

CONNECTION

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

Vibrant Opening

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Celebrating after cutting the ribbon for the restaurant Fujisan are (from left) Tara Borwey, Nicole Toulouse (with the Fairfax City Economic Development Authority), Karen Yan, Catherine Read, Tom Ross and Page Johnson.

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PHOTO BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

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MARCH 21-27, 2024

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Artist's rendition of the health facility, featuring an exterior canopy.

Fairfax City Receives Willard-Sherwood Update

Uniting medical care, fitness, children's and seniors' programs.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax City and Fairfax County are jointly redeveloping the county's Joseph Willard Health Center and the City's Sherwood Community Center into a single location for healthcare, wellness, fitness and arts, plus programs for children and seniors.

Planned to arise on the corner of Layton Hall Drive and Old Lee Highway in Fairfax City, the project envisions a revamped and redesigned campus to integrate key services, enhance existing programs and upgrade facilities to better serve the needs of both City and county residents, now and in the future.

Following various community-outreach meetings, both online and in person, the Fairfax City Council received updates on it during a Feb. 6 work session and a Feb. 13 regular meeting. Making both presentations was the City's consultant on this project, James Patteson, with Blue Heron Leadership Group.

"Everybody's really excited and positive about the project," he said. "We're now wrapping up the schematic design, and construction is expected to be finished, the end of 2027."

Presently referred to as the Willard-Sherwood Health & Community Center, what's on tap for this massive project is the demolition of the current Health Center and construction of a new, 100,000-square-foot facility in its place. It'll be three stories, with two levels of underground parking, and it'll connect to the existing, but expanded, Sherwood Center via a fully enclosed bridge.

The new health building will offer the same healthcare services it does today, while adding a new childcare center, some senior-citizen programs from Fairfax City's

Green Acres Center, plus a two-story gym with a track on the upper level.

The health facility will seek LEED gold certification by using less water and energy and employing all-electric building systems and equipment. More parking and outdoor features will be added overall, and traffic flow into, out of and around the campus will be made safer and smoother.

This project is the result of years-long evaluations conducted by the City and county. It establishes a partnership among the county Health Department and Office for Children and the City's Parks and Rec Department. Funding is provided within both jurisdictions' Capital Improvement plans.

The health center currently offers licensed medical, nursing, dental, pharmacy, speech and hearing care, plus X-rays, and contains vital records and administrative spaces. Programs and services aimed at promoting the health and wellbeing of infants, children and adults are there, as well.

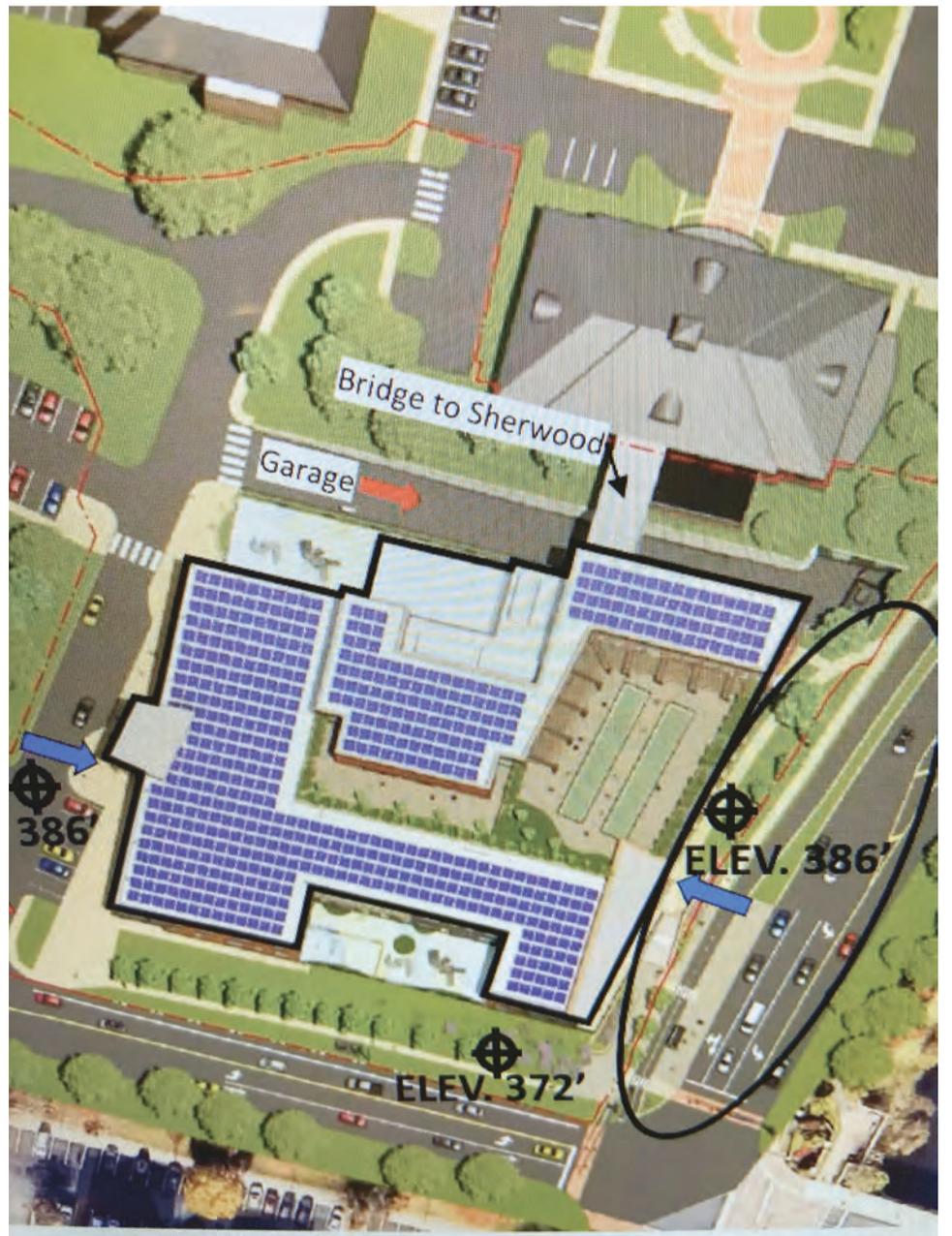
The Sherwood Community Center is a venue for recreational classes, preschool, after school care, meetings, parties, receptions and special events. Next to Van Dyck Park, it contains multipurpose classrooms, plus performance and banquet spaces.

The project's total cost estimate is approximately \$126,900,000 – which is some \$3,080,000 above the original figure. It'll generally be divided between the City and county based on each entity's pro-rata use of the space. According to Patteson, the county's cost share is anticipated to be 58 percent, with Fairfax City's portion, 42 percent.

The plan also contains an option to extend and renovate the Sherwood Center's 5,000-square-foot ballroom and turn it into a performing-arts center, with a reception area and box office added to the front. However, it hasn't yet been approved by City Council. This addition, anticipated to cost approximately \$4,500,000, isn't included in the price of the whole project because it would be 100-percent City funded.



The layout of the first floor of the health building.



An aerial drawing of the Willard-Sherwood Health & Community Center.

Opposition to Animal Services Changes

Some say proposal not sufficiently studied; no one in the audience at 2 town hall meetings spoke in favor of the proposal.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

The Department of Animal Sheltering and the Fairfax County Police Department, hosting two town halls on March 11 and March 13, heard statements and responded to questions from residents on the County's proposal to eliminate the Animal Protection Police Officer (APPO) unit; to replace the law enforcement officers with civilian Animal Control Officers (ACOs). The new ACOs would come under the management of the Animal Sheltering Department. Fielding questions were Deputy County Executive Tom Arnold; Deputy Police Chief Bob Blakely; police animal services division commander Eric Ivancic; and Director, department of animal sheltering, Reasa Currier.

County Deputy Executive Tom Arnold, whose office oversees both units, made clear that the change primarily targets the "major challenge of the bifurcated [organization] model," of handling issues between the two separate units and their missions, animal law enforcement and domestic animal welfare and sheltering. Speaking at the town hall, Arnold prioritized the goal of uniting the units, saying there will be added public services and cost savings may be achieved over time.

His response to the union's suggestion of a labor-management committee to resolve conflicts and troubleshoot: "It could work." But Arnold countered that the need for change was not a labor-management issue. "It is not based on personal conflicts" but on mission conflicts between the units. Arnold further opined that linking services for residents under one organization model is "expected to create better relationships."

Though the actual disconnects go largely unspecified to the public, several police union representatives point to lack of police unit commander continuity as part of the issue due to the FCPD's frequent commander rotation. The Shelter director indicated that the once regular meetings between the two divisions after she first came

to the Shelter two years ago are no longer held. The Shelter also came to restrict APPOs from use of its Pet Point system, used to track animals in the Shelter; and from physical entry into non-public areas of the Shelter facilities. The director declined to explain the reasons saying, "We are unable to comment on personnel matters."

Currier indicated a consultant has been hired to develop a mission statement [for the consolidated unit]. The union representative asked, "Why can't we have the same mission and goals?" Arnold answered that "we could work together but animal services are evolving and ever changing." He noted the rapidly advancing technology now used in policing, including body cameras and drones. The only technology specifically mentioned for animal services was mobile microchip readers, which could be carried in responding police vehicles, but which the APPO unit does not have. Currier says her repeated request that they be added went without action. The chip readers would allow return of stray animals in the field, without need to bring them to the shelter.

The original consolidation plan called for moving the wildlife management program to Animal Sheltering as well. But people and groups with wildlife concerns voiced continued questions and issues. Not satisfied with Blakely's assurance "nothing will change," their questions continued about wildlife handling protocols, including knowledge of wildlife, State laws and local ordinances governing wildlife handling, networking with rehabilitators, and humane euthanasia handling, as Animal Control Officers, not trained Animal Protection Police Officers respond to future calls.

Renee Grebe, who is active with Nature Forward and EQAC but does not speak for either organization, wrote, "I do not think wildlife-related issues should be handled by the shelter. In general, issues with wildlife (and their solutions) are, no pun intended, wildly different from issues (and their solutions) with domestic animals. I don't see too much overlap in them."



BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Supervisor Rodney Lusk, Franconia District, Chair of the Public Safety & Security Committee, which heard the initial proposal, attended the town hall "to listen and understand the issue better."

While Blakely has stated there are only two things ACOs cannot do legally as non-law enforcement officers, custodial arrests and search warrant executions, internal police department communications obtained by wildlife advocates and shared with The Connection indicate the department is aware of several related State codes and local ordinances which could restrict ACO actions.

Dr. Clare Thorp has spoken about loss of networking critical to wildlife response, euthanasia handling, and other concerns.

Rehabilitators say the County has misrepresented comparison reporting and organizational relationships relied on to recommend the change. They say that in a majority of jurisdictions in the Commonwealth, animal services report to police departments, not shelter management, or shelters report to the police departments along with their ACOs. They question ACOs legal ability to use firearms (needed for euthanasia in the field to prevent wildlife suffering) given existing State Codes restricting discharge waivers only to police.

The county has yet to share protocols and organizational placement for wildlife programs, since they are now not expected to be moved under Animal Sheltering.

The plan is for ACOs to receive the required three week training program for the ACO position developed by the state, supplemented with additional training, as needed. Also the county says their work will be assisted as needed by others for more complicated calls and investigations.

Rehabilitators note, although firearms are described as "an important tool for wildlife management", firearms training is not included in the State ACO training. Lone APPOs now can perform



APPO 2nd Lt. K. Prucnal, with Wallace, outside the new Lorton Police Station and Animal Shelter after its opening in October 2023.

these required duties alone.

The Shelter director listed services intended to keep animals with their families, rather than being surrendered to the shelter. Programs include those, such as behavior training support, assistance with housing, low cost veterinary care, and temporary boarding; all programs aimed at making surrender to the shelter a last resort. Currier said civilian shelter employees can better connect with communities. That, "Sworn law enforcement serving as the face of animal services can act as a barrier to accessing services for some residents."

Police union representatives at the meetings disagreed and spoke of their current work, providing many examples, in which they have assisted residents in need of help to keep their animals, connecting them to available shelter services, and examples of residents seeking out their help. They say this includes allowing owners time to make needed corrections to avoid being charged with violations.

Immigrant and minority communities are often less trusting of police officers than civilians for a variety of reasons, and this is one of the reasons given for the transition away from APPOs.

Several current APPOs commented that many County statements suggested the proposal is based with a mistaken understanding of APPO work, as a result of failure to involve serving APPOs as stakeholders in developing the proposal. Lack of engagement of stakeholders

is a sentiment echoed by the wildlife and conservation groups, as well as the APPO's union.

Residents attending the town halls included individuals and representatives of groups, such as Audubon of Northern Virginia; licensed wildlife rehabilitators; animal shelter volunteers, past and present; members of the Animal Services Advisory Committee (ASAC), past and present; and those without affiliation; as well as a large contingent of off-duty APPOs, past APPOs, and officers of the SSPBA police union.

A former Shelter volunteer, Natalie, with financial analyst background, criticized the proposal's lack of firm personnel and other savings; the increase to four shelter director level positions; and lack of accounting for added costs, including need to support the less well rounded training of ACOs compared to APPOs.

Arnold replied that the proposal "is not a financial decision."

Dr. Larry Jackson, a former member of the police department and the ASAC, warned that the proposal was "a done deal." He suggested Arnold, who oversees the police department, has pushed acceptance of the proposal without prior engagement of the variety of stakeholders. Jackson noted that there were no decision makers at the head table. The ultimate decision makers are the Board of Supervisors on the Board, which could decide on the

SEE ANIMAL SHELTER, PAGE 5

Newly Released Book Chronicles Fall of Saigon 1975

Local author tells of her Vietnamese family's escape on the last plane out.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Next spring, April 30, 2025, marks the 50th anniversary of the fall of Saigon. While there are photos and stories of the helicopter evacuations of the American diplomats and the South Vietnamese from the U.S. Embassy in Saigon on April 29, 1975, nothing has been told of what is considered to be the last plane to depart out of Saigon, a C-130. It left Tan Son Nhut Air Base before North Vietnamese forces breached the perimeter that afternoon.

Reportedly missing its cargo door and holding hundreds of soon-to-be Vietnamese refugees squeezed in side by side to allow as many as possible to escape, among them is the Nguyen family, including Truc Nguyen, who is three years old. Her father, Chau Tan Nguyen, is going to fly his family and hundreds of others out of Saigon in the C-130. The plane begins taxiing. The co-pilot pulls back on the yoke. The nose of the C-130 pitches upward, sending him and his human cargo airborne on the afternoon of April 29. Rockets tear past the aircraft. The seat of pilot Chau Tan Nguyen, a 40-year-old lieutenant colonel and C-130 pilot in the South Vietnamese Air Force, is strikingly empty.

Truc would grow up to be Truc (Eva) Nguyen Whitfield, co-author of the newly published book, "Uncommon Cargo: Sacrifice. Survival. Hope." (December 2023). Eva Nguyen Whitfield of Burke, Va., writes in the

acknowledgments of the book, "I want to express our heartfelt thanks to this great country. There is no other like it. When my family was in our most desperate time of need, the United States of America and its citizens welcomed us as refugees and helped us rebuild our lives. We're eternally grateful."

Jason Nulton is a retired lieutenant colonel in the United States Air Force. Nulton co-authored "Uncommon Cargo" with Whitfield. The Nguyen families allowed Nulton to document their story of escape through interviews, access to photos, letters, scrapbooks, and more.

"When Eva first told me her story, I was stunned. We'd known each other for a couple years, yet up to that point, the subject of our extended families wasn't something we talked much about. When I heard the against-all-odds story of her family's escape from Saigon, I knew immediately it had to be heard," Nulton said.

"Amongst the drama of the unfolding collapse, the gut-wrenching life and death decisions, and the ominous chaos of the time, the Nguyens beat the odds," Nulton added. "Their experience is an incredible illustration of what real freedom means in a world where many seem to take it for granted. It is a true example of what humans achieve, even when challenged with nearly impossible odds."

The 452-page book is set in the historic days preceding Saigon's impending fall. It dramatizes the real-life plan of Chau Tan Nguyen, Whitfield's father, to evacuate his family by flying them and others out of Saigon in the C-130 and to safety. The book is referred to as historical fiction because it dramatizes actual events and features characters based on real people who are composites or created in the story to fill gaps.

In an interview on March 1, Whitfield said

SEE NEWLY RELEASED BOOK, PAGE 5

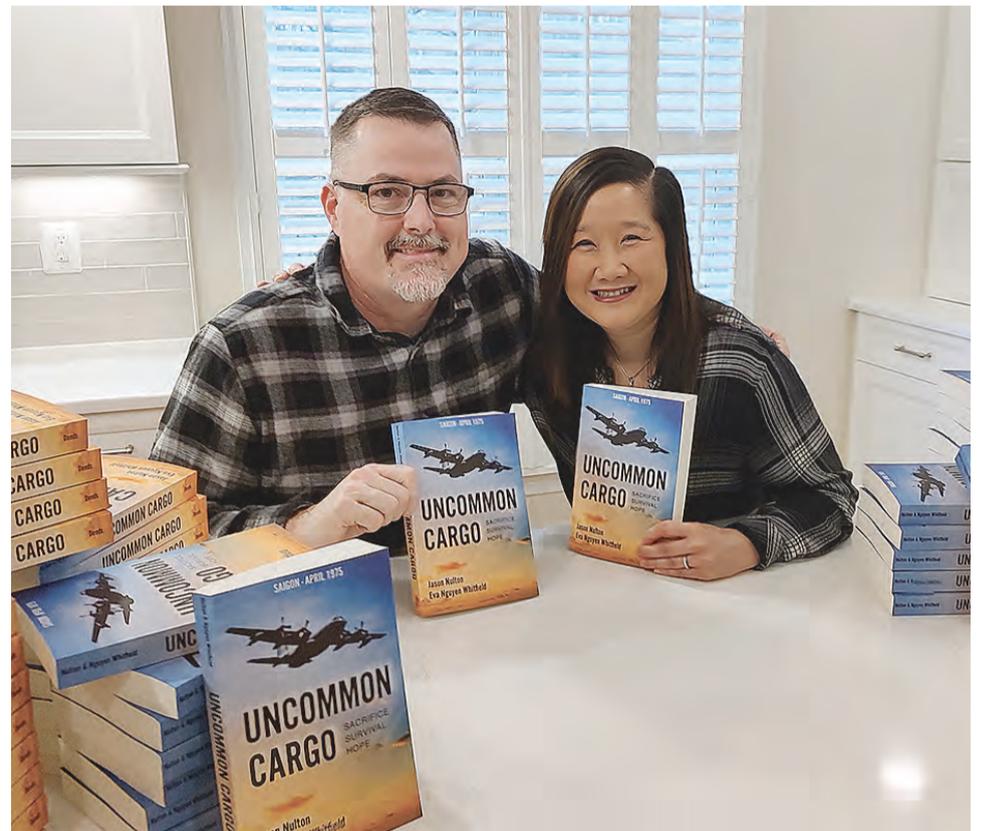


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Authors Jason Nulton and Eva Nguyen Whitfield hold their book, "Uncommon Cargo: Sacrifice. Survival. Hope." (2023), Deeds Publishing Athens

What happened to the Nguyens?

[SOURCE: "UNCOMMON CARGO"]

Chou Tan Nguyen died in Vietnam on April 29. When the family reached a refugee processing center in Thailand later that day, they only knew he wasn't there. Several days passed before they were aware that he had been killed.

The Nguyen family settled in Northern Virginia. A cousin of the author's mother, who was married to a Falls Church Presbyterian Church member, sponsored the family. For their first few years, they lived next door to the church in a house it owned. "I have really fond memories of living in the house that still stands today. I learned how to ride a bike in the church's parking lot," Eva Nguyen Whitfield said.

