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Mother and daughter Jessica and Katherina, 8, of Herndon, put their heads together to examine plant samples through the microscopes.

Wonder Wagon, Taking Nature on the Road

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Earth Day Extravaganza

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'Deadly Veto, Not Just Any Veto'

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PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION
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Under Contract!



Offered for...\$2,439,000

6025 Woodland Terrace, McLean
SPECTACULAR 2016 Arts & Crafts home with 3BR/4.5BA on 3 spacious levels located on over a half acre in sought-after Chesterbrook Woods! Designed by renowned architect Dwight McNeil and built by Joy Custom Design + Build. This finely detailed home features over 5300 sq ft of living space. The back of the house transitions beautifully to the sun-filled gourmet kitchen, breakfast area, and stunning family room. Spacious main level BR with en suite. Upper level features 2 BR's, each with en suite. Lower level offers a spacious family room, rec room, wine cellar, and full bath. **Chesterbrook, Longfellow, McLean Schools!**



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SOLD!



Sold for...\$2,550,000

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SOLD!



6144 Farver Road
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SOLD!



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SOLD!



1562 Forest Villa Ln
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\$1,550,000

SOLD!



2336 N. Oak Street
Falls Church, 22046
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SOLD!



1639 Macon Street
McLean, 22101
\$2,215,000

SOLD!



1313 Merrie Ridge Rd
McLean, 22101
\$1,637,500

Curious what your home is worth? Call to chat with JD and Ed today!

NEWS

More Earth Day Fun, Page 16



Barbara Hanlon and son David, 9, pose with a panda and rhinoceros made from recycled paper and cardboard by the Chinese American Parents Association of Northern Virginia.

Festive Earth Day Fun on a Sunny, Spring Saturday

Fairfax County's Earth Day celebration was Saturday, April 20, at Sully Historic Site in Chantilly.



The Kenney brothers, (from left) Cillian, 4, and Parker, 2 "rescue" rubber ducky from a "pond" at the Earth Day celebration Saturday, April 20, at Sully Historic Site in Chantilly.



Bella, 4, decorates a cup in which to grow a milkweed plant for caterpillars to feed on. The Fairfax County Park Foundation gave away milkweed seeds at the Earth Day celebration Saturday, April 20, at Sully Historic Site in Chantilly.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/
THE CONNECTION



Gael Ramos, 3, shares his ice cream with mom Anabal, holding Gabby, 1 month, at the Earth Day celebration Saturday, April 20, at Sully Historic Site in Chantilly.



Ibrahim Toprak, 4, (at left) tries feeding a goat from Frying Pan Farm Park at the Earth Day celebration Saturday, April 20, at Sully Historic Site in Chantilly.

VDOT Warns of Text Message Scams

Text messages claim people owe money for unpaid tolls.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is encouraging people to be on alert for a text message scam, also known as smishing, that is sending requests for payment of outstanding toll charges.

The FBI recently issued a warning about the scam, which has occurred in various states and does not specifically target E-ZPass customers.

Since March, people across the country submitted complaints to the FBI about receiving text messages representing toll road collection services claiming they owe money for unpaid tolls. The link in the text message is created to impersonate a toll facility's or collection service's name, and phone numbers appear to change between states. By clicking the link, people could risk giving away sensitive data, including credit card information.

To date, VDOT is not aware of Virginia resi-

dents receiving these scam messages.

If you receive an unsolicited text message suggesting it is from E-ZPass Virginia or a specific toll facility in Virginia, do not click on the link.

If anyone receives these text messages, they should reach out directly to the appropriate facility to verify authenticity. E-ZPass account holders and toll customers can check their accounts and pay tolls by going to the Toll Roads in Virginia website and E-ZPass website. People may also contact customer service representatives for the appropriate facility to validate their toll balance along with upcoming or past due payments.

Those who believe they received a smishing text about tolls due can file a complaint with the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov and include the phone number of the text message as well as the web link listed within the text.

SoberRides Offered for Cinco de Mayo

Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the 2024 Cinco de Mayo SoberRide® program will be in operation beginning at 12 p.m. Sunday, May 5, Cinco de Mayo, and operate until 12:00 a.m. on Monday, May 6 as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditional high-risk period.

During this twelve-hour period, area residents ages 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones then enter the SoberRide® code in the app's 'Payment' tab (under the 'Add Lyft Pass' option) to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's 2024 Cinco de Mayo SoberRide® promo code will be posted at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, May 5th on www.SoberRide.com.

WRAP also offers its SoberRide® program on St. Patrick's Day, Independence Day, Halloween and the winter holidays through and including New Year's.

SoberRide is offered throughout Lyft's Washington D.C. coverage area which includes all or parts of: the District of Columbia; the Maryland counties of Montgomery and Prince George's and towns therein plus the cities of Bowie, College Park, District Heights, Gaithersburg, Glenarden,

Greenbelt, Hyattsville, Laurel, Mount Ranier, New Carrollton, Rockville, Seat Pleasant and Takoma Park; and the Northern Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William and towns therein plus the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park.

Sponsors of WRAP's 2024 Cinco de Mayo SoberRide® campaign include the 395 Express Lanes, Anheuser-Busch, Beer Institute, Brown-Forman, Constellation Brands, Diageo, District of Columbia Association of Beverage Alcohol Wholesalers, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility, Giant Food, Glory Days Grill, Lyft, Molson Coors Beverage Company, New Belgium Brewing, Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington and the Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association. WRAP's 2024 Public Partner SoberRide® sponsors include the District of Columbia Office of the Deputy Mayor for Operations and Infrastructure's Highway Safety Office, the Maryland Highway Safety Office/Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration and the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.

Since 1991, WRAP's SoberRide® program has provided 89,725 free safe rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

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NEWS

Baby Animals, Bubbles, Bikes, Music, Hayrides and History

Fairfax City's HisTree Day is Saturday, April 27.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

People attending Fairfax City's annual HisTree Day celebration will be able to learn about the past while investing in the future and having a good time. It's set for Saturday, April 27, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., at Historic Blenheim, 3610 Blenheim Blvd.

An Earth Day event, it'll feature music, living-history presenters, plus a full slate of educational and exploratory activities honoring both Fairfax history and nature. Several City departments are participating, and admission is free.

Children can have some old-fashioned fun climbing on bales of straw, petting some farm animals and going on hayrides with their families. They may also blow sustainable bubbles and decorate cookies in Earth Day themes. And that's just for starters.

Children bringing their old bike helmets may exchange them for brand new ones that will be fitted to them. In addition, three bicycles – two children's bikes and one mountain bike – will be raffled off, so attendees are encouraged to enter their names in the drawing.

Always popular are artisans demonstrating early crafts. On tap this year are a brickmaker, a carpenter, a blacksmith, a weaver and a photographer. People will also be able to meet 19th-century schoolmarm and a roving reporter. Civil War soldiers and civilians will show how they made coffee and cornbread, and a tavern keeper will be happy to greet and chat with visitors.

During the day, attendees may learn about everything from monarch butterflies to crocheting to slave life to the suffragettes. There'll be a native-plants giveaway, or people may mosey on over to the display table of an early 19th-century scientist and view his preserved specimens.

Learn how today's stormwater-management technology helps the planet. Make and take a quilt square featuring a tree or other natural object. Guided, outdoor tours of the Historic Blenheim site will be offered at 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Tours of the historic house will be given between 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m. And for those wanting to learn about the history of their home or



The HisTree Day logo.

neighborhood, library and archival experts will be there to help them start their searches.

Making a return appearance this year will be an Enviroscape. Sure to be a big hit with children and adults alike, it's an interactive model demonstrating the impact that community development and pollution have on the waterways. This hands-on activity will teach people that protecting the environment is a responsibility shared by everyone. Since Fairfax City is at the headwaters of Accotink Creek, a tributary of the Potomac River, it's important to know how to keep this critical waterway healthy.

And once people work up an appetite from all that walking around, they'll be able to purchase four varieties of loaded tater tots, plus salads and wraps from Two Smooth Dudes, as well as three flavors of popcorn from Colonial Kettle Corn. Free parking will be available at Fairfax High School, 3501 Lion Run, and Daniels Run Elementary, 3705 Blenheim Blvd. Free CUE bus shuttles will take people to and from Fairfax High.

ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE

- 10 a.m. - GMU's 8th Green Machine Regiment Band
- 11 a.m. - Roustabout String Band
- 11:30 a.m. - Youth Boot Camp with Brass Band
- 12:30 p.m. - 49th Virginia Signal Corps demonstration
- 12:30 p.m. - GMU's 8th Green Machine Regiment Band
- 1:30 p.m. - Roustabout String Band
- 2 p.m. - Youth Boot Camp with Brass Band
- 2:45 p.m. - 49th Virginia Signal Corps demonstration
- 3 p.m. - Roustabout String Band
- 3:30 p.m. - Youth Boot Camp with Brass Band

For specific performance locations, plus more information about HisTree Day, go to www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/special-events/fairfax-histree-day.

McLEAN COMMUNITY CENTER
2024 GOVERNING BOARD ELECTION

Absentee Voting

Wednesday, March 27–Monday, May 13

Residents of Dranesville Small District 1A are encouraged to vote for members of the MCC Governing Board.

TWO WAYS TO VOTE: 1. in person (fill out a ballot at McLean Community Center) or 2. by mail. If you prefer to vote by mail, simply phone or send an e-mail to request ballots for members of your household. The requested ballots will be mailed to your home.

DEADLINE: Completed Absentee Voting ballots must be received in the ballot box at MCC by 5 p.m. on Monday, May 13.

TO REQUEST A BALLOT:

CALL: 703-790-0123, TTY: 711

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Governor Puts Virginia's Domestic Violence Victims in Danger

Local legislators irate at Youngkin's veto of important bills.

BY EDEN BROWN
THE CONNECTION

You could have heard a pin drop in the room as Lisette Johnson told the story of being shot by her husband of 21 years. It wasn't an easy story to tell. She tells it because she cannot believe Gov. Glenn Youngkin vetoed bills that would have prevented her husband from keeping that weapon after he threatened her.

"My verbally abusive husband was not mentally ill, he didn't just 'snap.' He had told me years earlier that if I ever tried to leave him he'd put a bullet through my head. I had asked him to keep guns away from our home and he said he had. But he had not. He knew exactly what he planned to do.

"I was one of the lucky ones — not just because I survived but because he didn't shoot my children. And as I lay bleeding from four bullets in my chest wall, liver, and diaphragm, my 12 year old daughter had the presence of mind to tell her brother to run next door and call 911. [My husband] had disabled the phone."

Virginia is one of a handful of states that hasn't closed fatal loopholes in the law. It is difficult for women like Johnson to understand why.

