

Oak Hill
Herndon
CONNECTION



WELLBEING

Page 7

HATE HAS NO HOME HERE.

نفرت کے لئے یہاں کوئی گھر نہیں ہے
이집에는 미움이 없다 לשנאה אין בית כאן
الكره ليس له مكان هنا **El odio no tiene hogar aquí.**

“We’re getting involved to care for others who are not ourselves.” Robert and Jill Garcia of Herndon lead a focus group to their working digs at the Herndon-Reston Indivisible meeting.

Herndon-Reston Indivisible Group Ready For Action

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Derek Jasper’s ‘Epiphany’ at NextStop

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Homeowners Oppose Proposed Transit Area Tax

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PHOTO BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

MARCH 1-7, 2017

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Homeowners Oppose Proposed Transit Area Tax

Lack of notification also criticized.

BY FALLON FORBUSH
THE CONNECTION

Homeowners voiced concern about paying a proposed service district tax that is being proposed in Reston and outside the Town of Herndon.

The Fairfax County Department of Transportation is seeking permission from the Board of Supervisors to establish a 40-year road fund and a special service district to raise \$350 million from people who own residential and commercial property near Metrorail stations.

The FCDOT hosted its second community meeting on Thursday, Feb. 23, on the proposed Reston Transportation Funding Plan at the Lutie Lewis Coates Elementary School outside the Town of Herndon.

Staff members from Supervisor Cathy Hudgins' and Supervisor John Foust's offices, who represent the Hunter Mill and Dranesville districts respectively, were present. The meeting, however, was not well attended by the public. Only eight community members showed up, but those who attended were vocal about their concerns.

FOR THE ROAD FUND, the rates are proposed at \$2,090 per dwelling unit for residential property and \$9.56 per square foot