Hong Van Nguyen, the patriarch of the family, stayed in Vietnam, trying to salvage his rubber plantation and business. By 1976, the government had seized it. Missing his family, he attempted to escape and became one of the first boat people. He washed up on the shores of Brunei and reunited with his family in 1977. Hong died in 1990.

Dat Thi Dang remained the respected matriarch of the family. With the plentiful resources of the church sponsors and non-profit assistance groups, she set her family up for success. She died in 2023 at age 96.

Nga Nguyen, Hong and Dat's daughter, completed her studies abroad with a degree in dietetics after Saigon fell and

"was hysterical after losing contact with her family." Months later, she communicated with her father and learned the family's fate. She reconnected with them in 1978 in Virginia, received a master's degree, and did clinical research at Johns Hopkins University for over two decades. She lives in Maryland.

Mai Nguyen, Hong and Dat's other daughter, went to work at the World Bank a year after arriving in the U.S. She did not let the grief of Chau's loss defeat her; instead, she focused on making their lives better in the new country. She lives in Northern Virginia.

Mai's three brothers: Son (Sonny) Nguyen studied engineering, works for the federal government, and lives in Northern Virginia with his family; Dzung (Eric) Nguyen earned a degree in mechanical engineering, lives in Texas, and is married to a woman he met in Vietnam; and Tuan Nguyen holds a degree in computer information systems, earned a Master of Business Administration, and became a communications officer in the U.S. Marines. He lives in Maryland and works for the Department of Defense.

Mai and Chau's daughter, Truc (Eva) Nguyen Whitfield, holds a bachelor's degree in finance and marketing and lives in Northern Virginia with her husband and two sons. Mai and Chau's son, Trung Nguyen, holds a bachelor's degree in management information, works in cybersecurity, and lives with his two children in Northern Virginia.



SCREENSHOT
WITH PERMISSION

The author's father, Chau Tan Nguyen, a 40-year-old lieutenant colonel and C-130 pilot in the South Vietnamese Air Force.



The last family photo of the Nguyens, taken just a few weeks before the fall of Saigon.

SCREENSHOT
WITH PERMISSION

The last family photo of the Nguyens, taken a few weeks before the fall of Saigon.

Newly Released Book Chronicles Fall of Saigon 1975

FROM PAGE 5

that Deeds Publishing specifically designed the book's cover to convey the essence of the story's setting and themes at a glance. The cover depicts a C-130 Hercules, an American four-engine turboprop military transport aircraft capable of operating from rough dirt strips. The military normally uses the C-130 to transport and drop troops and equipment in hostile areas.

"If you are in the military world or a pilot, they all recognize the plane. I love that the publisher paid attention to detail," Whitfield said.

The book's opening lines read, "April 29, 1975, Nguyen Home, Saigon, 1:45 p.m. 'It has to be now, Mai,' Chau tells his wife, the mother of their children, daughter Truc, 3, and son Trung, 18 months old. Mai, her parents, Hong and Dat, and her three younger brothers, Son, Dzung, and Tuan, all need to pack quickly for the flight.

"In March 1975, the North Vietnamese launched offensives in Quang Tri province, northern

South Vietnam, where counterattacks were unsuccessful. A large number of troops desert to protect themselves and their families, frequently stripping off their uniforms and abandoning them on the road. On April 21, 1975, South Vietnam's President Nguyen Van Thieu resigned. He denounced the United States for betraying his country. In his resignation speech, he says, 'You have let our soldiers die under the hail of shells ... Refusing to aid an ally and abandon it is an inhuman act.' By April 27, 100,000 North Vietnamese soldiers surrounded Saigon, and on April 29, they shelled Tan Son Nhut Air Base."

The Nguyen family had been renting their unused home space to Americans for years. They assumed the men who occupied their space were CIA agents. They were in danger.

According to "Uncommon Cargo," "When the communists took over South Vietnam in 1975, more than 60,000 people who had previously worked with or supported

the American war effort were executed, and hundreds of thousands were sent to 're-education camps' for months or years."

Nulton says in the book's acknowledgment that the Nguyens became legendary in his mind. In the U.S., veterans are revered as heroes who sacrificed for the cause of freedom and upheld the flag, the Constitution, and America's way of life. But Chau Nguyen went beyond that level of honor, becoming a veteran of something greater than a flag or a constitution. He fought for his failing country and died for the freedom of others.

"If not for Chau, his family and, indeed, many others may not have survived the collapse of South Vietnam. But instead, because of him, they have survived and thrived," writes Nulton in the book.

"Uncommon Cargo Sacrifice Survival Hope" is available online at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Books A Million. The 452-page book costs \$29.95; the Kindle version is \$4.99.

Animal Services Changes

FROM PAGE 3

proposal as part of FY-25 budget deliberations.

Supervisor Rodney Lusk, of Franconia District, attending the March 13 meeting, said that he "came to listen and understand the issue better," Lusk added, "I don't believe this is decided." While Lusk is the only Supervisor to attend the two March town halls, other Supervisors are taking meetings with individual residents and groups to hear stakeholder input and concerns.

Bill Beletsky, of Springfield, a dog owner attending without affiliation with an advocacy group, commented after the meeting. "The major issue I heard tonight is a 'lack of communication' between the two [units]. The county executive 'fix' is to disband animal police, and grow the animal shelter organization. However, there is no mission statement, no effectiveness study, no cost study, no study of required training, nor authority or responsibility proposal for the new 'enhanced' animal shelter organization — all are to be determined. Because our county executives can't resolve operational disputes between the Animal Po-

lice and Shelter, they will disband the Police. The real issue, therefore, is a lack of county executive leadership."

Questions continued past the one hour scheduled meeting time; no one in the audience spoke in favor of the proposal. The Animal Services Citizens Advisory Committee previously voted 7 to 2 in favor of the proposal at a scheduled meeting this year.

The final decision of whether or not to implement the proposal lies with the Board of Supervisor, who are expected to consider it as part of the budget process.

For more background, see The Connections previous reporting ("Animal, Wildlife Reorganization Ready for Reorganization?", March 6, pg 4, 13; and "Animal Protection Police or Animal Control Civilians, Dec. 14, 2023, Springfield, pg 3,11); and the County's official statements at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter/fairfax-county-animal-services-consolidation-proposal>.

For information on providing input on this proposal, or other elements of the advertised budget, see: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/speakers-form

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2023 (updated 1/14/2024)			
Crash Location	Number of Crashes Involving Pedestrians	Pedestrian Fatalities	Pedestrian Serious Injuries
Alexandria	48	0	6 (12.5%)
Arlington County	109	1 (0.9%)	17 (15.6%)
City of Fairfax	12	0	5 (41.7%)
Falls Church	12	0	6 (50.0%)
Fairfax County	233	10 (4.3%)	57 (24.5%)

SCREENSHOT NOVA SAFE STREETS

[HTTPS://NOVASFESTREETS.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2024/01/2023-KSI-SUMMARY.PDF](https://NOVASFESTREETS.ORG/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2024/01/2023-KSI-SUMMARY.PDF)

NOVA Safe Streets reports ten pedestrian fatalities in 2023 (updated Jan. 14, 2024) for Fairfax County, with 233 crashes involving pedestrians resulting in 57 pedestrians sustaining serious injuries.

2023 (updated 1/14/2024)			
Crash Location	Number of Crashes Involving Bicyclists	Bicyclist Fatalities	Bicyclist Serious Injuries
Alexandria	8	0	1 (12.5%)
Arlington County	52	0	2 (3.8%)
City of Fairfax	5	0	1 (20.0%)
Falls Church	5	0	1 (20.0%)
Fairfax County	74	0	10 (13.5%)
Total	144	0	15 (10.8%)

SCREENSHOT NOVA SAFE STREETS

In 2023 (updated Jan. 1, 2024), Fairfax County had zero bicyclist fatalities and 74 crashes involving bicycles.

Are Pedestrians and Bicyclists Safe?

Crashes involving pedestrians have been increasing over the last three years, up from 144 in 2021 to 191 in 2022 to 233 in 2023.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Part of an ongoing series.

The Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) Public Affairs Bureau posted on March 12, 2024, “Pedestrian fatalities saw a significant decline in 2023.” FCPD reported nine pedestrian fatalities in 2023, compared to 24 in 2022, based on “data collected by the crash reconstruction unit.”

The department recently issued its Year End 2023 Crime Report that covers Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2023. Insights include those findings in its “key highlights for traffic safety initiatives and fatal crashes.”

Virginia’s state-of-the-art comprehensive Traffic Records Electronic Data System, TRENDS, maintained by the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, holds Fairfax County data, including the towns of Clifton, Herndon, and Vienna. TRENDS’ data concurs that pedestrian fatalities in Fairfax County decreased when comparing data from 2023 to 2022.

FCPD transitioned to TRENDS from January through May 2017. The Department of Motor Vehicles maintains the official record of all reportable crashes occurring within the Commonwealth and is responsible for disseminating these reports.

Yet FCPD’s records do not always agree with those of TRENDS. For instance, TRENDS reports that in 2023 (updated 1/14/2024), there were 10 pedestrian

fatalities in Fairfax County. FCPD currently reports nine pedestrian fatalities for 2023. For 2022, TRENDS reported 32 pedestrian crash fatalities, while FCPD reported 24 pedestrian fatalities.

The accuracy of pedestrian and cyclist safety statistics and whether they are publicly transparent influences residents’ and leadership’s perception of Fairfax County’s safety and needs. TRENDS’ current crash findings involving pedestrians and cyclists on streets, roads, highways, and parking lots maintained by state, county, or municipal funds throughout Fairfax County paint a somewhat different picture from the one FCPD presents.

Specific to Fairfax County, the 2023 Safe Streets Report, which uses TRENDS, reports that total crashes involving pedestrians have been increasing over the last three years, up from 144 in 2021 to 191 in 2022 to 233 in 2023. Additionally, according to TRENDS data in 2023, Fairfax County experienced an increase in serious pedestrian injuries — 57 serious pedestrian injuries in 2023 compared to 53 in 2022. FCPD did not draw attention to these statistics in its 2023 Crime Report and insights for traffic safety initiatives and fatal crashes.