"What a slap in the face," she said, "for us to be considered so insignificant by our elected governor that he feels comfortable vetoing legislation that would have protect-

SEE VETO, PAGE 7



Diana Ortiz, Doorways Executive Director, said Doorways has been part of the community for almost five decades. "The increasing presence of firearms is a common denominator in the increased lethality of domestic violence. When we get a call from someone who is feeling threatened, the first question we ask is, has he ever used a weapon or threatened you with a gun? Do they have one?"

"I have worked at the Center for Gun Violence Solutions at Johns Hopkins since 2009 when my daughter was shot and injured at Virginia Tech. I've learned a lot since. . . . States with strong gun laws have lower death rates than [other] states."

— Laurie Haas, Center for Gun Violence Solutions, Johns Hopkins

PHOTOS BY EDEN BROWN



Lisette Johnson and Sen. Barbara Favola at the Doorways session on Gov. Glenn Youngkin's veto of important gun safety laws that would prevent guns from being in the hands of people with a history of domestic abuse.



Sen. Barbara Favola talked about Arlington County's efforts to curb firearms in cases of abuse. Her Senate Bill 47 was a law and order bill. "It was incredibly disappointing to have the governor veto a bill that ensured those subject to a protective order actually relinquished their firearms. We've heard from so many survivors that the firearm wasn't actually turned in... That's why I submitted this bill."



Sen. Russet Perry (D-31) told the crowd she had been a prosecutor before being elected.

"I dealt with the abuse of people who are victims of domestic violence. I had the honor of walking beside those who fought being abused - it's one of the reasons I ran for office. You can't change the law when you're a prosecutor, so I offered SB 642. It's a bill that is supposed to close the 'boyfriend loophole.' The courts would take a firearm from someone who was identified as an abuser. I listen closely to the Governor as he talks about support for victims and safely. Words don't matter. Actions matter. This is not a partisan issue. We won't be dissuaded by the Governor's indifference."



Elizabeth Bennett-Parker was the patron of HB 46.

"Nearly one-third of all homicides in Virginia are domestic violence incidents, and nearly two thirds of those involve a firearm. The bill would not have affected law abiding Virginians, only those who pose a danger to others. Governor Youngkin had his chance to stand up for victims of gun violence, and he didn't."



Adele McClure carried the house version of this bill, HB 362.

"The governor silences with a stroke of his pen many people who have been threatened or harmed by a partner, whether married or not. The Governor's veto protects abusers. HB 362 and SB 642 would have closed a loophole in current statute that allows those who commit domestic violence against a dating or intimate partner — the boyfriend loophole — to continue to possess their firearms. It is our DUTY as legislators to protect our citizens from abuse. This was a deadly veto, not just any veto."



Laurie Haas praised the legislators.

"These people are committed to saving lives. In addition to the shootings that go unnoticed, my colleague at Hopkins, Lisa Geller, in a study of mass shootings in the U.S., established that in two thirds of those mass shootings, the perpetrator had killed either a partner or family member or had a history of domestic violence before committing a mass shooting."

Veto Of Domestic Violence Gun Safety Laws

FROM PAGE 6

ed victims of sexual and domestic violence in Virginia. When courts hold abusers accountable it works," said Johnson. "There is no reason why anyone under a restraining order should have possession of a firearm."

Johnson's advocacy for victims was emphasized by the appearance of four local legislators, some of them just elected, who stood up and talked about legislation they had gotten through the Virginia General Assembly only to be vetoed by Youngkin. And they were angry.

Jonathan Yglesias, policy director for the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, thanked Doorways for hosting the event. "Gov. Youngkin's decision to veto these bills and cut millions of dollars from agencies providing vital services to crime victims jeopardizes the safety of women and families and leaves sexual and domestic violence advocates without the

resources to do their jobs," he said. "Without a significant influx of state dollars, there will be catastrophic and generational impacts on victims throughout Virginia."

Doorways is one of those organizations seeing more calls for help and fewer resources.

"Youngkin cut more than \$7 million from agencies providing services to victims of domestic violence," said Yglesias, while reminding attendees that despite cuts, help is available with trained advocates 24 hours a day.

"We also need to be paying attention to the helpers and advocates who need places like Doorways to be open to them," said Laurie Haas, Center for Gun Violence Solutions, Johns Hopkins.

"I have worked at the Center for Gun Violence Solutions at Johns Hopkins since 2009 when my daughter was shot and injured at Virginia Tech. I've learned a lot since. The greed driven efforts of the gun lobby to reframe the second

amendment as the absolute right for anyone to carry any gun anywhere has resulted in our country being awash in firearms. We regulate our right to free speech. I can't go into a theater and yell "Fire!" We regulate the right to assemble: I can't go up to the Capitol and stand on the steps without a permit. States with strong gun laws have lower death rates than states with loose gun laws."

To learn more: <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/center-for-gun-violence-solutions/about-our-team>

For more: <https://www.doorwaysva.org>
Statewide Hotline | Call: 800.838.8238 |
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BULLETIN BOARD

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

MCLEAN NEWCOMERS AND NEIGHBORS

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

with food, Armchair Traveler, Book Club, Bunco, Canasta, Crafty Ladies, Genealogy, Golf, Let Us Lunch, Mah Jongg, Mah Jongg NY Style, Movie Lovers, Museums/House and Garden Tours, Nature Walks, Restaurant Critics, Sing for Fun and Tech Fo-

rums. Application forms may be mailed to: Membership McLean Newcomers and Neighbors, P.O. Box 6166, McLean, VA 22106. Visit the website: www.mcleannewcomers.org.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 23



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2024 PRESIDENT'S AWARD



Fairfax County Park Authority now is able to bring nature programs to all parts of the county via the Wonder Wagon



Donors, staff, and board members cut the official opening ribbon as the drape was dropped to reveal the new colorfully painted van

Wonder Wagon Nature Center Ready to Roll

Mobile unit to assure nature learning reaches all.

By SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

If you are unable to get close to nature at Fairfax County's extensive system of 420 parks, 324 trails, or five Nature Centers, it could be for a variety of reasons. It might be lack of transportation or personal mobility issues, or for want of an available, knowledgeable nature guide. Now, thanks to several generous donors, nature is able to come to you, complete with helpful nature educators. The county's newly unveiled Wonder Wagon, a mobile nature center, is ready to roll. The unveiling, employing a necessarily huge drop cloth, marked the beginning of service on April 20th at the county's Earth Day Fairfax 2024 celebration. (See more on starting on page 3)

The mobile center was dedicated with a Board of Supervisors proclamation, read out at the Earth Day event by county supervisors, Kathy Smith, Sully District; Walter Alcorn, Hunter Mill District; and James Bierman Jr, Dranesville District, whose son notably shouted out the last words. The supervisors, joined by donors, and members and staff of the Park Authority, the Park Authority Board, and Park Foundation, officially cut the ribbon as the vehicle was undraped.

The County bills the Wagon as "not just a van; it's an experience." It brings hands-on experiences with plants and wildlife to create a connection with nature and help lead to a life-time appreciation for the beauty of nature and a long-term commitment to advocating for the environment.

The program will build to an expected 150 different programs offered by the mobile unit. A few of those inspiring encounters and nature-based educational programs were featured after the ribbon-cutting. Near the Wonder Wagon's colorful exterior, under its attached awning and at nearby tables, event-goers sampled programs presented



County supervisors, James Bierman, with his son, Kathy Smith, and Walter Alcorn, pose for a photo with Park Authority Board Chairman Kyle Stone, after reading the Proclamation held by Stone

PHOTOS BY
SUSAN LAUME/
THE CONNECTION

by park authority staff and Virginia Master Naturalist volunteers. Kids and adults closely examined birds, beetles, and the tiny things around us. And instead of the usual admonishment not to touch, participants were invited to a "Please Touch Table." At each station, they could explore, closer than nature allows, through a taxidermy and animal skeletal exploration, touch, sound, and magnified vision.

The Park Authority's mobile nature center is designed to promote environmental and



Fairfax Master Naturalist Lucy Collins poses with fox friend who was part of the "please touch" exploration table



Executive director of the Park Foundation, Bobbi Longworth, said the early popularity of the Wonder Wagon suggests they need to work towards adding a second unit



Arya Percell, 8, of Alexandria, tries out types of magnification to reveal small things

nature-based educational programs to underserved areas of Fairfax County, in support of the Ten Community Outcome Areas established in the county-wide Strategic Plan. The project is supported by major donors: Pohanka 100, Crabtree Family Foundation, Chesapeake Gateway's, The Community Fund, The Environmental Fund, Dominion Energy, and Fairfax County, as well as several other individual and organizational do-

nors. Funding provided not only the vehicle, but supports two new staff positions and program elements.

Described as already so popular that the Park Foundation seeks to add a second mobile unit, requests are being taken for public events, outreach and public schools. To find the Wonder Wagon event schedule or to request a visit at an event, see <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/wonder-wagon>

THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

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FDIC

New Staffing Standards Coming for Nursing Homes

On April 22, 2024, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued Minimum Staffing Standards for Long-Term Care Facilities, to provide safe and high-quality care for residents living in Medicare- and Medicaid-certified facilities.

“There are approximately 1.2 million Americans who are living in federally funded nursing homes. That’s about four out of five of the nursing homes in our country. So, the vast majority of nursing homes are federally funded,” said Vice President Kamala Harris at a roundtable discussion on April 24 on nursing home care.

“And the majority of federally funded nursing homes are understaffed. The estimate is 75 percent of those nursing homes are understaffed. And understand what that means for the resident of that nursing home.

“It means that there may be no one available to help them out of bed. It means there may be no one available when they fall. It means that they will receive less medical attention because the workers — the care workers in that facility are going from room to room, from resident to resident, and understaffed in terms of giving folks what they want to give in terms of level of care.

“It means more loneliness when we’re talking about anyone from our seniors to people with disabilities who are in those homes and who want and enjoy the interactions that they have with these care workers.

“This is God’s work, to care for people who often you’ve never met before, they’re not related to you, and you care for them as though they’re a member of your family.”

— Vice President Kamala Harris

“For residents, this will mean more staff, which means fewer ER visits. potentially, more independence for families. It’s going to mean peace of mind in terms of your loved one being taken care of. And for care workers, it’s going to be more time with their patients, less burnout, and lower turnover.”

AARP Executive Vice President and Chief Advocacy and Engagement Officer Nancy LeaMond issued the following statement in response to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services final rule that requires America’s nursing homes to have enough staff to provide the high-quality care that residents

expect and need.