SEE HOMEOWNERS, PAGE 4

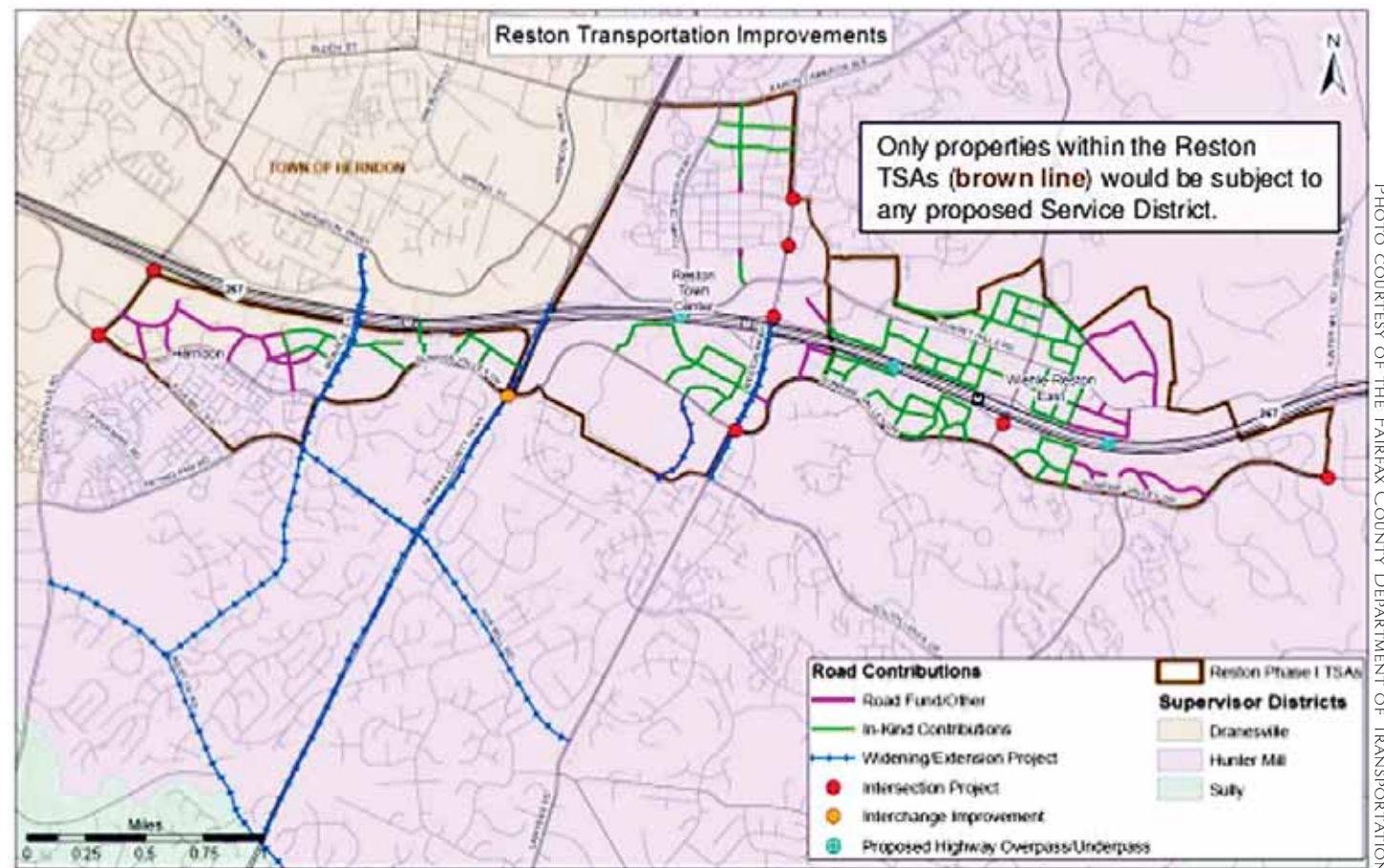


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

A map of the Reston Transit Station Areas (TSAs) that would be subject to the funding proposal. The Wiehle-Reston East and Reston Town Center TSAs are located along both sides of the Dulles Airport Access Road and Dulles Toll Road (DAAR) from the Virginia Department of Transportation owned storage facility to the east, Hunter Mill Road on the southeast and Fairfax County Parkway on the west. The Herndon TSA is located along the south side of the DAAR and is bounded by Fairfax County Parkway on the east, Fox Mill Road and Sunrise Valley Drive on the south and Centreville Road on the west. Land to the north of the Herndon station is within the Town of Herndon.

Herndon-Reston Indivisible Group Ready for Action

Movement started as a Google Doc has taken off.

ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

The Indivisible movement. It started as a Google Doc guide. A few progressive former congressional staffers joined forces to provide information on the workings of government and provide practical advice on how to resist a Trump administration that they see as threatening to the core values of America. Since they sent their guide out into the world via Twitter, 4,500 local groups have formed around them and around the country, like the one in the Herndon-Reston area.

The first time that the Herndon-Reston Indivisible group met, there were about 80 people in attendance and they fit fairly comfortably into one section of Café Montmartre at Lake Anne. The next time they gathered, they filled the eatery. At the

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third official meeting of the political action group, the attendees packed the community room, the classrooms and the hallway of the Sunset Hills Montessori School in the South Lakes Village area in Reston, the facility offered to the cause by school owner Eileen Minarik. "I have the meeting space. It's a community room and this is a community group, looking for ways to look out for all Americans, and that's the way I was raised."

The organizers admitted that the turnout on Tuesday evening, Feb. 21, was a bit overwhelming, but "wonderful to see," said Heidi Zollo as she made some welcoming remarks. About an hour in — after several speakers and words of appreciation to the crowd for their support — hundreds of people eventually formed working "interest groups."

Sixteen issues were on the agenda, divided into two sessions to accommodate the size of the crowd, and to allow participants the opportunity to work on more than one area of concern, should they so desire.

The "Immigration" work group drew Robert and Jill Garcia of Herndon to attend.



PHOTO BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

The Herndon-Reston Indivisible attendees break into interest groups to work on specific issues.

"It's about caring for 'the other,' the 'people who are not us' and needing to get involved to do something about the mayhem of Trump," said Robert Garcia. He was shepherding a line of people to their work-

ing group area with a "Hate Has No Home Here" placard held above his head.

"Indivisible 101" and "Virginia Elections"

SEE HERNDON-RESTON, PAGE 4

OAK HILL/HERNDON CONNECTION ♦ MARCH 1-7, 2017 ♦ 3

Homeowners Oppose Proposed Transit Area Tax

FROM PAGE 3

of commercial property.

The service district rate for homeowners is 21 cents per \$100 of assessed value of the property. These are not fixed rates, but would be reviewed annually by the county.

"I'm just a little concerned about the non-developer stakeholders here, the public," Kelley Westenhoff, of Reston, said during the meeting. "Who's going to be speaking for them and watch the hen house?"

The FCDOT is recommending an advisory group of developers and residents to be established to review the rates and make recommendations, according to Tom Biesiadny, director of the FCDOT.

"This isn't a static plan," Biesiadny said during the meeting. "It's not that the Board [of Supervisors] is going to adopt something, cast it in concrete and not revisit it for 40 years. It's a living plan that will be reviewed annually."

The rates have no restrictions on how they could fluctuate.

"I think that's a problem," Lee Lipsey, a homeowner living in the Reston Town Center, said during the meeting. "There is no limit on how much it can go up at any given year and that there is no limit on how much it could go up during the 40-year life."

A Herndon resident who declined to provide her name also voiced concern over the impact the service would have on her home value.

"As a property owner ... I'm being disadvantaged, I think, from selling my residential unit to someone just outside [the service district] that isn't going to have this additional tax burden," she said during the meeting. "And yet they'll be using the streets ... and yet they have no financial stake in the game. Just because I'm geographically within [the service district] why am I being assessed dollars when we have lots more users using these roads."