FCPD also did not provide in its posted 2023 Crime Report and Insights elements of crash data relative to “key highlights for traffic safety initiatives and fatal collisions,” such as whether the collision killed a pedestrian or bicyclist, whether speeding was involved, whether the driver or the person killed by the driver was impaired by alcohol

FATAL CRASHES		
	2022	2023
Driver Fatalities	12	11
Passenger Fatalities	4	4
Motorcycle Fatalities	5	5
Pedestrian Fatalities	24	9
Total Fatalities	45	29

DATA COLLECTED BY THE CRASH RECONSTRUCTION UNIT

[Source: FCPD
<https://fcpdnews.files.wordpress.com/2024/03/fcpd-countywide-crime-summary-q4-2023.pdf>]

SCREENSHOT NOVA SAFE STREETS

Note FCPD records Fatal Crashes in 2022 as 24 Pedestrian Fatalities and nine in 2023.



SCREENSHOT

Bruce Wright

or drugs, or whether the driver was distraction-free.

FCPD’s Fatal Crashes Table, provided in the 2023 Crime Report, compares only two elements of crash data: the type of participants (driver, passenger, motorcyclist, pedestrian) and the years 2022 and 2023.

As for bicyclists, the 2023 Safe Streets Report using TRENDS data presented better news for bicyclists: no fatalities during 2023. Safe Street’s report also cited a decrease in crashes involving bicyclists sustaining serious injuries — 10 in 2023 compared to 14 in 2022.

“The caveat is that only the worst bike crashes get reported if there’s \$1500 in

damages or serious injury,” said the Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling founder Bruce Wright. “Minor crashes are not reported to the DMV, and many others are not reported to the police,” he added.

“Those numbers are unacceptable, and I don’t think police are doing enough to keep pedestrians and bicyclists safe. Speeding is out of control. Police have limited resources, and the Virginia state legislature has limited the use of speed cameras,” Wright said. Wright adds that Fairfax police do not issue speeding citations when motorists travel less than ten mph over the speed limit. “Motorists expect to be able to travel at those speeds without consequences.”

In May 2023, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Fairfax County reduced the speed limit along the crash-prone 7-mile stretch of Richmond Highway, also known as Route 1, between Mount Vernon and the Capital Beltway, south of the City of Alexandria, to “optimize safety and operations for pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers, and transit users,” according to the departments.

Nonetheless, a hit-and-run crash claimed the life of Eder Machado Aleman, 36, of Fairfax, who was attempting to cross Rich-

SEE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, PAGE 10
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

OPINION

Women's History Month With Team MVD

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK

In celebration of Women's History Month, it's a pleasure to introduce the dedicated members of Team MVD who tirelessly serve our community. Team MVD includes Christine Morin, Camela Speer, Nicholas Rinehart, Peyton Smith, Maddie Alvarado, Cassidy Donaghy and our extraordinary volunteer, Shirley Short. With a significant portion of our team comprised of talented women, there's no better time to spotlight them.

Christine Morin has been my dedicated Chief of Staff, team leader and Economic Development Specialist since I was elected Supervisor and has been with the office for 15 years. Christine brings great experience, passion and smarts as an outstanding advocate for the Mount Vernon District, particularly her Lorton home community. Christine has played a pivotal role in various initiatives including the revitalization of Original MVHS, the Workhouse Arts Center and Liberty Lorton. Her community leadership extends to crucial projects like the construction of South County Middle School and Laurel Hill Elementary School; she also worked closely with staff in the development of the new Lorton Community Center,

Police Station and Animal Shelter. Christine is a leader within the County staff and is the only female Chief of Staff amongst the Board of Supervisors. She loves her family time and cheering on the Virginia Tech Hokies and Washington Capitals.

Camela Speer, Deputy Chief of Staff, specializing in Communications and the Environment has been an integral part of our team for six years. Camela brings relentless energy and dedication to her role. She ensures our office remains dynamic and proactive and our community informed about County activities. Her profound passion and expertise in environmental matters have been indispensable in our County's leadership as we strive to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. She is the inspiration behind our annual Environment Expo, motivating our community, young and old, to care about our planet. Camela is an avid traveler, always eager to share her adventures and wanderlust spirit.

Maddie Alvarado, (formerly Carcamo-Reyes) our Office Manager and bilingual Health and Human Services Liaison, is the first smiling face you will see when you visit, always happy to assist you. Maddie joined the team in January 2022. She has a knack for helping others and is completing a bache-



The Mount Vernon District Team.

lor's degree in health services at George Mason University. Last year, Maddie spearheaded our Back-to-School Community Day which brought in over 1,000 residents and helped get students ready for the upcoming school year. Maddie loves to read and volunteers most of her free time teaching dance and serving on the leadership team at her church.

Cassidy Donaghy makes sure you know and see what's happening in the District as she manages Communications, Events and Community Outreach. She is the newest to the team and started August 2022. Cassidy handles all our social media accounts, compiles the information for the newsletters and handles community outreach initiatives such as citizen awards and our Little Food Pantry. You can see Cassidy with her clipboard leading all our events, making sure everything is running smoothly. Make sure to stop by our upcoming Ides of Bark Dog Festival on March 24 at Grist Mill Park to see her in action. In her spare time Cassidy loves to sing

and is a member of the Alexandria Singers.

Shirley Short is our super volunteer and Lady Fairfax 2023. Shirley is a retired Fairfax County Firefighter and has been volunteering with the MVD office for about two decades. Shirley is such a light and you will see her at most of our events. If you have the chance to stop by the Mount Vernon Governmental Center you will see our beautifully kept information center which is all coordinated by Shirley. She is a vital part of our team and we wouldn't be able to do all that we do without her amazing support. Shirley also supports the Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce and loves RV trips and tending to her blooming garden.

Learn more about all our staff, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/mountvernon/mount-vernon-district-staff>. We invite you to stop by our office anytime Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Thursdays until 7 p.m. if you need assistance or just want to say hi. Team MVD is working for you!



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I was taken back by how friendly and welcoming the staff was. Everyone I saw looked really happy to be there. The community was stunning and clean. This gave me peace of mind, knowing that our friend is being attended to and cared for in the best way possible. –Jean, Google Review, 2023

 © 2024 Sunrise Senior Living

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FAIRFAX

Saving the Parkway's Trees

National Park Service forests are at risk of failure in the national capital region and beyond.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

In just two hours, four Friends of Dyke Marsh volunteers rescued around 55 trees from invasive English ivy on Saturday, March 16. Ivy vines snake up many trees on the George Washington Memorial Parkway, attach to the bark and put trees at risk.

In an area between Park Terrace Drive and the parkway, just south of Tulane Drive, the volunteers cut a two- to three-foot "window" around the circumference of the trees to separate the vine from its roots. Eventually, the vines will dry out and die.

English ivy, brought to North America by English settlers, is one of the most invasive and destructive plants in the region. It creates a monoculture that has minimal habitat value, gives little support to native insects and other wildlife and destroys biodiversity. It forms a dense mat that smothers and outcompetes native plants for sunlight, water and nutrients. It blocks sunlight from the tree's bark and leaves and holds moisture that leads to rot. The vines' weight can help topple a tree in heavy wind or snow.

"While most people who buy English ivy have the best of intentions when they purchase it, what they might not know is that it often escapes into natural spaces and the dense monoculture it forms is really harmful to the environment," said Mireya Stirzaker, the parkway's natural resource specialist. Nevertheless, retailers sell it.



English ivy is rampant along the parkway, climbing up many trees.



Eventually the cut ivy will die on the tree.



Nancy Herrman is a dedicated invasive plant warrior.



Rick Johnston is not intimidated by a thick patch of vines.



Gunnar Lucko wants to recruit others to help control ivy on the parkway's trees.



Ivy's flowers turn into berries that birds disperse and spread the plant.

English ivy is one of the most invasive and destructive plants in the region.

are adequately stocked," concluded the report.

"Threatened by large populations of hungry white-tailed deer, invasive plant crowding and other factors, seedlings struggle to grow into saplings that can eventually replace canopy trees," the study asserts. "Over time, these stressors can reduce tree species diversity and density, negatively impacting forests and the plants and animals that rely on them."

It takes many years for seedlings to grow into saplings and saplings to grow into young trees. In cooperation with Virginia Tech foresters, GWMP is developing a plan for managing its forests, including both natural forests and planted trees.

Friends of Dyke Marsh volunteers work twice a month to control invasive plants. Sign up at www.fodm.org. People can also help by not planting and controlling invasive plants on private property. Invasive plants escape into forests with seeds spread by birds, wind, shoes and other methods.

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com



English ivy smothers trees, blocks sunlight and puts trees at risk.



Before and after — Volunteers cut a "window" in the ivy at the base of the tree.



BURKE / FAIRFAX / FAIRFAX STATION/CLIFTON/LORTON / SPRINGFIELD ❖ MARCH 21-27, 2024 ❖ 9

Youngkin Vetoed Bill

Del. Paul Krizek, Mount Vernon, introduced a bill, HB1167, in the recent General Assembly, to allow localities to ban the sale of English ivy. The bill passed in the House of Delegates 54-45, and passed in the Senate 21 to 18. But on March 14, Gov. Glenn Youngkin vetoed the bill.

His veto statement said, "While the intent to regulate invasive species is praiseworthy, this bill proposes a prohibition on a single species, potentially establishing a precedent for banning other legal plant species in the future. Such a precedent could sow confusion and inconsistency in regulations state-

wide. The prospect of a patchwork of laws requires small business owners and garden enthusiasts to navigate complex legal landscapes. The most effective approach to addressing this issue is education and allowing the market to determine what is best for Virginians."

But there is more at stake than what's available at the garden store.

Delegate Krizek responded, "I am very disappointed that the Governor saw fit to not just veto this bipartisan legislation but to make it one of his first vetoes. This bill would not have stopped English ivy but it would have allowed local governments to have the option to ban its sale and thus educate people about its harm to the environment as one of the worst invasive plants still being sold. It takes down full-grown trees and harbors rats and mosquitoes."