“For years, AARP has fought to ensure the health and safety of every person living in a nursing home. CMS’s long overdue rule to require minimum staffing levels in America’s nursing homes will help protect the basic rights of residents to live in dignity. It is shameful that nursing homes receiving taxpayer dollars through Medicaid and Medicare haven’t been required to provide quality care through specific minimum staffing

“CMS’s long overdue rule to require minimum staffing levels in America’s nursing homes will help protect the basic rights of residents to live in dignity.”

— AARP Executive Vice President Nancy LeaMond

standards until now. Far too many residents and families have experienced tragic consequences because of poorly staffed facilities. AARP commends CMS for requiring nursing homes to meet important staffing standards, including having a registered nurse on site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

“Ultimately, ensuring nursing homes are adequately staffed will improve the quality of care residents receive and can give family caregivers peace of mind, knowing their loved ones are living with the quality of life they deserve,” LeaMond said.

Harris also addressed a new requirement to help increase pay for home health-care workers.

Medicaid currently pays \$125 billion a year to home healthcare companies. But home care companies have not been required to report how their federal dollars were being spent.

New rules will require that 80 percent of that money be spent on paying workers as opposed to administrative overhead costs.

“This is about dignity,” Harris said. “This is God’s work, to care for people who often you’ve never met before, they’re not related to you, and you care for them as though they’re a member of your family. ... Let’s recognize the gift that these talented professionals give to families and to all of us as a society.”

This final rule was informed by the feedback CMS received from over 46,000 public comments submitted in response to the proposed rule. Central to this final rule are new comprehensive minimum nurse staffing requirements, which aim to significantly re-

duce the risk of residents receiving unsafe and low-quality care within LTC facilities.

Additionally, to increase transparency related to compensation for workers, CMS will also require states to collect and report on the percent of Medicaid payments that are spent on compensation for direct care workers, and support staff, delivering care in nursing facilities and intermediate care facilities, for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Some LTC facilities may still be experiencing challenges in hiring and retaining certain nursing staff because of local workforce unavailability. Therefore, in addition to the existing statutory waiver of requirement to provide licensed nurses on a 24-hour basis, CMS is finalizing our proposal for hardship exemptions to apply in limited circumstances to the hours per resident day and 24/7 onsite RN requirements.

Nursing Home Staffing Campaign

The Virginia Health Care Association – Virginia Center for Assisted Living, representing over 350 long term care providers in Virginia, released results last October of a workforce survey of nursing home and assisted living facilities across the Commonwealth. Results from the survey showed the on-going struggle facing these providers as they work to find more caregivers for residents and patients. Nearly half (44%) of nursing homes have had to limit their admissions for lack of staff. Facilities are struggling to find new caregivers, despite significant hiring efforts. The survey and summary came before the issue of the new staffing standards.

The survey showed that 91% of facilities had CNA vacancies; 81% had LPN vacancies; 64% have RN vacancies; 31% had few to no applicants for vacant positions.

In September 2023, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services said that the agency would spend over \$75 million to launch a national nursing home staffing campaign to increase the number of nurses in nursing homes. Through this campaign, CMS will be providing financial incentives for nurses to work in the nursing home environment. For example, nurses could receive tuition reimbursement for a specific commitment to work in a qualifying nursing home or in an oversight capacity with a state inspection agency. It will also be easier for individuals to become nurse aides by streamlining the process for enrolling in training programs and finding placement in a nursing home. CMS will be using the campaign to promote awareness of the many career pathways in the nursing field that are available to help recruit all types of individuals, from NAs to LPNs/LVNs and RNs. To help accomplish these tasks, CMS will launch an awareness campaign for these programs and the benefits of working in nursing homes.

Additionally, CMS will partner with states to bolster nurse recruitment. For example,

Community Foundation of NOVA Grantees Focused on Aging

Grants totalling \$36,000 were awarded to the following two organizations:

❖ **Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington (\$18,000)**

Serving Northern Virginia

Funding will ensure 250 Northern Virginia seniors with irreversible chronic vision loss have access to eye health education, resource navigation services, assistive technology training, and peer support. These resources enable seniors to live longer, safer, happier, and more connected lives.

❖ **Shepherd’s Center of Northern Virginia (\$18,000)**

Serving Fairfax County

Funding will help the Shepherd’s Center serve more clients in underserved areas and ensure the transportation needs of older adults (such as critical doctor appointments and food essentials) are met.

Senior Wisdom

The Cambridge Dictionary defines a pub crawl as “a visit to several pubs, one after the other, having a drink or drinks at each one.” It’s not for the faint of heart. Nonetheless, 69-year-old David Clarkson of Sydney, Australia recently earned a page in the Guinness Book of World Records by “drinking his way” in and out of no less than 120 pubs in 24 hours. How did he do it? According to the Guinness judges: “Each visit had to incorporate a paid transaction for a beverage [non-alcoholic or alcoholic], as well as a minimum of 125 ml [milliliters, approximate 4 ounces] of liquid being consumed ... David notes that he consumed 20 liters of liquid in 24 hours, mostly consisting of soft drinks and juices.”

SOURCE: ASSOCIATION OF MATURE AMERICAN CITIZENS, SELF-DESCRIBED AS “THE CONSERVATIVE ALTERNATIVE”

states will be able to invest funds to improve their nurse aide training information and increase the number of financial incentives available. Financial incentives could begin to be distributed in 2025. These incentives will supplement nursing homes’ efforts to increase staffing.

The final rule is available to review today in the Federal Register at: <https://www.federalregister.gov/public-inspection/2024-08273/medicare-and-medic-aid-programs-minimum-staffing-standards-for-long-term-care-facilities-and-medic-aid>



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MCLEAN VILLAGE

Reston: eARTh Day 2024

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Robert Goudie, executive director of RTCA, and Jaynelle Hazard, executive director and curator of Tephra ICA, preside over the opening ceremony and presentation of the Danielle Hatch installation at Mercury Fountain Plaza.



The crowd listens to remarks at eARTh Day presented by Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art and Reston Town Center Association while behind them two contemporary art installation panels from artist Danielle Hatch's work "All Is In Motion, Is Growing, Is You" can be seen.



Danielle Hatch, an Arkansas-based artist, put the "ART" in eARTh Day 2024 by installing her contemporary work, "All Is In Motion, Is Growing, Is You," at Reston Town Center. The 150 feet of brightly colored, ruffled fabric gently blows in the wind.

Local stories and briefs.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Reston Town Center Association (RTCA) and Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art (Tephra) kicked off their art-inspired inaugural eARTh Day celebration on Saturday, April 20, at Reston Town Center Mercury Plaza with an Opening Ceremony. It featured the celebration of the large-scale installation at the fountain presented by Reston Community Center, titled All Is In Motion, Is Growing, Is You, by Arkansas-based interdisciplinary artist Danielle Hatch.

Robert Goude, RTCA executive director and board chair of Tephra, gave a snapshot of the free events that would follow the ceremony: a curated tour of the "Pressing Exhibit" at Tephra's main gallery; artist workshops and activities in Reston Town Square Park, a live concert, and a film screening of Anthropocene: The Human Epoch at LOOK Cinemas.

Heather Green, Assistant Professor in the InterArts program in the School of Art at George Mason University, read her poem, A Tendo for Trees.

Artist Hatch said it had been a long journey to last Thursday when a scissor lift hoisted her 20 feet in the air to install her work. It began as a "bizarre request" to come to people with the notion of covering their plaza in 150 feet of ruffles. "That can be a strange ask, but all this is to say how lovely it has been to take this journey with such supportive, invested, and caring partners."

Maggie White, spokesperson for U.S. Congressman Gerry Connolly, said that Connolly has been a longtime supporter of the arts and will continue to do so. "Hopefully, he will be able to join next year's eARTh celebration. Connolly missed the inaugural event, having been called back to vote on Saturday's foreign aid bill.

Del Karen Keys Gammara said she will continue supporting legislation that improves communities, including tree preservation and composting. According to Gammara, in the last session, "Some things survived, some did not." But it is always an ongoing effort to ensure a healthily built community, and the arts are always a part of development.

Fairfax County Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D- Hunter Mil) discussed challenges such as charging electric vehicles in multi-unit dwellings. Alcorn said the county was moving forward with the Charge up Fairfax. It is a process where the county assists local townhouse and condo associations and others who need help to figure out where they can put charging stations for the community.

Scott Cryer, board chair of Arts Fairfax, described a "white-knuckle" family emergency road trip he took as Category 4 Hurricane Laura made landfall. "We're navigating 100-year storms that are becoming part of our weekly and in some parts of our world daily existence. Fast forward to today and these wonderful and pioneering events, [and] we find ourselves a part of celebrating Earth Day. Art can communicate things that can't easily be communicated in words. Art can tell stories without saying a thing."



SCREENSHOT YOUTUBE

Reston resident Jane Braum has been named the Reston Association's Volunteer of the Year for 2023.



SCREENSHOT YOUTUBE

Mac Cummins, CEO of Reston Association, joins awardee Anna Najafi, 2023 Youth Volunteer of the Year.

RA Recognizes Volunteers

The Reston Association recognized two active volunteers at its annual members' meeting on Tuesday, April 9. The association named Jane Braum of Reston the 2024 Volunteer of the Year. Braum contributed valuable and timely advice and perspective to the Reston Association Community Survey, putting in well over 1,000 hours on the campaign. She was critical in coordinating the project's education, communication, and outreach efforts, ultimately leading to its success.

The association named high school sophomore Anna Najafias the 2023 Youth Volunteer of the Year. Anna volunteered at various community events and environmental projects, including planting trees at Arbor Day, removing invasive plants from natural areas, and assisting staff at events such as the summer Dog Paddles, Halloween Events, Holiday Fest, MLK Day of Service, and many others.

