout the world have the power to challenge systems of oppression, such as patriarchy. It also hopes that one day there may be a more inclusive society in which women play more integral roles in the places where decisions are made."

Juanisha Brooks portrays Margaret, the First Lady. "She's a highly accomplished woman who wears many hats," said Brooks. "She's graduated from both Stanford and Harvard and is a lawyer. Her main issues are progressive ones like child hunger, but she can also be stern. She's powerful and not one to be messed with – a good person, but tough."

"I love playing Margaret because, as an African American woman, I like that the playwright wrote this part specifically for a Black woman," said Brooks. "It shows that Black women can hold high-powered roles and do well in them. Representation is important, and I want to show other African American women that we're capable of leading in the White House and onstage."

Overall, she said, "People will love the laughter and joy this play brings. Though we cover complicated subjects, everyone will leave feeling uplifted. This show's also timely and relevant because it's coming out during election season without focusing on one political party. And doing it in Fairfax City – where many residents have worked for the federal government and can relate to this play – makes it truly special."

# ENTERTAINMENT

## 13TH ANNUAL 'STUFF THE BUS'

### FOOD DRIVE BEGINS

The buses are fueled and ready to roll as Stuff the Bus - the county's post-holiday food drive, now in its 13th year - hits the road in the fight against hunger in Fairfax County. Beginning Jan. 13, 2024, and continuing every Saturday through Feb. 17, 2024, a Fairfax County Fastran bus will visit local grocery stores to collect donated food and household items. Since launching in 2011, the campaign has collected more than 281,500 pounds of food to benefit local non-profit food pantries, resulting in 200,000 meals for those in need. Visit the following Stuff the Bus locations to drop off your food or cash donations during the specified donation hours:

Saturday, January 27  
Vienna Giant  
359 Maple Avenue East  
Vienna, VA 22180

Donation hours: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
To benefit CHO (Committee for Helping Others).

Herndon Giant  
2425 Centreville Rd  
Village Center at Dulles  
Herndon, VA 20171

Donation hours 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
To benefit Cornerstones.

## THE MCLEAN TREES FOUNDATION, NEIGHBORHOOD TREES PROGRAM, WANTS TO HELP YOU PLANT A NATIVE TREE IN YOUR YARD!

Don't know how to plant a tree but want to support the environmental health of your community? Want your family to have the experience of planting a tree? If you live in McLean, the McLean Trees Foundation (MTF) (a local nonprofit) will help you select an appropriate native tree for your property, deliver the tree to your yard, help you plant it, provide information on maintenance, and even check back with you a few months after planting to see how your tree is doing. If you are interested in participating in this program to boost our native tree canopy in McLean, visit the website at <https://www.mcleantreesfoundation.org/neighborhood-tree-program> and submit your application! A fee of \$100 is assessed to cover the costs of the program (limit one 6-7 foot tree in 15 gallon container per household). There is a separate program for those who are interested in spearheading a community tree planting campaign in their neighborhood. MTF's Tree Champion program makes it easy to help your neighbors plant more trees!

## NOW THRU FEB. 11

"The Who's Tommy." At Workhouse Arts Center, Building W-3 Theater, Lorton. Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sundays at 2 p.m. If you already know The Who's remarkable rock opera, then you'll be singing



The 12th Annual Chocolate Festival will be held Sunday, Jan. 28, 2024 at the McLean Community Center.

along. If you don't, then you're in for a real treat! This spirited stage production offers some startling, fascinating variations from the movie, so if you think you know Tommy...come see what's new!

## 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/>

## BONITA LESTINA FAIRFAX OLD TOWN HALL

### PERFORMANCE SERIES

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

### SCHEDULE

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



The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra with Isata Kanneh-Mason will perform on Sunday, Jan. 28, 2024 at GMU Center for the Arts in Fairfax.

## NOW THRU 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.

## NOW THRU 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 philosophically compelling.

## JAN. 19-28

**Falls Church Restaurant Week.** At 40 participating restaurants in Falls Church. Falls Church Restaurant Week entices diners to sample or return to local eateries by offering special menus or other exclusive money saving offers. Participating restaurants include widely

acclaimed restaurants like Ellie Bird (3-course menu for \$55) and Thompson Italian (3-course menu for \$50) as well as some exciting up-and-comers and local favorites like:

**Borek-G:** the mother and son owned Turkish restaurant, which The Post's Tim Carman called "sublime", is offering a 3 course menu for \$25 during Restaurant Week.