Another bill, SB306, introduced by Delegate Holly Seibold and Senator Saddam Salim would require retailers to post signs indicating that plants are invasive. Youngkin has until April 8 to act.

Virginia's Natural Heritage Program has so far confirmed 90 invasive plants in the state (<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/natural-heritage/document/nh-invasive-plant-list-2023.pdf>).

GWM Parkway Is a National Park

When the Parkway was planned, designers envisioned a unique roadway to preserve and enhance the Potomac River valley, to keep both banks of the river in public ownership and to create a grand

gateway to the home of first U.S. President George Washington, Mount Vernon, at the road's southern terminus. They integrated the road's design with the undulating terrain following natural contours and winding in gentle curves, featured natural areas, scenic vistas, some forested areas and some grassy areas.

Forests Are in Trouble

Studies of National Park Service forests concluded that forests in almost all of NPS's 39 eastern parks are at risk due to invasive plants and overabundant white-tailed deer browsing (April 2023) (<https://doi.org/10.1002/eap.2837>).

National park forests in the eastern U.S., including the George

Washington Memorial Parkway's forests, are regenerating at low levels. In 90 percent of Washington, D.C.-area parks, the tree regenerating rates are so low that researchers anticipate widespread forest loss in the next few decades. Threats include invasive insects and plants, deer browse and climate change.

Healthy forests sustain themselves when seedlings and saplings fill a gap in the canopy after a tree dies. NPS uses a measurement called a "stocking index." NPS says, "A park is considered to have healthy regeneration if the stocking index shows that 67 percent of its forest plots are adequately stocked with seedlings and small saplings. Since monitoring began, no [National Capital Region] park has reached 67 percent or even exceeded 30 percent. For the GWM Parkway south of the Potomac Gorge, only eight percent of plots

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

Expedited Data Center Zoning Amendments

Too late for Chantilly.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted a resolution presented in a board matter by Sully Supervisor and Vice-Chairman Kathy L. Smith (D) with Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay (D) and Mason Supervisor Andres F. Jimenez at the board's March 19 meeting. The resolution directs staff to prepare zoning amendments to strengthen the current provisions for data centers and provide options for by right development and special exception permissions in certain districts and over certain size thresholds and additional standards.

Staff should do so expeditiously, with the proposed amendment ready for an advertised public hearing before the board in July. "With the expedited timeframe, it is recognized that community engagement efforts must be largely centralized, with virtual meeting options to maximize opportunities for citizen involvement," Smith said. She emphasized the importance of getting ahead of data center development to protect communities and address localities' concerns.

Smith said it may be appropriate later "to include new permissions and standards in the zoning ordinance for electrical substations to the extent permitted by law."

McKay said the county has "few data centers" and only "very few on the horizon," but there is urgency. "The board wants to move

forward," he said.

"It's important that we get the protections right and the guidelines are right," McKay said. And the quickest way to do that is to approve these zoning amendments.

Jimenez agreed and added that communities should come first over data centers. The county should put the data centers "where they belong" and "the community has a quality of life that they came to Fairfax to have."

Amendments Too Late for Chantilly

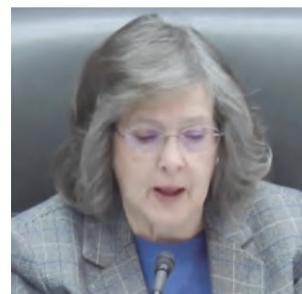
Earlier this year, on Jan. 23, 2024, after more than three hours of debate and public comment, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved rezoning a 12-acre plot of property in Chantilly for a 110-foot-tall data center, voting 8-1. Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) dissented.

The Board of Supervisors approved Project Description: PDCREF 2 Chantilly LCC Rezoning to I-5 District to permit the land use of a data center with a gross floor area (GFA) of 402,000 and a floor area ratio (FAR—building area ÷ lot area) of 0.8 to be located on the south side of Lee Jackson Memorial Highway, approximately 1,200 feet west of its intersection with Stonecroft Boulevard. The board approved the rezoning concurrently with a special exception already submitted. [Source: <https://plus.fairfaxcounty.gov/CitizenAccess/Cap/CapDetail.aspx?Module=Zoning&TabName=Zoning&capID1=REC22&capID2=00000&capID3=00GHV&agencyCode=FFXJ>]

Penzance's Chantilly data center will be



Illustration of the data center in Chantilly to be developed by real estate investment firm Penzance.



Vice-Chair Kathy L. Smith (D-Sully) of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors



Mason District Supervisor Andres F. Jimenez (D)



Chairman Jeff McKay (D)

Fairfax County's highest data center at 110 feet, nearly one-half the height of the Sheraton Tysons Hotel at 215 feet and 24 stories.

Lee Jackson Memorial Highway and Stonecroft Boulevard are the approved locations for the data center, placing it half a mile away from homes, close to Route 50, and near existing warehouses.

The Penzance affiliate applicant agreed to enclose the diesel generators, monitor water

quality, do a noise study, and pursue LEED Silver certification, as detailed in the Jan. 22 Board Draft Proffer. The applicant will also dedicate a 67-acre resource protection area on the property as a park to create a "buffer" between the facility and residents. Dominion will also build a new substation to serve the data center, although the cost of the substation will be paid by ratepayers, not the data center.

Pedestrians And Bicyclists Safety

FROM PAGE 6

mond Highway "outside of the crosswalk," the Fairfax County Police Department posted on Oct. 7, 2023.

In the past, Fairfax County's pedestrian and bicyclist safety initiatives focused on altering road users' behavior and encouraging responsible parties.

In contrast, Vision Zero's Safe System approach considers how the people who design, build, and manage the transportation network, including VDOT, can prioritize the lives and health of users.

The responsibility for enhancing pedestrians' and bicyclists' safety is shared. It is not limited to drivers and cyclists complying with traffic and highway laws, not being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or not paying attention. Modifications and infrastructure construction are needed to accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and drivers safely.

Kenneth Comer, chairman at large of the county Trails, Sidewalks, and Bikeways Committee, wrote in a letter on July 5, 2022, to Jeffrey C. McKay, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, citing increasing urgency for pedestrian and bicyclist safety issues especially along the

Route 1 corridor.

From Jan. 1 through March 14 of this year, drivers traveling on roads within Fairfax County have fatally crashed into four pedestrians.

A Feb. 15 pedestrian crash at Route 1 and Huntington Avenue in Belle Haven marked the county's first fatal pedestrian collision of the year. An adult man was crossing Richmond Highway outside a crosswalk when a northbound 2006 Toyota Camry struck him. He was pronounced dead at the scene, according to Fairfax Police.

The second, third, and fourth fatal pedestrian crashes in 2024 occurred in three separate collisions on Sunday, March 10.

The first deadly collision on March 10 occurred just after midnight that Sunday in Hybla Valley and involved a stolen Sonata, according to Fairfax County Police. An officer reportedly saw the stolen car on Buckman Road, near Russell Road. When the police approached, the motorist drove away, and "officers did not pursue." Fifteen minutes later, an officer saw the stolen vehicle speeding along Janna Lee Avenue. The driver sideswiped an occupied vehicle, crashed into a dumpster, and exited the vehicle and fled. "Officers then found a struck pedestrian in the grass nearby. James Johnson, 63,

of Hybla Valley, was taken to the hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries. Officers saturated the area but were unable to locate the driver," police said.

March 10's second fatal pedestrian collision occurred at 3:39 a.m. on the shoulder of 495's westbound lanes just east of Exit 176 where a person appeared to be changing a vehicle's tire, according to Virginia State Police. The driver of a passing truck struck the pedestrian, who died at the scene.

Less than 15 minutes later, troopers encountered a woman in the eastbound lanes of the same area of I-495 near Exit 176. A 2005 Honda Accord, heading eastbound in the right center lane on I-495, "was unable to avoid striking a female pedestrian who had stepped into traffic," the VSP said in an update on Tuesday, March 12. The woman, Vanessa Schwartz, 35, of Alexandria, died at the scene of the crash. The crash remains under investigation, with the assistance of the Virginia State Police Crash Reconstruction Team.

Even one death is not acceptable. In 2023, for the first time since the City of Alexandria's Vision Zero goal of eliminating roadway deaths and severe injuries was adopted in 2017, the city ended the year with zero fatalities. The program webpage

provides more information on the city's Vision Zero Program. Additional resources include the Vision Zero Action Plan, the Vision Zero Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Work Plan, and the Vision Zero Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2023.

Fairfax County Police responded to questions about traffic safety statistics with a statement: "Our 2023 crime report includes all the data relating to fatal crashes that occurred and were investigated by FCPD. The reason there is a difference between the TREDs numbers and ours is that they do not make that distinction with jurisdiction, so the numbers can vary.

"The FCPD works hard all year long implementing traffic safety initiatives, public awareness, and safety tips through our social media platforms, Traffic Safety Division, and Crime Prevention Unit."

The Fairfax County Police Department and Virginia State Police will launch the Road Shark campaign for 2024. Road Shark is a high-visibility and coordinated enforcement and education effort to deter aggressive driving, reduce crashes, and change driving behavior, enhancing traffic safety on the roadways of Fairfax County. Last year, nearly 25,000 citations and warnings were issued over four waves

Fairfax City Seeks Voting-Sticker Designs

The City of Fairfax Office of Elections and Commission on the Arts invite all school-aged students in Fairfax City to design the City's next "I Voted" and "Future Voter" stickers. This contest is open to all grades K-12 students who live in the City of Fairfax, attend public or private school in the City, or reside and are homeschooled within the City.

The "Future Voter" sticker contest is only for students in grades kindergarten through sixth. The "I Voted" sticker contest is for students in grades seven through 12. The contest began in January and will run for just a few more weeks.

All forms of artwork must be received on or before April 12; late entries will not be accepted. No entry fee is required. Participants must submit their original artwork, plus an entry form containing a signature of consent by a parent or a legal guardian.