OPINION

Infant Immunization Week

Dear Editor,

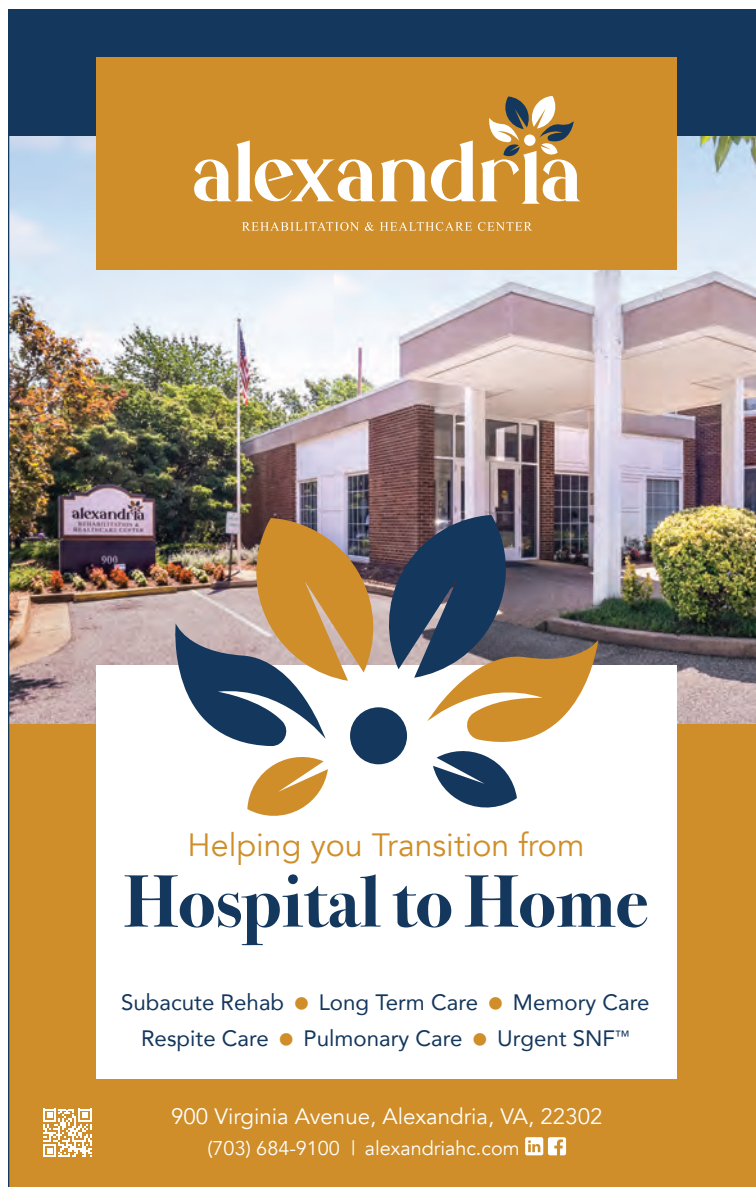
April 22-29 is National Infant Immunization Week, an observance to highlight the importance of protecting infants and young children from vaccine-preventable diseases.

With summer just around the corner, now is the perfect time for families to proactively schedule appointments for their children's school-required vaccines. By scheduling vaccination appointments now, families can ensure their children are fully protected against preventable diseases by the time school starts this fall.

Vaccines serve as crucial safeguards, protecting our children from preventable diseases and allowing them to enjoy a summer filled with fun and exploration.

This National Infant Immunization Week, let's prioritize our children's health by taking action on vaccinations now.

Rebecca Epstein
ImmunizeVA




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Help Restock Frost Middle School Pantry

Frost Middle School seeks the community's help to fill its pantry shelves for students in need. Especially welcome are Amazon gift cards or nonperishable food items so the school may continue to provide weekend food to students who might otherwise go hungry.

Donations of the following food products are needed: Shelf-stable milk and shelf-stable, individual, prepared meals (Dinty Moore, Chef Boyardee, Hamburger Helper, etc.), as well as cereal cups/packets, fruit/apple sauce cups, granola bars, snack packs (crackers, pretzels, popcorn, etc.) and other healthy snacks.

Deliver to Frost Middle at 4101 Pickett Road in Fairfax, weekdays from 7 a.m.-3:30 pm. Visit nonprofit Britepaths' Food4Thought Partner page to donate online and learn more about its Food4Thought partner schools, such as Frost. Go to <https://britepaths.org/food4thought>.



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HERNDON

Earth Day 2024: Scouts to the Rescue

Girls Scout Troops 51092 and 51003 of Herndon, along with some of the scouts' siblings, participated in the Earth Day Town Parks and Stream Cleanup Project at Runnymede Park, located at 195 Herndon Parkway in the Town of Herndon. Its natural setting includes 58 acres of woods, meadows, and Sugarland Run.

The girls arrived shortly before 9 a.m. on Saturday, April 20, wearing long pants, sturdy shoes, and work gloves. They grabbed plastic bags and headed down the path, accompanied by troop leaders and other adults. They cut across the grassy meadow and into the woods, looking for Sugarland Run.

"Can I pick up a cigarette butt?" inquired one scout when she reached the stream. "You've got gloves. It's okay," an adult voice replied. The scouts merrily ran from site to site, picking up debris dropped or blown into the park, contributing to the upkeep of one of the town's eleven parks and three trail systems.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/
THE CONNECTION



Millie and Avery, two 10-year-old Scouts, pick up trash in Runnymede Park as part of Earth Day 2024.



Girl Scouts from Troops 51092 and 51003 and some of their siblings participate in a community service project at Runnymede Park in Herndon for Earth Day 2024.

LORTON



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Investing in Students and Climate

Last week, Fairfax County Public Schools celebrated an investment in its students, their health, and the climate at the Lorton Station Elementary School parking lot. FCPS students, staff, and parents unintentionally expose themselves to daily school bus diesel exhaust and other toxins.

Changing that continued on Wednesday, April 17. FCPS is transitioning to electric and low-emission school buses, helping to secure a healthier future where all children can breathe cleaner air.

Local dignitaries and FCPS officials joined U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly to mark the occasion. The U.S. and State of Virginia flags flanked Connolly as he stood at the podium in the parking lot. Behind him, a new electric school bus sat, waiting to transport students.

Connolly reminded those gathered that

on Jan. 8 of this year, he announced that Fairfax County Public Schools would receive \$16,590,000 from the Environmental Protection Agency to buy 42 new electric school buses through the agency's Clean School Bus Grants Competition.

"I was so proud to help secure this funding as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and I am even prouder to see these dollars in action," Connolly said. "We know we must do better for our students and their future, and with this incredible investment, we will."

Fairfax County Public Schools is one of the largest school districts. Its buses transport more than 140,000 students to and from school each day. Students, staff, and parents regularly encounter diesel exhaust and other toxins. "That changes with the electric buses," Connolly said.

MCLEAN



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Vendor Phyllis Hickman is ready to assist shoppers such as Laurel and Caroline Hamilton and others at the McLean Community Yard sale.

Community Yard Sale: Thrill of the Hunt; Upcycling

Catherine Nesbitt, the special events manager at McLean Community Center, reported that 80 people registered for the McLean Community Yard Sale on Saturday, April 20. However, an early morning rain kept half the vendors away. Yet, when the sun came out later in the morning, so did the shoppers, most leaving with their arms full of up-cycled treasures.

Shopper Caroline Hamilton, 15, enjoyed the thrill of the hunt at the McLean Yard Sale. Holding a gray, furry stuffed animal, Caroline explained how she snagged her purchase. "I said, 'Yes;' Mom said, 'No.' I said, 'I'll pay for it.' Who wouldn't want a stuffed ostrich wearing a saddle?"

NEWS

Road Rage Shooting Results in Arrest

Fairfax County police say a recent road-rage incident in Centreville led to the arrest of a Manassas man. Charged with four felonies and a misdemeanor was Brian Fuentes Ruiz, 22.



Fuentes Ruiz

officers and safely taken into custody. No one else was inside his vehicle, and the two people didn't know each other. Police also said a firearm was recovered in the doorframe of Fuentes Ruiz's vehicle.

Fuentes Ruiz was charged with attempted malicious wounding by shooting, use of a firearm in the commission of a felony, shooting from a vehicle, maliciously shooting at an occupied vehicle, and brandishing (a misdemeanor). He's being held without bond in the Adult Detention Center and has a July 23 court date.

Anyone with information about this event or who may have witnessed it is asked to call the Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 5. Tips may also be submitted anonymously via Crime Solvers by phoning 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477).

— BONNIE HOBBS

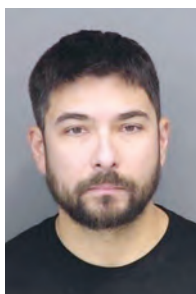
On April 13, shortly after 9:30 a.m., officers from the Sully District Police Station responded to the area of Compton Road and Centreville Road for reports of a man shooting at another vehicle while driving.

Detectives from the Major Crimes Bureau determined that the victim, who was the sole occupant of his vehicle, passed the suspect's vehicle on Compton Road. Then, say police, Fuentes Ruiz "began closely following the victim in his vehicle before [allegedly] firing multiple shots at the victim. Thankfully, no one was injured."

Afterward, they say the suspect reportedly fled onto I-66 eastbound but was quickly located by police

Chantilly Man Charged in Child Pornography

Fairfax County police have charged William Riddell, 40, of Chantilly with 14 criminal offenses relating to the possession and production of child sexual abuse material. He was arrested March 30 by the Salina Police Department in Kansas, where he was held prior



Riddell

to his extradition to Fairfax County. first offense; and three counts of reproduction of child pornography, second offense. He has a July 23 court date.

He was previously a private music teacher in the Chantilly area. Riddell was also employed with Loudoun County Public Schools between 2008-2013 as a part-time substitute teacher. And in 2012, he was a paid booster clinician, a non-FCPS employee, at Chantilly High.

Detectives are concerned there may be more alleged victims and would like to speak with anyone who believes they or their children may have been involved in an inappropriate relationship with Riddell.

Anyone with information about this case, or others possibly related, is asked to call the Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 4. Tips may also be submitted anonymously via Crime Solvers by phoning 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477).

— BONNIE HOBBS

Detectives from the Major Crimes Bureau's Child Abuse Squad began investigating Riddell after it was reported that he may have had an inappropriate sexual relationship with a minor in Fairfax County. During the investigation, detectives allegedly uncovered electronic evidence of child sex-abuse material belonging to him.

The alleged inappropriate relationship with a minor is still under investigation. Meanwhile, detectives charged Riddell with one count of possession of child pornography, first offense; nine counts of possession of child pornography, second offense; one count of reproduction of child pornography,

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EARTH DAY FUN

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



From left, Ana Mira, Fatima Chughtai, Noreen Dorion, Madeline Vasquez, Lorie Jreige and Faustina Sarpong with the Fairfax County Health Department's Division of School Health told visitors about medication safety and disposal.



Florist Anna Beall, owner of The Fertile Burb flower farm, helps people discover sustainable growing methods in the suburbs at the Earth Day celebration at Sully Historic Site in Chantilly.



Kevin Elam and Friends performing traditional, Irish music at the Earth Day celebration Saturday, April 20 in Chantilly



Levi Mo, 4, on a tractor from Merrifield Garden Center at the Earth Day celebration Saturday, April 20, at Sully Historic Site in Chantilly.