**La Tingeria** from Chef David Peña, which evolved from a Mexican food truck to a brick & mortar and is now opening additional locations. Named to the Washingtonian's 2023 list of Very Best Restaurants, La Tingeria is offering 2 menu items plus sides and a drink for \$10 during lunch.

**Harvey's** by Chef Thomas Harvey, was named to Washington Post and Eater's best of 2023 lists, and is offering a 3-course menu for \$45 per person.

Newly opened restaurants participating in restaurant week include Nue, Chasin' Tails, Roll Play, and The Falls.

## JAN. 20 TO FEB. 4

### "Shakespeare in Hollywood."

Presented by the Vienna Theatre Company and Vienna Department of Recreation. Performances Jan. 20-Feb. 3 at 8 p.m.; Sundays Jan. 28 and Feb. 4 at 2 p.m. Venue Address: 120 Cherry Street, Vienna. Visit [www.viennatheatrecompany.org](http://www.viennatheatrecompany.org).

## WEDNESDAY/JAN. 24

**Open Houses at All Park Authority Rec Centers.** Check out your neighborhood Fairfax County Park Authority Rec Center for free on Wednesday, Jan. 24. If you are a current Rec Center member, bring family and friends along to check out these community wellness hubs. Visitors will receive a free, 7-day trial membership or be able to purchase a 30-day for \$30 pass to the Park Authority's Rec Centers. Everyone is invited to explore the Rec Centers, use gym equipment, take a lap in the pool and try out drop-in fitness classes (space

permitting) all day long. Each Rec Center will offer special programs and activities from 4:30-7:30 p.m. on Jan. 24. Come by in the evening to visit the membership table, grab some giveaways, take part in arts and crafts, and enjoy other special offerings.

Additional information for the Open House programming at each individual Rec Center is available online for the following locations:

Audrey Moore, 8100 Braddock Road, Annandale  
Cub Run, 4630 Stonecroft Blvd., Chantilly  
Franconia, 6601 Telegraph Road, Alexandria  
George Washington, 8426 Old Mt. Vernon Road, Alexandria  
Oakmont, 3200 Jermantown Road, Oakton  
Providence, 7525 Marc Drive, Falls Church  
South Run, 7550 Reservation Drive, Springfield  
Spring Hill, 1239 Spring Hill Road, McLean

## JAN. 26-28

**Jurassic Quest.** At Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. Capital-area families can walk among the nation's biggest herd of photorealistic dinosaurs when Jurassic Quest opens at the Dulles Expo Center for one weekend only, Jan. 26-28. Walk through 165 million years of the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods to learn about the creatures that ruled the Earth! In addition to life-like dinosaurs, Jurassic Quest's classic experiences for the whole family include some of the largest rideable dinosaurs in North America, live dinosaur shows, interactive science and art activities including a fossil dig and real fossils like T-Rex teeth, a triceratops horn and life-size dino skull, a "Triceratots" soft play area for our littlest explorers, bounce houses and inflatable attractions, photo opportunities, and more. Advance purchase online recommended to ensure desired date and availability at [www.jurassicquest.com](http://www.jurassicquest.com), or tickets are available on-site.

## ARTSCREEN: A FREE FILM SERIES CELEBRATING THE ARTS

Join in a free film series on Friday evenings in the City of Fairfax at the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Blenheim Blvd., Fairfax. Doors open at 7 p.m.; Films begin at 7:30 p.m. Free popcorn, candy, refreshments and door prizes, too!

Jan. 26: 20 Feet from Stardom. (2013) PG-13 - Backup singers live in a world that lies just beyond the spotlight. Their voices bring harmony to the biggest bands in popular music, but we've had no idea who these singers are or what lives they lead, until now.

Feb. 23: A Great Day in Harlem. (1994) Not Rated - The documentary compiles interviews of all the top jazz musicians in NYC in the year 1958, for a piece in Esquire magazine.

April 12: Midnight in Paris. (2011) PG-13 - While on a trip to Paris with his fiancée's family, a nostalgic screenwriter finds himself mysteriously going back to the 1920s every day at midnight.