"The purpose of the voting-sticker contest is to engage and teach students about their civic duties," explained Fairfax City Registrar Wannicha Rojanapradith. "By their participating in designing the 'I Voted' and 'Future Voter' stickers, we hope to instill long-term civic engagement and encourage students to vote regularly once they become eligible to do so."

Forms and artwork may be submitted via Website, mail or in-person to: Election Sticker Project, Fairfax City Hall, Suite 123, 10455 Armstrong Drive, Fairfax VA 22030.

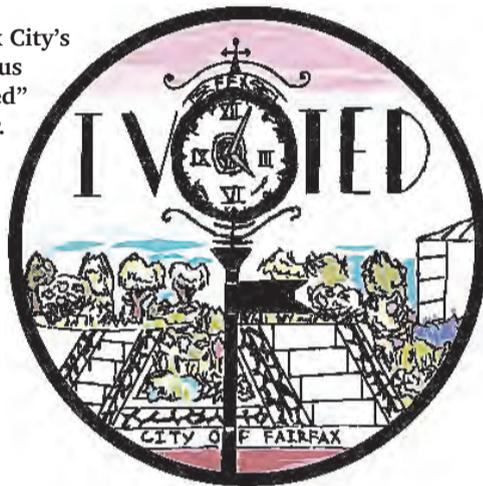
For more detailed information about the contest rules, to obtain an entry form and to submit artwork, go to <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts/2024-election-sticker-contest>.

- BONNIE HOBBS

Fairfax City's previous "Future Voter" sticker.



Fairfax City's previous "I Voted" sticker.



NEWS BRIEFS

National Vietnam War Veterans Day

Friday, March 29, is National Vietnam War Veterans Day. To commemorate it, a special ceremony will be held at 11 a.m. at the Veterans Amphitheatre next to Fairfax City Hall at 10485-10489 Armstrong St. in Fairfax. Sponsoring this event are the Fairfax County Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the Fairfax Resolves Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution (SAR), along with VFW Post No. 8469 and American Legion Post No. 177.

The public is welcome to attend and honor all Vietnam veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, plus their families. In addition, the names of the 147 Fairfax County residents killed in Vietnam, or missing, will be read. And all Vietnam veterans present will be recognized.

Donate Supplies To The Lamb Center

The Lamb Center, a nonprofit, daytime drop-in center for the homeless, needs the following supplies, this month: laundry detergent; liquid bleach; dryer sheets; unscented, 13-gallon trash bags with drawstrings; hand soap; disinfectant wipes; backpacks; travel-sized toiletries (mouthwash must be alcohol-free); surgical face masks (not N95); winter boots and athletic shoes (men's and women's, all sizes); work gloves (new); men's belts (sizes 30-48); men's sneakers (8-13); men's boots, (8-13); and men's jersey boxer briefs (M-XL).

All supplies may be brought to The Lamb Center, 3160 Campbell Drive in Fairfax, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; and Saturdays, from 9-11 a.m.

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ENTERTAINMENT



The Capital Art & Craft Festival takes place March 22-24, 2024 at the Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly.

FORB'S ANNUAL

NATIVE PLANT SALE

Online ordering for FORB's (Friends of Riverbend Park) annual Native Plant Sale opens on Thursday, February 1, 2024 and closes on Sunday, March 24, 2024. Go to the website at www.forbpark.org, and click "2024 Native Plant Sale" on the home page. There are over 500 plants from 56 species from which to choose including Virginia Bluebells, Cardinal Flowers, several varieties of Phlox and many, many more. All orders will be picked up on Saturday, April 13, 2024 at the Riverbend Park Educational Pavilion on Potomac Hills Street.

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!

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/>



An Easter Egg Hunt/Craft and Bake Sale takes place on Sunday, March 24, 2024 at the Clifton Presbyterian Church.

BONITA LESTINA

FAIRFAX OLD TOWN HALL PERFORMANCE SERIES

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

SCHEDULE

March 22: James & Victor – Jazz Duo/Steel Pan

April 5: Francesca Hurst – Solo Piano

April 19: Sylvan Waters Duo – Harp/Brass

MARCH 9 TO APRIL 14

"Every Brilliant Thing." At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. Workhouse Arts Center Performing Arts, announces its newest production, Every Brilliant Thing, a heartfelt one-person play that celebrates the little things that make life brilliant. "Every Brilliant Thing" is an interactive solo performance piece that explores the resilience of the human spirit and the capacity to find joy in all the little things. Showtimes are Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets are on sale now and range from \$25 to \$35. For more information, visit the website (www.workhousearts.org).

THURSDAY/MARCH 21

Film, "Kenyatta: Do Not Wait Your Turn." 5-7:45 pm. At Johnson Center Cinema, GMU, Fairfax. The Visiting Filmmakers Series is pleased to welcome filmmaker Timothy Harris to campus for a free public screening of his new documentary, followed by a post-screening discussion. Executive produced by Al Roker, Kenyatta: Do Not Wait Your Turn tells the story of Malcolm

Kenyatta, a self-described "poor, gay, Black man from North Philly," currently a Pennsylvania State Representative, during his historic run for the Pennsylvania Democratic nomination for the United States Senate. This event is free and open to the public, but registration is required.

THURSDAY/MARCH 21

Summer Job Fair for High School Students. 4-6 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The McLean Citizens Association, with support from McLean, Langley, and Marshall High Schools, is hosting a summer job fair. Students do not need to sign up -- just walk in. Recommend students bring copies of their resume to leave with potential employers. Students will have the opportunity to fill out applications on the spot! If you have questions regarding this event, send them to e_y_committee@mcleancitizens.org.

THURSDAY/MARCH 21

Author Grace Jun to Speak. 7 p.m. At Foxcroft School. Grace Jun is an assistant professor at the University of Georgia, where her research and teaching focus on design and disability processes, has been named Foxcroft's 2024 Alison Harrison Goodyear '29 Fellow. Jun will speak to the community about her career journey and research. This event is open to the local community. Admission is free, but seating is limited. Call 540-687-4510.

FRIDAY/MARCH 22

Oil Painter Denise Shamoun Phalan. 11 a.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. McLean Art Society is honored to host local artist, Denise Phalan, who will share her personal sketch books that serve as an important component in her pro-



The Fiesta Del Sol: Latin American & Caribbean Festival takes place on Saturday, March 23, 2024 at the McLean Community Center.

cess of oil painting, creating mixed media and collage. Ms. Phalan earned an MFA in drawing and painting from The Catholic University of America in Washington DC, is a member of the Oil Painters of America and Austin Plein Air. Her studio is located at The Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton. She has received numerous awards for her paintings and mixed media works.

Headquarters, Reston. This event delivers a treasure hunt experience in a fun, educational and rewarding forum. Bring one personal item such as jewelry, coins, a timepiece, artwork or other heirlooms, and the appraisal expert will educate you and the other participants with information on what it's worth and what you can do with your treasure. Contact Member Services at 703-435-6530.

MARCH 22-24

Capital Art & Craft Festival. At Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly. The Capital Art & Craft Festival will feature 260 juried artisans in more than a dozen mediums including glass, jewelry, leather, paintings, prints, photography, pottery, wearable art and wood. Attendees may buy directly from the artisans who create the work, all of which is crafted by hand. Times: Friday, March 22 and Saturday, March 23: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Sunday, March 24: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Tickets: \$10 in advance; \$12 at the door. Senior discount available; children under 12 free. Ticket information: www.CACFart

SATURDAY/MARCH 23

Winterguard and Drumline Competition. At South County High School, Lorton. On March 23, South County High School will host The Atlantic Indoor Association (AIA) Winterguard and Drumline Championships. The winterguard incorporates flags, sabers, mock rifles with dance. The drumline is composed of several types of drums divided into the pit, battery and front ensemble with cymbals, xylophones, snare drums, and base drums rounding out the sound.

SATURDAY/MARCH 23

Workhouse Wonderland Exhibition and Fundraiser Event. 7:30-10 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, McGuireWoods Gallery, Building W-16, Lorton. "Every adventure requires a first step," says the Cheshire Cat. Join in a whimsical night at Collect 2024 -Workhouse Wonderland! Enjoy Wonderland activities, libations, and treats, and be part of why "we're all mad here." The Collect exhibition features 50+ original creations by the acclaimed community of artists at the Workhouse. Artwork on display can be won in an exciting raffle at the end of the evening.

SATURDAY/MARCH 23

Appraisal Roadshow. 10:45 a.m.-12 p.m. At Reston Association

SATURDAY/MARCH 23

Mr. Vaudeville. 2 p.m. At Reston Community Center's Center Stage, Reston. Mr. Vaudeville finds himself in a predicament of theatrical confusion that creates a hilarious afternoon of magic, mayhem and vaudeville comedy.

SATURDAY/MARCH 23

Fiesta Del Sol: Latin American & Caribbean Festival. 5-10 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Enjoy the tastes and sounds of Latin America and the Caribbean with live bands, quality artisan exhibitors, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages and sumptuous food. Learn how to dance the salsa, meringue or bachata from the best of dance instructors throughout the evening.