From left are Rose Hendricks, who leads Fairfax County's chapter of the Citizens' Climate Lobby, with Yasin and Nesrin Gedik and daughter Kayra, 3-1/2, at the Earth Day celebration Saturday, April 20, at Sully Historic Site in Chantilly



Linda Pistun, 11, sells games for her nonprofit Linda's Lab to raise money for her goal of solving world hunger and improving science education. She also wrote a book about how people can reduce their carbon footprints and had a display of a mealworm's life cycle.

EARTH DAY FUN

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Jim Serfass, site manager at Hidden Pond Nature Center, is flanked by youth volunteers Emily Yi and Henry Wells at the Earth Day celebration Saturday, April 20, at Sully Historic Site in Chantilly. Their board shows how beavers new to an area can change bodies of water, attracting more animals to live there.



In the touch-a-truck area, Rayyan Hassan, 3-1/2, sits inside a county trash truck at the Earth Day celebration Saturday, April 20, at Sully Historic Site in Chantilly.



Children having fun playing "ice" hockey on a synthetic rink at the Earth Day celebration Saturday, April 20, at Sully Historic Site in Chantilly.

COMMUNITY NEWS AT A GLANCE

GREAT FALLS

Outdoor Spring Concert with Hamburgers and Hot Dogs

Smith Chapel Global Methodist Church is having an Outdoor Spring Concert on Friday, May 10, from 7-8:30 PM. The concert is open to everyone.

Hamburgers and hot dogs will be served starting at 6 PM.

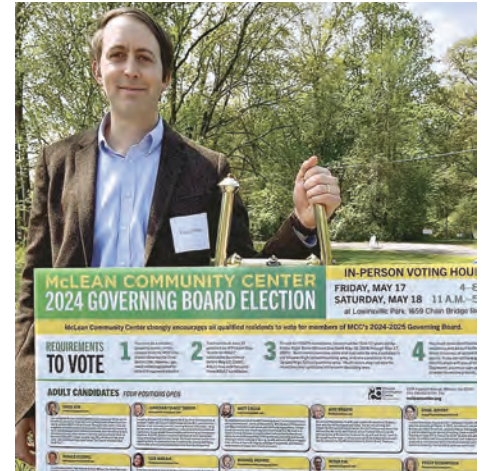
Michael O'Brien, a Christian Pop and Contemporary Worship Musician, will perform from the Church Gazebo. People attending are asked to bring a lawn chair. Smith Chapel Methodist Church is located at 11321 Beach Mill Road in Great Falls.

MCLEAN



MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Ron Keesing and Michael Monroe, two McLean Community Center Governing Board candidates, discuss their platforms with youth board candidate Anastasiia Dudnik-Dubiniak and McLean voter Elan Kazemi.



MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Doug Jeffery, MCA Governing Board candidate, holds the McLean Community Center Governing Board candidate sign.

MCA Candidates Meet Residents

On Saturday, April 20, some of the 15 certified candidates for McLean Community Center Governing Board volunteer positions spoke to voters at the McLean Community Yard Sale. Four adult and two teen positions are open this year on the 15-seat, ten-adult, and five-teen board. Board members oversee the center's programs and facilities, including the Robert Ames Alden Theatre and Old Firehouse Center, policy, strategic planning, and finances. The community center is at 1234 Ingleside Ave.

Absentee balloting began on March 27. Residents can vote in person or by mail. To request a household ballot, fill out the online ballot request form, call 703-744-9348, or email elections@mcleancenter.org. The voting tent at T.G.I.F. Carnival Rides will host in-person voting for Governing Board members from 4-8 p.m. on Friday, May 17, and from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on McLean Day, Saturday, May 18, at Lewinsville Park. Watch for the McLean Day Guide publishing in the Connection on May 15. The park is located at 1659 Chain Bridge Road.

TOWN OF VIENNA

New Pierce Velocity Pumper Pushed into Service in Vienna

On Saturday, April 20, the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department (VVFD), their supporters, community members, Town of Vienna officials and Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department staff literally pushed Station 402's new, brilliant red Pierce Velocity Pumper with gold leaf lettering into service.

"Our appreciation goes out to all of you who generously support us, your local 501c3 charity owning the station, and all our emergency vehicles," the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department posted on Instagram. Before motor vehicles, horse-driven fire apparatus had to be hand-pushed back into the station.

Be sure to visit the 11th annual Taste of Vienna on Saturday, April 27, 2024, from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. To learn more about ways to support the VVFD, visit its website, VVFD.org



SCREENSHOT INSTAGRAM VIENNAVFD

Washing down and shining up the new Pierce Velocity Pumper for Station 402 in Vienna.

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



From left are Peter Dalton, Grace Lopez (as Ellie in the mom's body), Riley Burden, and Thursday Butler (as the mom in Ellie's body).



The students in gym class. Lilli McNerney (with foot on student) plays the gym teacher.

Mother-Daughter Story with Message about Understanding

Westfield High presents the musical, 'Freaky Friday.'

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Ellie Blake, 16, and her mom Katherine have a contentious relationship and wish they could be in each other's bodies for a brief time to see things through each other's eyes. Then, after singing the song, "Just One Day," while holding a magic hourglass, they swap minds.

That's the premise of Westfield High's upcoming musical, "Freaky Friday." The curtain rises Thursday-Friday, May 2-3, at 7 p.m.; and Saturday, May 4, at 2 and 7 p.m. Tickets are \$15, adults; \$10, students, at the door and via www.westfieldtheatre.com.

Based on the popular novel and hit Disney movie, it features a cast and crew of 50. "It's a heartwarming show, appropriate for all ages," said Director Enza Giannone-Hosig. "We have very talented performers, including some great newcomers. And with lots of graduating seniors, it's nice to see them passing on their skills to the younger generation."

Since "Freaky Friday" takes the stage the weekend before Mother's Day, a mother-daughter-themed event is planned for the May 4 matinee. "We're telling moms and daughters attending that show to swap outfits with each other," said Giannone-Hosig. "Then we'll have a fashion show at intermission, plus mother-daughter shoutouts and a photo booth."

She chose this play in honor of her own daughter "because there's nothing more conflicting and complex than a mother-daughter relationship. And that's why this show has stood the test of time. I love things everyone

can relate to – and in 'Freaky Friday,' this family has been through something difficult and is trying to find happiness again."

"It's also a reminder that, often, parents and children need to step back and think about what each other is going through," continued Giannone-Hosig. "When they do that, their relationship becomes stronger."

Portraying the mom, Katherine Blake, is junior Grace Lopez. "She and her daughter don't get along as well as they did before her husband, Ellie's dad, died three years earlier," said Lopez. "Now she's in her 40s and about to remarry. She's organized, punctual, likes to be in charge, and has her own catering business."

But after the switch when Katherine "becomes" Ellie, explained Lopez, "As a teenager, she's messy, likes to do things her own way, fights with her little brother Fletcher and bullies him. She's also witty, snarky and awkward – especially around Adam, her crush. But she has a lot of emotional depth because she's sad about her dad's death, so she expresses it by being angry at everyone."

Enjoying her role, Lopez said, "Me and my mom have a similar relationship, so I can connect to Ellie. It's challenging because I sing so many songs in this show. But it's fun because when Ellie's in the mom's body, nobody knows they're living each other's lives, except for them, so it's kind of a disaster."

Her favorite song is "After All of This and Everything," an emotional ballad. "I'm singing it near the end of the show," said Lopez. "Ellie finally breaks down and shows what she's been going through and tells herself that, after everything, it'll be OK. And it makes me cry because it's so sad."

Lopez said audiences will connect with "Freaky Friday's" mother-daughter dynamic because "it's the strongest one you have in your life. And it reminds people to appreciate your moms while you still have them. There's also a dramatic and emotional aspect to this play that's hidden behind the

lines. We've all worked really hard on this show, and everyone will be able to relate to the characters."

Senior Thursday Butler plays Ellie. "She's informal, has bad manners, is grumpy and is always rolling her eyes at her mom and future stepdad," said Butler. "But as the mom, she's a hardworking perfectionist, social, outgoing and polite. Katherine's maybe willfully ignorant of the trouble Ellie's having since her dad died. And she's more connected to her son Fletcher since he's easier to deal with."

Butler loves portraying Katherine because, she said, "I'm a lot like her. I have my own, side-hustle cupcake business and do catering, too, so I get where she's coming from. Ellie often comes last because so many other things demand Katherine's attention. I understand being the most mature person in the room because I'm already 18; and I'm also a camp counselor so I can relate to Katherine's maternal, caring side and protectiveness toward others."

Butler especially likes the song, "What You Got," which Lopez sings as Ellie. "She performs it amazingly and goes from closed-off, angsty teen to being more open and social," said Butler. "In her mom's body, she realizes she can be more confident – and she eventually learns to be that way as Ellie."

Audiences will love the vocal performances, said Butler, because "the songs are insanely difficult, with many four- or five-part harmonies. And our techies did a great job with the set. The moral of the story is that emotions are complicated – be patient with each other."

The set will be split, with half showing Ellie's world and half, Katherine's. Ellie's includes her high-school gym with climbing wall and lockers, and Katherine's shows her kitchen and backyard. And where their worlds overlap, said Butler, "We'll use the whole stage with cool lighting."

Sophomore Peter Dalton portrays Adam, who wants to be Ellie's boyfriend. "He's pop-

ular and cool, but also nice and friendly," said Dalton. "He seems fun to be around; I'd like being his friend. He flirts with Ellie, not knowing it's really her mom in Ellie's body."

Dalton likes his part because he sings solos in most of the songs and even has his own number, "Women and Sandwiches." In it, Fletcher's run away from home because he thinks his mom and sister are mean and don't like him. "Adam finds him at the bus stop and tries consoling him by comparing women to sandwiches," said Dalton. "I tell him, with time and understanding, tastes can change."

He said audiences will enjoy the show's humor because "it's a funny musical with jokes for kids to adults. And the songs are creative, with witty lyrics that tell stories and are interesting to listen to."

Playing Fletcher, 10, is freshman Riley Burden. "He's infatuated with puppets, so he's always making big movements and talking loud," said Burden. "He's friendly but doesn't have many friends because he goes everywhere with his puppets – a purple elephant and a yellow starfish, one on each hand – so other kids make fun of him."

Burden said looking back at his own childhood more in depth informs his role. And, he added, "I get to throw out socially accepted behavior and act like when things were simpler and all you had to do was play and have fun."

"Watch Your Back" is his favorite song. "The gym teacher is singing to Ellie and the other students – who are doing an obstacle course while singing," said Burden. "It's fun to watch, and the rhythms let the actors have a good time performing it. I sing it backstage with the ensemble to amplify the sound onstage."

He said audiences will like how this show "delves into everyday relationships and makes you think about how you treat your family members. Everyone's doing a fantastic job singing, and people will be talking about how well they did."