# ENTERTAINMENT

JAN. 26-27

Mason Cabaret Presents **Over the Rainbow: The Music of Judy, Ella, and Barbra.** January 26, 27 at 8 p.m.; January 27 at 2 p.m. At GMU's Harris Theatre, Fairfax.

FRIDAY/JAN. 26

Artist **Ann Barbieri.** 11 a.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. McLean Art Society is honored to present a demonstration by local artist Ann Barbieri on how she begins a new painting. Ms. Barbieri has been recognized as "Artist of the Year" by the Friends of the Torpedo Factory (where her studio is based), has been invited to numerous solo exhibitions, and was twice selected by the U.S. State Department to exhibit her works for its Art in Embassies program.

SATURDAY/JAN. 27

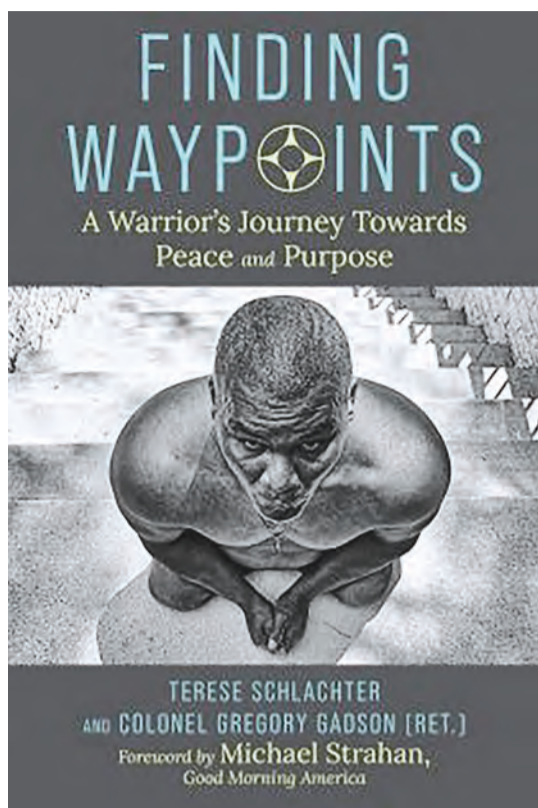
**Reston Museum Bricks by the Lake.** Reston Museum to host its 3rd Bricks by the Lake Event. The event consists of a brick (i.e. LEGO) building competition (registration required), an exhibit of Master Builds by the Charm City LUG, light refreshments, free play and crafts. Main event activities are at Reston Museum and Reston Community Center though many other Lake Anne Plaza merchants are participating as well. Before, during, and after the event those interested can purchase this year's Limited Edition brick kit, designed by Nathan Hagan. This year's kit is Reston's Van Gogh Bridge at Lake Anne. Designed by William Roehl, which was inspired by the famous paintings by its namesake of a drawbridge in Arles, France. The kit is sponsored by FGM Architects and Reston Art Gallery and Studios. Kits can be purchased at the Reston Museum or online at [restonmuseum.org/shop](http://restonmuseum.org/shop).

SATURDAY/JAN. 27

**Hamid Rahmanian's Song of the North.** 4 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Experience "breathtaking fireworks of creativity" (La Monde) with Hamid Rahmanian's newest large-scale cinematic shadow play *Song of the North*. With more than 500 handmade puppets and an original score by renowned Iranian composer Loga Ramin Torkian, you'll be transported to a magical and ancient landscape, rich in history and lore in this epic love story adapted from the *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings). The Center for the Arts is offering a free school time performance of Hamid Rahmanian's *Song of the North* on Friday, January 26 at 11 a.m. The performance is free but registration is required.