SUNDAY/MARCH 24

Easter Egg Hunt/Craft and Bake Sale. 11:30 to 1 p.m. At Clifton Presbyterian Church, Clifton. The Clifton Betterment Association, partnering with the Clifton Presbyterian Church will host an Easter Egg Hunt/Craft and Bake Sale at the Clifton Presbyterian Church. All kids welcome, no need to be a church member. The Bunny will be there.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 27

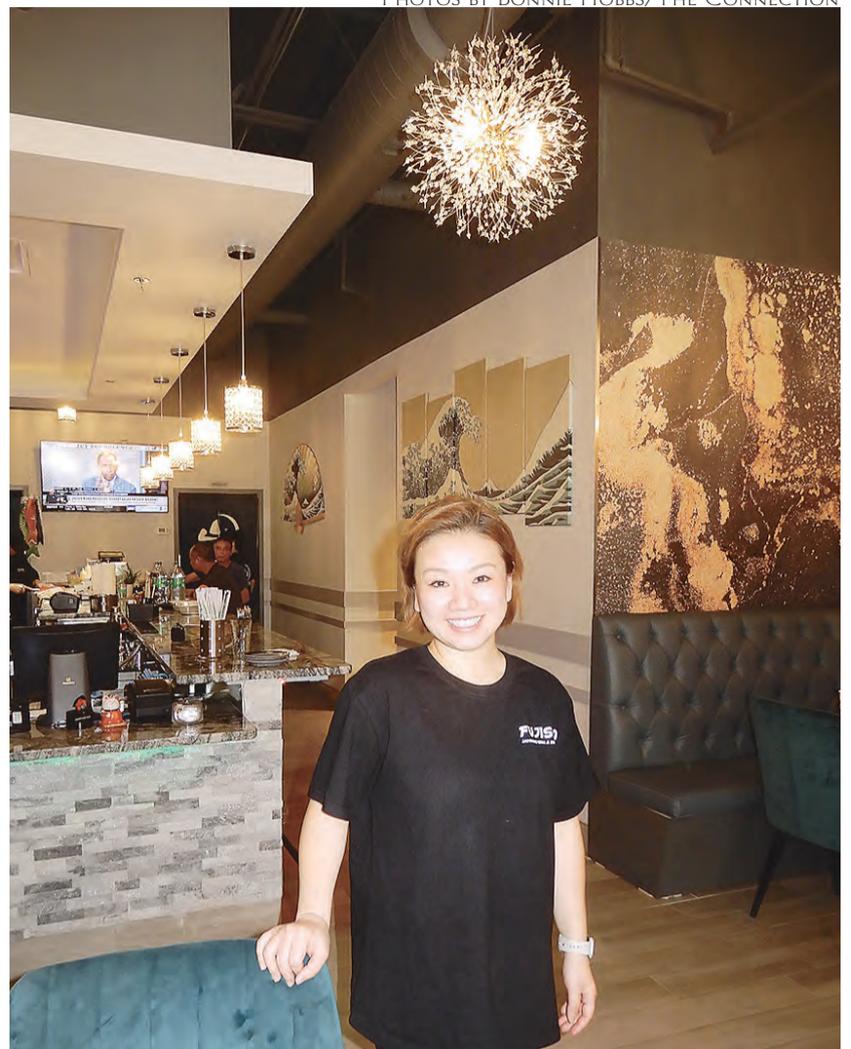
"Saving Claire" Documentary. 11 a.m.-noon. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. "Saving Claire" is an innovative new tool for fall prevention which tells the story of denying gravity. "Saving Claire" works. It is tested, repeatable, and a scalable model. There will be a panel discussion following the documentary viewing.

THURSDAY/MARCH 28

"The Tales of Beatrix Potter". 1 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. With dancers of The Royal Ballet. This live-action film adapts the animal



Celebrating after cutting the ribbon are (from left) Tara Borway, Nicole Toulouse (with the Fairfax City Economic Development Authority), Karen Yan, Catherine Read, Tom Ross and Page Johnson.



Fujisan owner Karen Yan

Fujisan Offers Creative, Fresh Japanese Dishes

It's open in the Shops at Fairfax shopping center.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Fujisan literally means Mount Fuji in Japanese, so it's only fitting that owner Karen Yan named her Japanese restaurant in Fairfax City after it. Called Fujisan Japanese Grill & Sushi Bar, it's at 10698 Fairfax Blvd. in the Shops at Fairfax shopping center. She even designed its interior.

"The food is as beautiful and delicious as this restaurant is," said Tara Borway with Fairfax City Economic Development. "Her vision was to create a place where people could enjoy good food in a welcoming atmosphere without a hefty price tag. And it features a team of top chefs with years of experience working in New York and Washington, D.C."

Borway was speaking at the restaurant's recent ribbon cutting. She was also pleased that, "right out of the gate," Fujisan participated in Restaurant Week. And Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read was also happy to greet a new business here.

"I'm excited that this restaurant is in my neighborhood," she said. "It's within walking distance from both Fairchester Woods and Cobbdale." Then, speaking directly to Yan, Read said, "You're a welcome addition to our City and neighborhood, and I look forward to having many meals here."

"Everyone's given us a warm welcome," replied Yan. "Thank you."

Councilmember Tom Ross noted that the Fairfax City community is always supportive of its new businesses and restaurants. And Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jennifer Rose described Fujisan as "an amazing Japanese restaurant."

Also speaking was Fairfax City's Commissioner of the Revenue, Page Johnson. "Seventy percent of the City businesses are small businesses like this one," he said. "They're the backbone of our economy, and we're so glad to have Fujisan here."

Yan previously owned a restaurant in Maryland; but after moving to Fair Lakes in 2021, she knew she wanted to open one in Virginia. She decided to do so in Fairfax City, she explained, "because of its booming development. It's also clean and safe, with friendly people, and it's not far from where I live."

Saying business at Fujisan has been good, Yan has been pleased with the community support her business has received. "We have many repeat customers, with some coming here five times a month," she said. "They come here the first time by themselves and then return with their families and friends."

Discussing some of the most popular items on Fujisan's menu, Yan said the Donburi (rice bowls) are big hits with the customers, with the favorite being the Salmon Volcano Rice featuring seared salmon over rice, topped with a poached egg. The signature sushi rolls are also top sellers, especially the Komodo Dragon Roll containing 12 pieces filled with soft-shell crab and cucumber



A sample of Fujisan's offerings – meat, vegetables, dumplings, sushi and a spring roll.

and topped with eel, avocado and caviar.

Another customer favorite is the Dobin Mushi soup. It's made with a traditional Japanese broth, steamed and served in a teapot with seafood, a quail egg, mushrooms, a fishcake and lime. "People also like our Chef's Selections from our sushi bar," said Yan. "For example, our Fujisan Box Deluxe has nine small dishes in a box with different types of sashimi [raw fish] and chirashi [rice at the bottom of the bowl]." And all the boxes are served with miso soup and a house salad.

"We have lots of vegetarian options, too," she added. "They include sweet potato rolls, veggie rolls, hibachi vegetables, avocado salad and Yaki Udon/Soba noodles – which are stir-fried noodles with mixed vegetables."

Furthermore, if some diners aren't fans of eating raw fish, Fujisan also offers cooked entrees, such as hibachi shrimp, scallops,

lobster and filet mignon. Chicken and steak teriyaki dishes are on the menu, as well, as are a variety of salads.

"We can seat 40 people, and we also have a full bar with happy hour from 4-6 p.m., daily," said Yan. "Fujisan is a modern, casual restaurant with a relaxing environment. We have very good service with a friendly staff and a wide selection of food options, including ramen. And as a sushi restaurant, we have fresh fish come every day from places such as Norway and Canada."

So how do the customers like the food? Just ask Matt Easley and Joey Peppersack, who were there recently enjoying lunch. "The

dumplings are so delicious – they're savory with a sweet dipping sauce," said Easley. "And the crab sushi has a crab-forward flavor, and some sweetness, which I love. And with wasabi on it, it has spice, too. I'll definitely be coming back again; I can hardly wait."

Agreeing, Peppersack said the dumplings were "really good and their texture was perfect. The meat and chicken inside them were very tender, and the seasoning was really tasty. I'd recommend this restaurant to others, especially because of the dumplings."

◆◆◆

Fujisan's hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 11 a.m.-9:30 p.m.; Friday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m.; Saturday, 11:30 a.m.-10 p.m.; and Sunday, 11:30 a.m.-9 p.m. (Closed Tuesdays). Lunch specials are offered weekdays, from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Customers may also order meals online at www.fujisanva.com or by calling 571-407-7105.

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Ides of Bark

Bring your best canine friend out to Ides of Bark at Grist Mill Park on Sunday, March 24, from 1 to 4 p.m. Enjoy a day filled with games, prizes, vendors and family fun.

This free event is supported by Mount Vernon District Supervisor Dan Storek and sponsored by the Fairfax County Park Foundation.

Grist Mill Location
4710 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy
Alexandria, VA 22309

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
south@connectionnewspapers.com

Mary Kimm
Editor and Publisher
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com

Bonnie Hobbs
Community Reporter, 703-778-9415
bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com

Mercia Hobson
Staff Reporter
mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com

Mike Salmon
Contributing Writer
msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com

Ken Moore
Contributing Writer
kmoore@connectionnewspapers.com

Susan Laume
Contributing Writer

ADVERTISING:
For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk
Display Advertising/National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment Advertising
703-778-9431

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Publisher
Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

In Memoriam Managing Editor
Kamal Kurspahic

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 12

stories of Beatrix Potter into a full-fledged ballet performance danced by various stars of the Royal Ballet. An ideal film for both children and adults. Rated G.

THURSDAY/MARCH 28

Maudy Thursday. 7:30 p.m. at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, McLean. This service commemorates Jesus Christ's institution of the eucharist during the last supper. The Rev. Dr. Scott Ramsey will preach, reflecting on I Corinthians 11:23-26 and John 13:1-17, 31b-35. There will be two services on Good Friday, March 29. One at Noon and one at 7:30 pm, both in the Sanctuary. These services will focus on the Passion Narrative from the Gospel of John. Good Friday services commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus and his death on the cross at Calvary. The service will be led by the Rev. Layne Brubaker. Both evening services will also be live streamed on our website and our YouTube Channel. Join us as we observe these important days in the Christian year and as we prepare for the joy of the resurrection on Easter Sunday.

SATURDAY/MARCH 30

Easter Egg Hunt. At Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, at corner of Chain Bridge Road and Great Falls Street in McLean.

- ♦ Hunt #1 will be for pre-school children ages 2 through Kindergarten age 5 from 9:30 to 10:15 am.
- ♦ Hunt #2 will be for grades 1-3 at 11:00 to 11:45 am.
- ♦ And Hunt #3 will be for children grades 4-5 held at 12:30 - 1:15 pm.

Each hunt will begin in the Pavilion (the garden area to the north-east of the main parking lot) with activities and games. Egg hunts will follow in the garden surrounding the Pavilion.