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THEATRE

Romantic Comedy about a Strong, Brave Woman

CFTC presents 'The Heiress of Hawtrey Hall'

PHOTOS BY HEATHER REGAN PHOTOGRAPHY

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Aromantic comedy set in early 1800s England, "The Heiress of Hawtrey Hall" is City of Fairfax Theatre Co.'s (CFTC) upcoming play. Written and directed by Ellen Dean Price, it features a cast and crew of 15 who've been rehearsing since January.

It's about heiress Grace Coventry and her attempt to protect both her inheritance and financial independence now that she's come of age. And although she faces an uphill battle, she acquires an unlikely but clever ally during her quest.

It's Price's third produced play and will debut during Fairfax City's Spotlight on the Arts festival. Show times are Thursday-Friday, May 2-3, at 8 p.m.; Saturday, May 4, at 2 and 8 p.m.; and Sunday, May 5, at 2 p.m., at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive in Fairfax. Tickets are \$25, adults; \$20, students, via www.fairfax-citytheatre.org/productions/heiress-of-hawtrey-hall.

"Grace's parents died and left her their estate; but in that time period, it was rare for a woman to inherit," explained Price. "And if she married, everything she owned would go to her husband. So Grace wants to stay unmarried – but her aunt and cousin are upset about it because it wasn't the norm then to remain that way. So they foist an unsuspecting heiress to introduce her to possible suitors."

Calling the play funny and light, Price said it's perfect for a date night or a fun girls' night out and is recommended for ages 10 and up. "It's about thinking about what you really want in life – and reevaluating it, along the way," she said. "We have a very talented cast. Our experienced actors are a joy to work with and have great chemistry among them."

"CFTC is a great organization and it's a thrill to work with everyone here," she continued. "I've acted with CFTC before, but this is my first time directing one of their productions. The venue has limited seating, so I advise people to buy their tickets ahead. It's a classic romantic play, and audiences will have a fun time at the theater."

Portraying Grace is Rose Hahn. "She's 21 – right on the edge of being a spinster then," said Hahn. "She's intelligent, fiercely independent and stubborn, and also a thoughtful, loving person. Her parents died when she was a preteen, and then her aunt

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From left are Rose Hahn and Michael Hammond.

whisked her away to London and raised her there. But she'd grown up in Hawtrey Hall, where her father was the lord, and he'd trained her to become the estate's heiress because she was an only child."

At the party, said Hahn, "Grace is reluctantly meeting suitors but doesn't want to marry because she likes her independence. She also doesn't like societal pressures requiring her to act a certain way. She'd rather read a book about agriculture than talk about boys. And she hasn't yet met a man who can match her intellect."

Hahn likes playing Grace because "she values similar things to me. I'm also an independent, nerdy person who values intelligence. And watching her develop confidence in her convictions is really inspiring to me. She's witty, clever and quick-thinking and speaks her mind."

"It's challenging to show the two sides of her when she has to put on airs to be in society. And you can see the difference when she's doing that, and when she's showing who she really is, including some insecurities. She's a layered and complex human being – which I think is really lovely and exactly the kind of female character the world needs right now."

Hahn said audiences will enjoy this play's romantic and comedic aspects, plus the journey of a woman "finding her way in a world that's telling her to take a specific, narrow path, instead of the one she'd choose for herself. People will like its feminism, too, and it's also a positive and hopeful story." She noted, as well, that the interior of Old Town Hall becomes Hawtrey Hall for this show, and the characters will wear "beautiful, authentic, period costumes."

Furthermore, added Hahn, "Ellen and the



Michael Kelley (as Lord Dennington), Sam Beeson (as Lord Walcott), Rose Hahn (as Miss Coventry) Michael Hammond (as Mr. Mullens), Victoria Jungck (as Lady Eleanor), and Mattie Cohan (as Lady Agnes)



Rose Hahn (as Miss Coventry), Victoria Jungck (as Lady Eleanor), Mattie Cohan (as Lady Agnes) and Michael Hammond (as Mr. Mullens)

entire ensemble are so dedicated and talented, and they're putting all their passion into bringing the story and characters to life. It makes the process of putting on this show so much better, and that's my favorite part."

Michael Hammond plays John Mullens, who grew up in the local village in the countryside outside London. He's now a steward working at Hawtrey Hall and managing its accounts and land. "Although he's a realist, he's also an optimist with a quiet, joyful confidence and is hopeful within his social class," said Hammond. "He brings a nice levity to a proper environment."

"He's honest and direct, with no pretense, and has a good sense of humor," continued Hammond. "Every time a suitor enters the estate, Mullens talks about him with Grace afterward and listens to her thoughts about him. They're very at ease with each other and can chat easily together. No topic is off limits, and they can be their real selves

around each other."

Hammond said it's a wonderful role for him because there are many similarities between Mullens's personality and his own. He's also enjoying it because "the play is funny and – since I'm onstage almost the whole time – I get to see the suitors and Grace's family being ridiculous. Mullens is more confident than I am in real life, so it's fun to inhabit a character who says lines that are bolder than I usually do and speaks his mind."

Hammond believes audience members will see a bit of themselves in every single character. "Each one is so unique and funny in their own way that people will connect with and root for different ones at different times. And I think that's a sign of a well-written play. There's a heroine, but the other characters support her on her journey. The humor is silly, but the story is one where you want to know what happens next."

ENTERTAINMENT



The Vale Arts Spring Show and Sale will take place Friday, April 26, 2024 in Oakton. (Pictured): "In the Shadow", Size: 7"x5", Oil Painting by Kim Richards.

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/>

APRIL 1-30

Young at Art Exhibit for 55+ Plus Age Group. At RCC Hunters Woods, Reston. This free exhibit, for two-dimensional art only, will take place from Monday, April 1 to Tuesday, April 30. A reception and presentation of awards is planned for Thursday, April 13th in the Community Room from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. This will be an opportunity to view the art and present several fun awards. At 2:15 p.m., you are invited to attend a performance by violinist Miles Stiebel at the CenterStage.

APRIL 6-28

Pat Macintyre Retrospective Exhibit. At Reston Art Gallery and Studios, 11400 Washington Plaza West, Lake Anne, Reston. See a collection of works by Pat Macintyre, a beloved, lifelong artist with an instantly recognizable style, including original drawings and paintings from the era of Reston's

formation. Open every weekend from 12-5 p.m. Meet the artist and connect with fellow Macintyre fans at the show reception, 2-4 p.m. on Sunday, April 14.

PARK AUTHORITY, MASTER GARDENERS OFFER FREE

VEGETABLE GARDEN CLINICS As spring blooms, the Fairfax County Park Authority and the Fairfax County Master Gardeners extend a warm invitation to all gardening enthusiasts for a series of free Vegetable Garden Plant Clinics. These educational programs, offered in collaboration with the Fairfax County Master Gardeners and the Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE), aim to cultivate a deeper understanding of gardening practices and foster a sense of community among green thumbs of all levels.

Join expert gardeners at a variety of locations as they provide valuable insights, answer questions, distribute soil sample kits, and offer complimentary analyses of plant and pest issues. These clinics are scheduled to run from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on the following Saturdays: April 13, May 11, June 8, July 13, Aug. 10 and Sept. 14. Clinics will be held concurrently on each of these dates at eight locations across Fairfax County:

Pine Ridge Park, 3401 Woodburn Road, Annandale
Baron Cameron Park, 11300 Baron Cameron Ave., Reston
Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean
Grist Mill Park, 4320 Mt. Vernon Memorial Highway, Alexandria
Grove Point Park, 6432 Bowie Drive, Springfield



The Taste of Vienna will be held Saturday, April 27, 2024 in Vienna.

George Mason Park, 9700 Braddock Road, Fairfax
Hogge Park, 3139 Glen Carlyn Road, Falls Church
Nottoway Park, 9537 Courthouse Road, Vienna

FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

Walk With Dr. Rinka Mehra. 10 a.m. Meet at Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, Vienna. Walk with Dr. Rinku Mehra is a new initiative aimed at encouraging families to participate in a monthly walk to promote a healthy community and encourage active lifestyles. Walk with Dr. Mehra offers participants the opportunity to engage in safe physical activity while gaining valuable health information and connecting with others in their community. Visit <https://www.themehraclinic.com/about>

JOIN THE SPRING CLEANING EFFORT IN FAIRFAX COUNTY PARKS

It's spring cleaning time again and the Fairfax County Park Authority and dozens of volunteers of all ages throughout the county are rolling up their sleeves to spruce up public parks across the county as part of the annual Watershed Cleanup Days in conjunction with the Nature Conservancy.

Cleanups have been scheduled at various locations throughout the county and offer a diverse array of activities to be involved in. From collecting and bagging trash to tackling other projects, volunteers will have the chance to contribute to the beautification and preservation of our natural spaces. Choose from among the following locations:

Saturday, April 27
Cub Run Stream Valley Park: Penrose Place, Chantilly (9-11:30 a.m.)
Cub Run Stream Valley Park: Flint Lee Road, Chantilly (9-11:30 a.m.)
Sunday, April 28

Lake Accotink Park, Springfield (9 a.m.-noon)

APRIL 19 TO MAY 4

The Vienna Theatre Company presents "The 39 Steps". Don't miss the fun as Monty Python meets Spy vs Spy. Get tickets at <http://www.viennatheatrecompany.org/tickets.html>

FAIRFAX COUNTY FARMERS MARKETS READY FOR 2024 SEASON

The opening of the 2024 Farmers Market season is fast approaching and the Park Authority, along with dozens of local food producers, will have tons of fresh and healthy foods waiting for you at all 10 markets located throughout the county.

This year, you can expect to find locally grown produce, delicious baked goods and prepared foods at the farmers markets. Additionally, enjoy a variety of family-friendly activities from musical performances, games, and don't forget to bring your food scraps to support our community composting efforts!

The 2024 season begins April 17 with the McCutcheon/Mount Vernon Market. Check out our full market schedule for the latest times and locations.