SUNDAY/JAN. 28

**12th Annual Chocolate Festival.** 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Attendees can indulge their sweet tooth by sampling offerings from more than 12 regional chocolate vendors. Mars Corporation will deliver a presen-



Author **Col. Gregory Gadson** will speak on Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024 at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton.

tation on the History of Chocolate, adding an educational touch to the event. Entertainment by the Sunshine Gang Band. Admission is only \$3 for individuals aged four and up, which includes a tote bag. The proceeds generated from this festival will contribute to various community projects championed by the Rotary Club of McLean. The projects supported by the festival include scholarships for graduating high school seniors, books for Timber Lane Elementary School, McLean Project for the Arts, playground equipment at the Fairfax Children's Center, hygiene products for school-age girls, medical equipment and clean water initiatives in several African countries. The funds will also support global initiatives such as eradicating Polio abroad, medical needs in Central America, food insecurity across the globe, and many other community projects. Visit [www.mcleanchocolatefestival.org](http://www.mcleanchocolatefestival.org)

SUNDAY/JAN. 28

**Railroad Snow Removal Operations Forum.** 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum will hold a video presentation and informal discussion of how railroads remove snow from the tracks to maintain operations on the nation's railways. Admission: 13 through adult, \$5; children 5-12, \$3; under 4, free; seniors (65+ and active/retired military), \$4; museum members, free. For more information on the museum and show events, phone 703-425-9225. [www.fairfax-station.org](http://www.fairfax-station.org) [www.facebook.com/FFXSRR](https://www.facebook.com/FFXSRR)

SUNDAY/JAN. 28

**Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.** 2 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Vasily Petrenko, conductor; Isata Kanneh-Mason, piano; Debussy (orch. by Ravel): *Danse*; Prokofiev: *Piano Concerto No. 3* in C major, Op. 26; Rimsky-Korsakov: *Scheherazade*, Op. 35. The Royal

Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO) returns to the Center for the Arts for an exhilarating program of Russian masterpieces with rising star pianist Isata Kanneh-Mason. Under the esteemed direction of Maestro Vasily Petrenko, RPO plays Debussy's sprightly colorful *Danse* (orchestration by Ravel) and Rimsky-Korsakov's brilliant symphonic poem, *Scheherazade*, which depicts the exotic fantasy tale using every instrument of the orchestra to tell the story.

FEB. 1-18

**"Shutter Sisters."** At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road Tysons. This sweet and funny tale explores the parallel lives of two women. A white woman named Michael struggles with strained family relationships at her adopted mother's funeral, while a Black woman named Mykal navigates a challenge of her own: becoming an empty nester. A surrealist journey through womanhood, identity, and what it means to belong.

Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.1ststage.org](http://www.1ststage.org) or by calling the 1st Stage box office at 703-854-1856.

THURSDAY/FEB. 1

**"After Life" Foreign Film.** 1 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. (Japan; Directed by Hirokazu Koreeda). Shown in Japanese with English subtitles. In this acclaimed film, a group of people who have recently died find themselves in limbo. Counselors are on hand to help new arrivals pick one memory from their lives to bring with them into eternity. Once the memories are chosen, the staff makes a short film representing each one, and the films make up a collage of thoughtful cinematic moments.

THURSDAY/FEB. 1

Author **Col. Gregory Gadson.** 6:30-8 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. Join in an evening of inspiration with Workhouse Board member and decorated veteran, Col. Gregory Gadson (Ret.) as he speaks about his recently released book, which details his courageous comeback following the loss of both of his legs in an IED attack in Iraq. Colonel Gadson and co-author Terese Schlachter will be present for the talk and book signing.

FEB. 2-4

**City of Fairfax Chocolate Lovers' Festival.** Get ready for the most delicious event of the year. The Chocolate Lovers Festival is coming back to Fairfax Feb. 2-4, 2024. All your favorite chocolate events and vendors return this year, so stay tuned for more information. <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/special-events/chocolate-lovers-festival/schedule-of-events>

SEE ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 19

## Here's What's Happening at MCC!

**Your Center, Your Community, Your Voice**

Take the MCC 2023 Community Feedback Survey Available in English, Spanish and Korean Survey ends on 1/31

Go to [qrco.de/beMvvf](http://qrco.de/beMvvf), or follow the link at [mcleancenter.org](http://mcleancenter.org)

JAN 26

Presented by The Alden

Macdonald Scholarship Competition Application Deadline: Friday, Jan. 26

FEB 1

Presented by The Alden

Foreign Language Film Thursday, Feb. 1, 1 p.m.