EASTER SERVICE

Celebrate the joy of Easter with us at Lewins-

ville Presbyterian Church. They will have three services of worship: The sunrise service will be held at 6:30 a.m. in the cemetery and will be led by the Rev. Layne Brubaker. This will be a small, informal worship setting in the location which has provided a final resting place for members of the Tysons-McLean community for more than 175 years. Our 9:00 am and 11:00 am Services of Worship will be a traditional Easter service in the sanctuary featuring commissioned music by David Conte, with Brass, Organ & Tympani. Lewinsville Choirs will provide glorious music of the season. The Rev. Dr. Scott Ramsey will preach at both services, reflecting on Isaiah 25:6-9 and Mark 16:1-18. The 9 am and 11 am services will also be live streamed on our website and on our YouTube channel.

SATURDAY/MARCH 30

Spring Fest. 10 a.m. to noon. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Join your neighbors to celebrate the changing of seasons with self-guided arts and crafts, entertainment and the opportunity for your children to get a photo with Bunny. Bring your camera and smartphone for photos! An MCC staff member will be on hand to take a photo of you and your family.

ENJOY EGG-CELLENT SPRING CELEBRATIONS AT FAIRFAX COUNTY PARKS!

Spring is in the air and the Fairfax County Park Authority is gearing up for a season of family-friendly fun with all sorts of egg hunts and spring celebrations at several locations throughout the county. Enjoy festive activities for all ages in the park - the perfect setting for creating lasting spring memories: Spring EGG-stravaganza at Lake Fairfax Park on March 23 from 3:30-5 p.m. Cost \$8. Baskets & Bunnies at Burke Lake Park on March 30. Amusements tickets, 10 a.m.- 5 p.m. Cost \$10

(online ticketing open until March 28. Limited day-of sales). Egg Hunt Ticket (1-4 years). Choose times between 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Cost \$5 (online ticketing open until March 28. Limited day-of sales). Bubbles and Bunnies at Cub Run Rec Center on March 30, 9-10:30 a.m. and 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Cost \$20. Easter Egg Hunt at Colvin Run Mill on March 30. Choose times between noon to 3:45 p.m. Cost \$8. Mini Golf Egg-plorations at Oakmont Rec Center on March 30. Choose times between 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Cost \$15. Egg-speriments at Hidden Oaks Nature Center on April 6, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Cost \$10.

SATURDAY/MARCH 30

"Empowering Women for Their Future." 2-4 p.m. At Cabell's Mill, 5235 Walney Road, Chantilly. Sponsored by the Fairfax County Women in NAACP. This event promises to be an inspiring gathering celebrating the contributions of women throughout history and exploring ways to empower women for the future. Guest speakers who will share their insights and experiences: Jatrice Martel Gaiter: Executive Vice President, External Affairs for Volunteers America. Angela V. Harris: Award-winning Coach, Technologist, and Philanthropist. Jneva Norfleet: Program Analyst for the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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! 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.

Not Great News



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

"Not Great News." What kind of a moron am I? "Why," as Curly of The Three Stooges asked years ago in a typical two-reeler, "is there more than one kind?" If you've been following along recently (reading my column regularly), you might recall that I'm in a bit ('bit.' Isn't that the understatement of the year?) of trouble. After reviewing, my most recent scan, some tumors grew, some remained stable. In addition, my regular monthly lab work showed some kidney function at disappointing levels (another understatement). As a result, both my oncologist and nephrologist are beginning to use the dreaded "d" word: dialysis in our conversations/emails. And so, the prospect of kidney failure and dialysis loom large as the possibility of spending multiple hours a day, multiple days a week hooked up to a machine that will function as my kidneys moves ever closer to becoming my reality. 'Not great news' for sure. In fact, one might describe it as the worst possible news (considering my medical circumstances).

To be honest, I don't yet have the details. Never had I been told that dialysis was inevitable (given the side effects of the anti-cancer medicine I have been taking for three-plus years). What I have been told in the last two days by both my oncologist and nephrologist (kidney doctor) is fairly discouraging (yet another understatement). The likelihood that I'll be moving off this slippery slope and into a Barcalounger (at the dialysis center), a fear I've been compartmentalizing for years, may very well be in the offing. It seems the only straw that would suspend/re-think this treatment is if my thyroid cancer tumors began growing and moving and causing all sorts of complications. Since I'm presently not taking any anti-cancer medicine due to the adverse side effect to the kidneys, this seems likely. Inevitable? One more prediction the doctors can't/won't make.

And so, my body/organs, left to their own medical devices, have succumbed quicker to the cancer than they otherwise had. In this situation, no medicine means no luck. Even with my wife hanging horseshoes right-side-up (so the luck doesn't run out) at the horse barn she frequents, it may be that after 15 years of being my oncologist's "third miracle," the tide or the worm, depending on your preference, has turned. And turning in an unfavorable direction.

But so, what? I'll approach this next phase of my cancer journey as I have with all the others. I will remain positive about the negative. Throughout my years of treatment, I have often surprised my oncologist by my much-better-than-anticipated reaction to whatever he was prescribing.

Moreover, I've lived so much longer than the experts - who provide the figurative handbook of AMA-approved steps and procedures, expect their patients diagnosed with non-small cell lung cancer stage IV to live. Having exceeded my original "13 month to two-years" prognosis by over a decade, the standard steps sort of don't apply to me/haven't applied to me for many years. The "Hippocratic oath," (do no harm), has been invoked a time or two by my oncologist as I was no longer the norm, and so a lot of my treatment was common sense type measures/don't make the patient worse. And we all succeed beyond any of our wildest dreams to the point where I am now still living into year 16.

I can understand - and imagine, how certain medical treatment/protocols aren't necessarily suitable for long-term exposure, especially when you're diagnosed with cancer. As such, your orientation becomes more short term.

The present matters most. What happens in 15 years? The doctors are more concerned about what happened today and tomorrow. Considering how the patient's body will react to non-stop chemotherapy - while living so much longer than doctor's training and experience would have led them to believe, is sort out of the doctor's purview. By surviving so long, I may have become my own worst enemy (sort of outkicked my punt coverage, if you know football?). As for the medical side of it, certain organs aren't/weren't structured to endure so much chemotherapy. And because I am still an active patient, up until recently, having been on chemotherapy, targeted therapy and so forth for 15 years nonstop, I can speak from experience. And when I was asked regularly by my oncologist if I wanted to take a break from treatment, I always said "No." I was too afraid of what the cancer might do if left untreated. Well, I sure am going to find out now. Unfortunately, due to the kidney complication, I might never be able to re-start my cancer medicine. If that happens/continues and I'm off my thyroid cancer medicine for an extended period, I will be grateful for the extra time that I've earned, but I wouldn't bet the over. Having stage IV papillary thyroid cancer is bad enough, especially after having been treated for non-small cell lung cancer, also stage IV, for 10 years previously. I can't say it's totally been fun while it lasted. Nor will I say how much fun it's going to be living forward, given these recent complications. Nevertheless, it (life) has always beaten the alternative: death. With no guarantees, especially with respect to cancer treatment, one must be open to a maybe. I have been, and I still am. No maybes about it.

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

Willard-Sherwood Update

FROM PAGE 2

During the design-development phase, the project team will work with the architect and Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR) to reconcile the construction costs, evaluate additional cost-saving strategies and conduct value engineering. "We responded to citizen input on the design of the health building," said Patteson. "And at each step of the process, we'll get a cost estimate and see the updated design."

The main entrance to the health facility will be on Blenheim Boulevard. The building will feature rooftop solar panels and contain both stairways and an elevator. And the parking garage will have 245 spaces. In addition, since Fairfax City's Police Department is on the same campus as the Sherwood Center, its access out to Layton Hall Road will be improved.

Providing more specific details about the new building, Patteson said its gym will be college-sized, with collapsible seating for 300 people. And a fitness space for Pilates and other forms of exercise will open onto the track. "You'll be able to see people working out behind a glass area," he said.

The City's Parks and Recreation staff will relocate to the health center, and

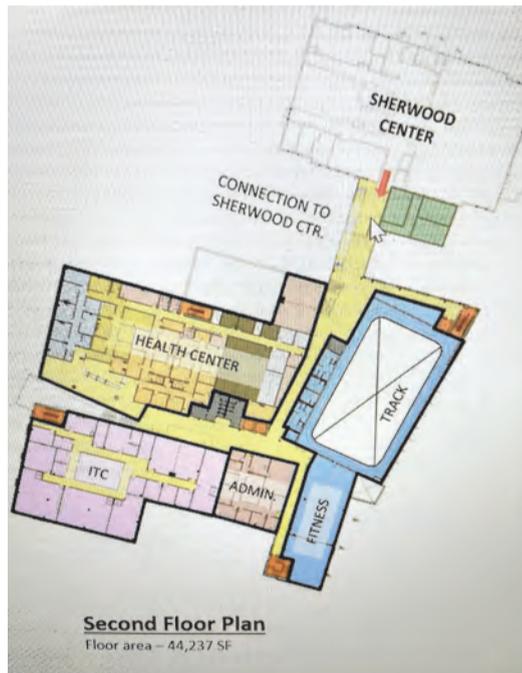
Health Department programs will be on the second floor. There'll also be a rooftop terrace for events and for use by the seniors, and it'll be landscaped all around. And on the ground will be a plaza near a bike-share area.

Brooke Hardin, Fairfax City's director of Community Development and Planning, is happy about the plans, as well. "The building won't look institutional but, instead, will be fun and innovative," he said. "It's light and airy and connects to the outdoors. It has informal places for people to gather, and there's a canopy and generous hallways.

And, he added, "We're pleased with how responsive the design team was to the community's wishes." For example, the building's exterior ADA ramp was moved closer to the bus stop, after residents complained that the initial drawings showed it too far away.

Regarding the project overall, Councilmember Tom Ross said, "I think this will be really exciting for the community, and I appreciate the presentation."

On Feb. 13, City Council officially reaffirmed its commitment to the project and authorized City staff to proceed to the de-



The health building's second floor, including the indoor track.

sign-development phase. "We'll come back to Council after we're done with that phase," said Hardin. "The City will have to decide, in about 18 months, if it wants to go forward with the performing-arts center."

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