WEDNESDAYS
McCutcheon/Mount Vernon
April 17-Dec. 18, 8 a.m. - noon
Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria
Oakmont
May 1-Nov. 6, 8 a.m.-noon
Oakmont Recreation Center, 3200 Jermantown Road, Oakton
Wakefield
May 1 - Oct. 30, 2-6 p.m.
Wakefield Park, 8100 Braddock Road, Annandale
THURSDAYS
Annandale
May 2 -Nov. 14, 8 a.m. - noon
Mason District Park, 6621 Columbia Pike, Annandale
Herndon
May 2 -Nov. 7, 8 a.m. - noon

Old Town Herndon, 700 Block of Lynn St., Herndon (by the Red Caboose)
FRIDAYS
McLean

May 3-Nov. 15, 8 a.m.-noon
Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean

Kingstowne
May 3-Oct. 25, 3-7 p.m.
In the Giant parking lot, 5870 Kingstowne Towne Center, Alexandria
SATURDAYS

Burke
April 20-Dec. 21, 8 a.m.-noon
VRE parking Lot, 5671 Roberts Parkway, Burke

Reston
April 27-Dec. 7, 8 a.m.-noon
Lake Anne Village Center, 1609-A Washington Plaza, Reston

SUNDAYS
Lorton
May 5-Nov. 10, 8 a.m.-noon
VRE parking lot, 8990 Lorton Station Blvd., Lorton

Visit the Farmers Market website for complete information about this year's markets - including details on SNAP benefits for eligible households available at designated locations.

If you have any questions, contact the Community Horticulture Office at 702-642-0128.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 24

Okaidja Afroso "Jaku Mumor" The Ancestral Spirit of Ghana. 8:00 p.m. At the CenterStage at Reston Community Center Hunters Woods, Reston. Okaidja Afroso ushers in a fresh breeze of musical flavors from the shores of Ghana's Gulf of Guinea. Visit <https://restoncommunitycenter.com/things-to-do/performances/touring-artist-series/>.

APRIL 26-28

Spring Book Sale. Sponsored by Friends of Centreville Library. At 14200 St. Germain Drive, Centreville.
Friday, April 26 from 1-5 p.m.
Saturday, April 27 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

ENTERTAINMENT



The Bamberg Symphony with Helene Grimaud performs on Saturday, April 27, 2024, at GMU Center for the Arts in Fairfax.

Sunday, April 28 from 1-4 p.m.
Bag Sale on Sunday from 1-4 p.m.

FRIDAY/APRIL 26

Vale Arts Spring Show and Sale. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Historic Vale Schoolhouse, 3124 Vale Road, Oakton. More than 150 original artworks by 9 local artists, Kim Richard, Linda Bullen, Laura Barringer, Lorrie Herman, Cathleen Lawless, Andrea Cybyk, Jenna Klimchak. Guest Artists: Anna Willard, and Lori Goll.

FRIDAY/APRIL 26

Watercolorist Gwen Bragg. 11 a.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. McLean Art Society is honored to present nationally acclaimed watercolorist, Gwen Bragg, giving a step-by-step demonstration of her wet-on-wet method. She will show how she creates textures in her paintings, applying water and paint on paper that is set on plexiglass and repeatedly flipping it to create colors that blend and flow, resulting in a beautiful aesthetic that is integral to her work.

SATURDAY/APRIL 27

DEA Prescription Drug Take Back Initiative. 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. At Vienna Police Department, 215

Center Street, South, Vienna. In conjunction with the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and state and local law enforcement agencies, the Vienna Police Department will again participate in a one-day initiative to remove potentially dangerous controlled substances from area homes. The Vienna Police Department will have a collection site for old, expired, unused, or unwanted medications. Prescription medications, controlled or non-controlled substances, and over-the-counter drugs may be turned in anonymously at the collection point inside the Vienna Police Department.

SATURDAY/APRIL 27

Bamberg Symphony. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. The Bamberg Symphony—one of Germany's premier orchestras—debuts at the Center for the Arts in a program inspired by New Yorker music critic and Pulitzer Prize finalist Alex Ross's recent book *Wagnerism: Art and Politics in the Shadow of Music*. It explores Richard Wagner's complicated, many-sided legacy and his colossal influence on music, art, and culture as part of the ensemble's concert series "The World After Wagner."

SATURDAY/APRIL 27

National Poetry Month Poetry Reading. 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. At Green Spring Gardens, Alexandria. Come celebrate the Poetry in the Parks community engagement series, starting with a free poetry reading held during National Poetry Month. Hosted by ArtsFairfax and the Fairfax Poet Laureate, the fifth event in the series will feature the poetry of prominent writers from the greater Virginia region. Spaces are limited, so reserve your spot today!

SATURDAY/APRIL 27

Drug Take-Back Day. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Clifton Presbyterian Church Parking Lot, Clifton. Simply drive through the drop-off area and hand your medication containers from your vehicle to a staff member. All drugs are handled, controlled, disposed of only by official DEA Agents. There is no cost. Personal labeling should be removed from all medication containers before dropping them off.

SATURDAY/APRIL 27

Taste of Vienna. 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. At Vienna Firehouse, 400 Center Street South, Vienna. Featuring 29 culinary vendors and 6 food trucks. The focus of the event is to showcase the many excellent restaurants and food trucks that the Vienna area has to offer. The VVFD parking lot will be lined with many local favorites, and the event draws large crowds of area diners every year. Admission is free and guests will be able to purchase food and beverages. This is a fundraiser for the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department.

SATURDAY/APRIL 27

Sensory Day. 1-4 p.m. At the Old Firehouse Center, McLean. Challenge your senses at the Old Firehouse! This unique and fun event, supporting Autism Awareness Month, will provide all who attend a sensory exploration through taste, smell, sound, sight and touch. This event is free and open to all. For Old Firehouse activities, call 703-448-8336.

SUNDAY/APRIL 28

HO Gauge Model Trains Running. 12-4 p.m. At The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Potomac Module Crew will have HO gauge model trains running at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$3; ages 13 and older, \$5; seniors and military (active and retired), \$4. <http://www.fairfax-station.org>, <http://www.facebook.com/FFXSRR>, 703-425-9225.

SUNDAY/APRIL 28

Walk on the Hill. 2-5 p.m. Some of Vienna's most beautiful, historic properties will be featured during this year's Walk on the Hill in the Windover Heights neighborhood. At Windover Avenue between Lewis Street and Lawyers Road. Since 1974, residents and visitors have made the lovely pilgrimage to this historic neighborhood to participate in self-guided tours through dozens of participating yards and gardens offering inspiring views of glorious spring flowers, budding trees, live music, exhibits and refreshments.



Take a Suffragist Memorial Tour on Thursday, May 2, 2024 in Lorton.

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SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 22

Here's What's Happening at MCC!

APR
27

The Old Firehouse Center Family Event

Sensory Day
Saturday, April 27, 1-4 p.m.

Free for all participants;
preregistration is recommended.



MAY
2

Presented by The Alden

"Alice: Dreaming of Wonderland"
Thursday, May 2, 6 p.m.

\$20/\$17 seniors
\$15 MCC district residents

MAY
3

Old Firehouse Teacher Workday Trip

Kings Dominion
Friday, May 3, 8 a.m.-7 p.m.

\$90/\$80 MCC district residents

MAY
4

Presented By Dark Horse Theatre Company and (The) Unruly Theatre Project

Improvicon
Saturday, May 4, 7 p.m.

\$20/\$15 MCC district residents

MAY
8/9

Presented by The Alden

Foreign Language Film
Wednesday, May 8, 6:30 p.m.
Thursday, May 9, 1 p.m.

Free admission

MAY
10

Presented by The Alden

(the) Unruly Theatre Project
Friday, May 10, 7 p.m.

Free admission

MAY
16

Presented by The Alden

Performing Arts Movie
Thursday, May 16, 1 p.m.

Free admission



The McLean
Community Center
mcleancenter.org

Home of The Alden Theatre
aldentheatre.org

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

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Employment

Transaction Network Services Inc. in Reston VA seeks Data Scientist III. Design data pipelines. Reqs MS in Comp. Sci, Data Analytics, Statistics, Bus analytics, Info sys + 3 yrs exp. May work remote. Email CV to TAG@tnsi.com & ref job title/REQ #R339.

Legals

Legals

**Hearings for the Town of Clifton, Virginia
Proposed FY2025 Town Budget and Proposed
Amendments to Ch. 8 and 16 of the Town Code
May 7, 2022**

Notice is hereby given that the Town Council of the Town of Clifton, Virginia will hold Public Hearings on Tuesday, May 7, 2024, 7:30PM at the Town Hall at 12641 Chapel Rd. to consider the proposed FY2025 Town Budget and proposed amendments to Ch. 8 and 16 of the Town Code regarding the Cigarette Tax and Meals Tax rates, respectively.

The FY2025 proposed Town Budget and proposed amendments to Ch. 8 and 16 of the Town Code will be posted on the Town's website at cliftonva.gov and a hardcopy will be posted at the Clifton Post Office, 12644 Chapel Road, Clifton, VA 20124. All interested parties are encouraged to attend the public hearings to express their views with respect to the proposed FY2025 Town Budget and amendments to Ch. 8 and 16 of the Code. Written comments may be submitted via email to clerk@cliftonva.gov and via regular U.S. mail to P.O. Box 309, Clifton, VA, 20124 no later than May 7, 2024. Written comments will be entered into the record but will not be read aloud.

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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 21

THURSDAY/MAY 2

Suffragist Memorial Tour. 10-11:30 a.m. At Turning Point Suffragist Memorial, 9751 Ox Road, Lorton. Join AARP in a Guided tour of the Memorial and learn the history of the women that fought for the right to vote through the eyes of one of them. The Turning Point Suffragist Memorial commemorates all of the millions of women who engaged in the suffragist movement primarily from 1848 through passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920 that allowed most women to vote. This memorial is both a visual symbol and educational tool that elevates them to their proper place in history. Visit <https://events.aarp.org/Tour05022024>

THURSDAY/MAY 2

"Alice: Dreaming of Wonderland." 6 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Get ready to experience an amazing journey in the crazy world of Wonderland! Based on the classic by Lewis Carroll, "Alice" is an action-packed theatrical circus full of surprises, amazing acts, video projection with 3-D mapping and live music. Visit the website, aldentheatre.org.

MAY 2-4

"Romeo and Juliet". At Lake Braddock Secondary School, 9200 Burke Lake Road, Burke. "Romeo and Juliet," by far one of Shakespeare's most famous plays, is a tale that transcends time and culture. As the Folger Shakespeare Theatre puts it, "In Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare creates a violent world, in which two young people fall in love. It is not simply that their families disapprove; the Montagues and the Capulets are engaged in a blood feud. Show times: May 2 and 3 at 7 p.m. and May 4 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Tickets available on lbtheatre.com

MAY 2-4

2024 Play Festival. Presented by the Capital Baptist Homeschool Co-op. Location: Capital Baptist Church, 3504 Gallows Road, Annandale. Dates: May 2 & 3 at 7 p.m.: Aesop's (Oh So Slightly) Updated Fables & The Pirates of Penzance; May 4 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.: All I Really Need to Know I Learned by Being in A Bad Play & The Pirates of Penzance. Led by veteran director, Barbara Schwartz, the students of Capital Baptist Homeschool Co-op are set to bring these comedic performances alive in a dazzling display of talent and charm.