Presented by The Alden

Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company & Year of the Dragon Festival Sunday, Feb. 4

Festival: noon-4 p.m. Free Admission

Performance: 4 p.m. \$30/\$25 Seniors & Students \$20 MCC district residents

FEB 4



Presented by The Alden

"Animaniacs" in Concert Saturday, Feb. 10, 7 p.m.

FEB 10



The McLean Community Center [mcleancenter.org](http://mcleancenter.org)

Home of The Alden Theatre [aldentheatre.org](http://aldentheatre.org)

1234 Ingleside Ave. McLean, VA 22101 703-790-0123, TTY: 711

[@mcleancenter](https://www.facebook.com/mcleancenter) [@mcleancentervva](https://www.instagram.com/mcleancentervva)





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### Legals

#### ABC LICENSE

MSK Foods Capital LLC trading as Chosun Hwaro, 10790 Fairgrounds Drive, Fairfax, Fairfax City, VA 22030-1916. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Mixed Beverage Restaurant license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Mun Sun Kim, Member. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at [www.abc.virginia.gov](http://www.abc.virginia.gov) or 800-552-3200.

### Legals

#### ABC LICENSE

Alpahahara Foods LLC RECORDED WITH THE SCC trading as Mirch Dhamaka, 2443 Centreville Rd, Ste G1, Herndon, Fairfax County, VA 20171-3020. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a MIXED BEVERAGE RESTAURANT LICENSE license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Padmaja Yadagiri, Owner. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at [www.abc.virginia.gov](http://www.abc.virginia.gov) or 800-552-3200.

### Announcements

#### Estate Sale

**January 27 & 28, 8AM to 4PM**  
**3117 Waterside Lane, Alexandria 22309**

Details & Pics at [Estatesales.net](http://Estatesales.net). Solid Wood Furniture (Ethan Allen, Crescent, Basset), grandfather clock; Minton, Z S & C, & J. Haviland china; lamps, bunkbed, quilted items, wall art, Singer, Baskets, Yarn, flutes, area rugs, Woodard Briarwood outdoor furniture & much more.

### Employment

IT Engineer (Herndon, VA) Design, plan, & implemnt netwrk & sys arch to ensure stability & security of IT environ. Assess & mng info & netwrk security risks thru dvlpmnt & implemntn of security policies & measures. Provide tech supprt & traing to IT specialists. Reqs: MS IT, eng'g, comp sci, or smlr field + 1 yr IT netwrk supprt & maintenance rlt'd exp. Exp w/ Microsoft products in an Active Directory & Exchange environ. Mandarin fluency. Res: China Telecom (Americas) Corporation, [jobsatcta@ctamericas.com](mailto:jobsatcta@ctamericas.com).

### Legals

#### NOTICE ABANDONED WATERCRAFT

Notice is hereby given that the following watercraft has been abandoned for more than 60 DAYS on the property of Mr. Mien S. Niu at 1008 DEAD RUN DR. McLean VA 22101, 202-656-4668.

1983 RENKEN boat (white), 19'7", Hull ID #: RBMG1171M83A, Reg #: MD1296AJ

Application for Watercraft Registration/Title will be made in accordance with Section 29.1-733.25 of the Code of Virginia if this watercraft is not claimed and removed within 30 days of first publication of this notice. Please contact the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources with questions.

### Legals

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## NEWS

# RA Announces RELAC Referendum

If passed, affected properties would be able to install individual HVAC systems.

By MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Reston Association is taking action that could lead members in specific Lake Anne residential clusters to be able to install individual HVAC systems without violation.

Reston Association is holding a referendum regarding RELAC, the Reston Lake Anne Air Conditioning system. Announced as "the world's first 'community air-conditioning system'" by The Evening Star Washington D.C. on Friday, June 18, 1965, the system provides chilled water for air conditioning services to clusters and condominiums near Lake Anne. RELAC is not owned or operated by Reston Association.

The impetus for the referendum is that in December 2023, RELAC notified units it had been providing with cooling services it would discontinue those services as of 2024.

Following its two advertised public hearings on the matter, one on Feb. 5 and another on Feb. 12, Reston Association is mailing ballots to members voting in the referendum on February 13. March 8 is the deadline for ballot returns. On March 13, the Board of Directors will hold a special meeting to announce the referendum results.