MAY 3-4

Perchfest Spring: A Retro Music & Mini Golf Festival. At Capital One in McLean. Step back in time during Capital One Center's signature festival, Perchfest, with retro games, throwback decorations, and all the nostalgia vibes! Offering guests the ultimate festival in the clouds with putt putt, live music, craft beer from Starr Hill Biergarten, fitness classes, Made in Fairfax's pop-up shop, and so much more. Guests are encouraged to wear 80's and 90's attire for retro fun! Event Link: <https://www.capitalonecenter.com/events/perchfest-spring-edition-2024>

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Obituary

Obituary



Anne Reynolds, 94, Williamsburg, VA, passed away April 12, 2024. She is pre-deceased by her parents Maria and Michele Prisco and siblings Anthony Prisco, Frank Prisco, Jeanne Maffucci, and Mildred Cunningham. She is survived by her son, Bruce Reynolds (Robin Haertle), daughter, Jan Walker (Terry) of Williamsburg, grandchildren Victoria Bodanyi (Raul Gonzalez), Thomas Walker (Stephanie Nelson), Saul Reynolds-Haertle, and Isaac Reynolds. She was beloved Nonna to great-grandsons Gergo Gonzalez,

Mischa Gonzalez and Theodore Walker.

Anne moved to Williamsburg from Oradell, NJ, where she had lived for 44 years. In Oradell, she was active with the Oradell Zoning Board, the Pasack Valley Community Development Committee, the Oradell Senior Social Club, and the Oradell Arts and Business Coalition. She helped found the Water Works Conservancy and created the Oradell People Uniting with Students organization. She received the Oradell Volunteer Award, and was the 1999 Bergen County (NJ) Volunteer of the Year. She was a member of the Book and Needle Club of Oradell, and was an avid bicyclist and member of the Bicycle Touring Club of North Jersey. She was chorist and lector for St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church of Oradell.

Anne was an avid bicyclist and member of Potomac Pedalers Touring Club and the Bicycle Touring Club of North Jersey for many years. She collected Native American rugs, pottery and baskets, loved opera, and spent years with season tickets to the Metropolitan Opera. In Williamsburg, she joined The Woman's Club of Williamsburg-GFWC, where she was recognized for over forty-five years as a GFWC clubwoman.

A private memorial service will be held later this summer. If you'd like to donate in memory of Anne, she would have appreciated donations to the Water Works Conservancy in Oradell (<https://www.hwww.org/>). Cremation Society of Virginia is handling the arrangements. Online condolences may be expressed at www.vacremationsociety.com.

CALENDAR



"Alice: Dreaming of Wonderland" can be seen on Thursday, May 2, 2024 at the McLean Community Center in McLean.

FROM PAGE 22

SATURDAY/MAY 4

Spring Native Plant Sale. 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. The sale will feature seasonal plants that are native to the region. All plants are raised and sold by Hill House Garden Nursery and include flowering perennials, native shrubs, and small trees available for purchase. During the sale, attendees can enter a free drawing to win a native tree. For more information, email CSC@viennava.gov or call 703-255-6300.

MAY 12 TO JUNE 16

HomeAid Diaper Drive. Being held community-wide in Northern Virginia. HomeAid National Capital Region's diaper drive is a community-wide donation drive aimed at collecting diapers and wipes for families in need. Sign-up to host a donation site, purchase diapers online, or volunteer to count, sort, and deliver diapers. May 12th - June 16th. Visit www.homeaidncr.org.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 22

and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax or www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html.

The Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia Caregivers' Support Group takes place the first and third Tuesdays of each month, 10-11:30 a.m. via Zoom. This group is for caregivers of family members with dementia. Meetings are gently facilitated. For more information and to get the Zoom link, contact Jack Tarr at jtarr5@verizon.net or 703-821-6838.

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

Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group Meets from 1:30-3 p.m. the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW. 703-532-4892.

Date to Who Knows When



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Continuing the theme from last week's column: it's been medically documented and agreed that I now have papillary thyroid cancer stage IV, and wait for it: chronic kidney disease, also stage IV. This is my new narrative, my current medical situation. This replaces the narrative that had characterized the previous 12 years (until I began treatment for thyroid cancer, after having an operation to remove my thyroid called a thyroidectomy in 2020) that I had non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV. As the Lombardi Center (Georgetown) thyroid cancer doctor told me when we went there for a second opinion; after reviewing my medical records said, "If you (meaning me) had lung cancer, we wouldn't be having this conversation." Which means, for all of you readers who haven't yet had your morning coffee, I'd be dead. That's because lung cancer is a killer. Though I might have laughed at the time, I soon stopped laughing when we discussed the effectiveness of the drug I had been prescribed. The doctor said it was the best drug to prescribe, one she most definitely would have prescribed. The problem: it was not a lifelong solution. In fact, it is a one to three-years-ish solution after which, as we say in Boston: "It will be Katie bar the door," which means trouble.

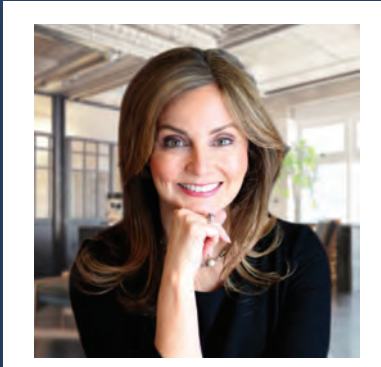
And that was years before I found myself in my current hot seat: stage IV kidney disease caused as a direct result of the years of chemotherapy and the most recent three years of that exact thyroid cancer drug/treatment. As a result, I am no longer taking my thyroid cancer drug so I am presently drifting along with untreated thyroid cancer and untreated (not much the doctors can do I'm told; kidney damage is irreparable) kidney disease. A "double-header" if there ever was one. As Matt Damon said in a classic scene from the movie "Good Will Hunting": "How do you like them apples?" I don't but I will deal with this new hand as I have in the past with the old, whether there's a fat lady singing: "It ain't over till it's over" or not.

And for those of you following along at home, given the fact that I am nearing the age of 70 and am already a cancer patient, a kidney transplant is completely out of the question. Which leaves me with a bit of an uncertain future with few drugs if any, that can successfully treat my stage IV papillary thyroid cancer without damaging my kidneys. And if I damage my kidneys further, I will be on d,d, dialysis. Once this treatment starts, at present, there is no undoing it. I will be on dialysis for the rest of my life. A life which can last for years with a reasonably normal-ish quality and mobility of life (as we've learned). If I were to cross that Rubicon however, I have been well-informed by my medical provider, and some steps have already been taken to prepare and educate me as to the challenges – and opportunities that await. It is not, from what I have learned, a death sentence nor a situation that necessarily confines me to a Barcalounger at an infusion center Mon., Wed., and Fri. for six hours per day, as I had thought.

Part of that education process has been and continues to be interactions with a renal-specific dietician, a nutritionist, and a pharmacy specialist with the hope of slowing down my descent into dialysis. We can't exactly treat the kidneys I'm told, but we can certainly stop stressing them. Eliminating certain foods, medical supplements, miscellaneous drinks (coffee and colas, for an example), and further reducing the amount of liquid that I do drink. This will put less pressure will be put on the kidneys to filter – which is after all, what they do. With this new knowledge and my acceptance of the somewhat tenuous grasp of my future, I will try to eliminate the bad while adding the good. Bad being sodium, potassium, and phosphorus primarily, and of course all the chemicals that manufacturers put in our food. I have lists to follow and articles to read and reread until this dietary evolution becomes second nature to me. Nonetheless, I don't feel as if I've been left to wither on the vine, so to speak. I have regular calls scheduled with these various medical professionals, aside from regular commitments with my oncologist, endocrinologist, nephrologist and of course, my primary care provider as well - who knows me years longer and better than any of these specialists. He knew me before cancer (in fact, he was the one who called me with the results of my surgical biopsy, 15+ years ago). Moreover, I know I can count on him. He's regularly available whenever I need an assessment of any new medical conditions/symptoms. He is an email away and is super responsive. I'll often receive same day feedback from him which for anyone, especially a cancer patient with stage IV chronic kidney disease complicating his life as a papillary thyroid patient, is a kind of responsiveness that I must have. Furthermore, I need to feel that someone is watching and/or listening to me because my situation is quite serious, and time might not be exactly on my side. I don't imagine that having two major health concerns, thyroid cancer, and chronic kidney disease, makes any of these conversations easy. Nevertheless, I'm glad to know where I'm going since I haven't always known where I've been.

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

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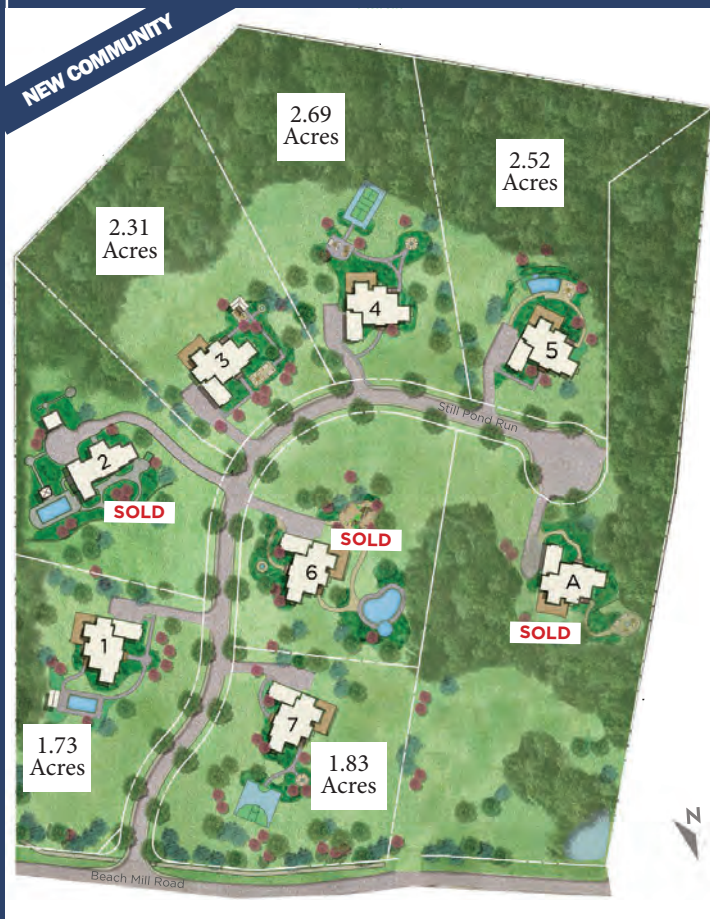


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