Reston Association posted an online update on Jan. 22 that clarified Section VI.2(b)(15) of the Reston Deed. It says that a lot within a residential cluster that RELAC can service cannot install its own HVAC system. That is unless Section VI.2(b)(15) of the Reston Deed is amended or repealed by a two-thirds vote of the Category A members of all residential clusters on the service. Reston Association will permit affected properties to install individual HVAC units if the vote passes.

Reston Association noted that a new entity may be able to provide central cooling services; however,

SEE RA ANNOUNCES, PAGE 19



The Reston Lake Anne Air Conditioning system (RELAC) serves clusters and condominiums near Lake Anne in Reston.

# RA Announces RELAC Referendum

FROM PAGE 18

until a referendum passes, it will enforce the current covenant that no individual air conditioning units of any type shall be permitted.

Members in good standing with Reston Association subject to Deed Section VI.2(b) (15) are eligible to vote in the upcoming referendum.

Reston RELAC reported on its website that on Dec. 11, 2023, the Directors of Reston RELAC LLC, RELAC, and Simon McKeown as Steering Committee Chair signed a Memorandum of Understanding, “a crucial step toward addressing operational and managerial concerns related to RELAC.”

The website <https://relacwatercooling.com/> posted on Jan. 17, 2024, that “RELAC cooling is doable, subject to community sup-

port.” An in-person meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 23, at 7 p.m., and a hybrid meeting is on Wednesday, Jan. 24, at RCC Lake Anne Rose Gallery, 1608A Washington Plaza, N. in Reston.

## What Is RELAC?

RELAC provides chilled water for air conditioning services to clusters and condominiums near Lake Anne. It is piped under the streets, parks, and plazas of the 227 townhouses, 12 shops, and a 15-story apartment building, using 10,000 feet of buried pipes, according to The Evening Star, Washington D.C., June 18, 1965. The article states, “In each home, a coil atop the gas furnace uses the chilled water to cool and dehumidify air in the house under control of thermo-

stat... Heat picked up by the water in cooling household air is removed by the water pumped from nearby Lake Anne. The heated water is pumped back into the 30 acre man-made lake.”

## Have There Been Other RELAC Referendums?

In late 2013, Reston residents unhappy with RELAC service and RA restrictions formed Free From 15 to seek a 2015 referendum vote to revoke the RA covenant and allow current RELAC customers to choose, purchase, and install any air-conditioning system, subject to RA Design Review Board approval. RA members defeated the 2015 referendum and a similar 2005 referendum. [Source <http://hickoryclusterassociation.blogspot.com/p/relac.html>]

## ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 17

### SATURDAY/FEB. 3

**Fairfax Symphony Orchestra's The Four Seasons.** 8 p.m. At GMU's Harris Theatre, Fairfax. Prepare to be transported to breathtaking musical landscapes as violinist Chee-Yun showcases the virtuosity and passion of two iconic compositions: Vivaldi's Four Seasons and Piazzolla's Four Seasons of Buenos Aires.

### FEB. 3-4

**Virginia Opera's Sanctuary Road.** Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. This compelling and historically resonant opera, composed by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Paul Moravec, with a libretto by Pulitzer Prize-winner Mark Campbell, brings to life the harrowing and inspiring tales of those who escaped slavery through the Underground Railroad. Visit Virginia Opera's website at <https://vaopera.org/sanctuary-road>.

### SUNDAY/FEB. 4

**Mosaic Harmony Presents Peace.** 4:30 p.m. At Temple Rodef Shalom, 2100 Westmoreland Street, Falls Church. Featuring performances by Koleinu - Temple Rodef Shalom, Mosaic Harmony, Muzic on a Mission, Silk Road Dance Company, Sufi Melody, Tema Choir USA, Temple Sinai Choir, and Voices of Hope Youth Choir.

### SUNDAY/FEB. 4

**Kwame Alexander – Children's Author & Poet.** 3 p.m. At Reston Community Center, Reston. Kwame Alexander is a poet, educator, producer, New York Times bestselling author of 38 books and regular contributor to NPR's Morning Edition.

### SUNDAY/FEB. 4

**Year of the Dragon with Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company.** Festival 12-4 p.m.; Performance 4 p.m. At the Alden Theater at McLean Com-

munity Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Celebrate Chinese Lunar New Year with a performance created just for this upcoming Year of the Dragon. The program will feature this and other Nai-Ni Chen repertoire favorites that bridge the richness of Asian artistic heritage and the energy of American dance.

### SUNDAY/FEB. 4

**Traditional Celtic Music.** At 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. At The Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Champion fiddler, Gàidhlig singer and harper Seán Heely returns to the Concerts at the Old Brogue.

### SATURDAY/FEB. 10

**Ping Pong Tournament.** 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Clifton Town Hall, 12641 Chapel Road, Clifton. No fee to enter. All ages and levels of experience welcome. To register, visit <https://c25k.redpodium.com/clifton-annual-ping-pong-tournament-2024>.

## A Bit More to Say



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

To dive deeper into my Kenny-with-cancer dilemma, it's quite possible that my future treatment, or lack thereof, will come down to whether I restart my cancer treatment and irreparably harm my kidneys (leading to dialysis) or don't restart my cancer medicine and subsequently don't damage my kidneys/don't need dialysis but as a consequence, the cancer tumors grow unmedicated which leads to predictable complications that don't end well for me.

This damned if I do, damned if I don't situation reminds me of a long ago Three Stooges episode titled “Restless Knights (1935), a period-type story about a time in British history. The Stooges got in trouble for something and were sentenced to death. As they stood in a front of a firing squad, Curly asked if there was another way to die. The man in charge said he could be burned at the stake or hung. Larry asks Curly how he'd like to die. Curly says: “I'd rather be burned at the stake.” Larry asks “Why?” Curly replies: “A hot stake is better than a cold chop.” And Curly laughs, sort of proud of his reasoning. When I consider my cancer verses kidney dialysis choice, I'm not the least bit amused (except as I remember this exchange between Larry and Curly).

Unfortunately, my two options are not mutually exclusive. They could happen simultaneously if the lack of a clear alternative/plan “B” exists. Which if I were to hazard a guess, is not an uncommon outcome for a cancer patient when the side effects of the treatment overwhelm the body's the body's immune system and party, so to speak comes to an end. A ‘party’ which, for me anyhow, has been going on for nearly 15 years, to my oncologist's surprise. He of the original; “13 month to two years” prognosis offered up during the original Team Lourie meeting in late Feb. 2009.

And to invoke the late Maurice Chevalier, “I remember it well.” It was, after all New Year's Day in 2009 when my symptoms, which had manifested a few days earlier with pain in my left ribcage migrating to my right, got the best of me. On that day, I had difficulty catching my breath/breathing (inhaling in particular) and when getting up off the couch became similarly difficult, I realized that a trip to the Emergency Room was necessary. (On a holiday no less, but that's how much abnormal pain I was experiencing.) At the time, I never imagined that this initial visit would lead to a stage IV non-small cell lung cancer diagnosis eight weeks or so later. That's when we all met my oncologist for the first time and heard my “terminal” prognosis. Out of the blue is how I describe it. But after the hearing the oncologist read the reports from all the various doctors (pulmonologist, thoracic surgeon, general surgeon – to include the biopsy, and pathologist) I had visited in the previous two months since that initial Emergency Room visit, I was perplexed as to how and why a lifelong non-smoker in otherwise perfect health, with no cancer history in my immediate family, could be so diagnosed at age 54 and a half.

But that was then, this is now (age 69). An age when I don't believe I have as many lives left as I did then. Though I think I've taken cancer's best shot – and lived 14+ years to write about it, I've been worried/anticipated this doomsday-type scenario when the complication of side effects might lead to the problem I've written about today. Not that I'm describing/feeling that this recent turn of health events/side effect trouble as some sort of self-fulfilling inevitability, nevertheless; I'm not particularly surprised, more grateful that it took so long to get it here. I can't really say I feel as Lou Gehrig felt on his “luckiest man on the face of the earth” farewell at Yankee stadium, but I have lived to see the Red Sox win two more World Series since I was diagnosed and if I had known then that I'd outlive my prognosis by – 13 years, I might have thought I was the luckiest man. Given that non-small cell lung cancer stage IV was my original diagnosis, the leading cause of cancer deaths by far; in fact, as many deaths as the next three cancer groups combined, (breast, prostate and colon) to have survived – for any reason has been a miracle. You won't hear any complaints from me.

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



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