Biesiadny answered her question by saying the lines were drawn in the county's Reston Transit Station Areas Comprehensive Plan amendment, which the Board of Supervisors adopted on Feb. 11, 2014, and not by his agency.

"There was quite a bit of community outreach as part of that comprehensive plan amendment," Biesiadny said. "That effort went on for about four years in terms of



PHOTOS BY FALLON FORBUSH/THE CONNECTION

Kelley Westenhoff was concerned that the rates for the road fund and service districts were not fixed and said she did not trust the county to adjust them responsibly or advocate for the interest of homeowners.

looking at not just what the boundaries are, but what the development that could occur in the boundaries in the future."

Reston is served by three Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Metrorail stations on the Silver Line: the Reston Town Center, Wiehle-Reston East and Herndon stations. The county designated the areas around these stations as Transit Station Areas (TSAs).

The proposed road fund would only affect commercial property owners who develop within the TSAs. By right development would not be subject to the road fund.

The proposed service district would affect all property owners within the TSAs (in brown on the map).

The money raised by the funding plan would be used to construct transportation infrastructure projects that were identified by the comprehensive plan.

These include roadway improvements, intersection improvements and new roadways to add to the TSA area's road network to improve connectivity to, from and around the transit stations.

The funding plan will use \$1.2 billion in public funding:

- ❖ Federal: \$155 million
- ❖ State: \$174.5 million
- ❖ Regional: \$580.55 million
- ❖ Local: \$289.95 million

THE BOUNDARIES are no longer up for deliberation, according to Biesiadny.

"Why weren't the residential property



Hugh Rodell, Jan Visintainer and Lee Lipsey told county officials that they were not aware of the proposed plan and demanded to know why property owners within the proposed service district were not notified by mail before the plan was finalized for presentation to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

owners notified by mail in the special districts of all of these public meetings and discussion?" Hugh Rodell asked during the public meeting.

Ray Johnson of the FCDOT responded by saying that an effort was underway to get mailers out to property owners, less than five days before the Board of Supervisors was scheduled to hold a public hearing and vote on the plan.

He called on Hudgins' staff members to provide more details, but the two staff members who were present could not provide any details about efforts to notify property owners through direct mailings.

"I'm fairly involved in my community and the area and I just found out about it maybe a week or two weeks ago, much less some of the activity that went on in the early stages of these advisory committees and boards, etcetera," Rodell said. "I would just think that in these special tax districts ... that that would have been a requirement, that all property owners are notified by mail."

Lipsey agreed, but said that it may be too late.

"We know that the last hearings where these things go before the Board of Supervisors, it's too late for citizens to really have an impact and really be heard early enough that what they're saying counts," she said.

The Reston 20/20 Committee came out against the service district back in January



Ray Johnson of the Fairfax County Department of Transportation explains the Reston Transportation Plan during a community meeting at the Lutie Lewis Coates Elementary School.

during the FCDOT's first community meeting that was held in Reston.

Other groups are voicing opposition to applying a special tax on residential property owners.

The Reston Association Board of Directors voted on the same night of this meeting — Thursday, Feb. 23 — to take a position that the service district should not be applied to any residential properties within the Reston TSA. However, they also recognized that the improvements should be made to "keep pace with development" in the area and that commercial property owners should still be taxed.

The Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing and vote on the Reston Transportation Funding Plan at the Fairfax County Government Center on Tuesday, Feb. 28, before deadline of this paper.

They will not be voting on the tax district.

During the hearing, the Board of Supervisors will also decide on whether to hold a separate hearing on April 4 to vote on the plan's associated service district.

Herndon-Reston Indivisible Group Ready for Action

FROM PAGE 3

groups were available in both sessions, since educating themselves and others on how to take action and what to do to take it locally, is a cornerstone of the organization.

Tyler Tucker, who was there to represent Lt. Governor Ralph Northam, a candidate for governor in the upcoming November state election, was on hand to offer an insider's perspective on effective engagement with elected officials. He got the crowd fired up when he declared "They've got to be scared. I have never seen such par-

ticipation on our side."

Some of the attendees, like Nikki Pugh from Germany and Lyndsay Nelson from Reston seemed to want involvement in all of the issue groups. "None of this, what's going on [in this administration] is OK with me," said Nelson. "I was raised in Germany. I studied history. I know where this

can lead."

Despite the size of each spontaneous committee, each group was able to organize themselves to appoint leadership, agree on some action points, and make plans for their gathering outside of the next general meeting.

Since Tuesday, Facebook posts for the different sub-groups of

Herndon-Reston Indivisible have been sent across the internet. There are daily reminders to take some specific action with information on how to contact elected officials and what to say to best make a point. There are updates on legislation, moves from the White House, and Town Hall meetings. "We're in it for the long haul," said Zollo. "Like they say, it's a marathon, not a sprint."

To find out more about Herndon-Reston Indivisible, visit their Facebook page. The Indivisible Guide can be downloaded at www.indivisibleguide.com.

"None of this is OK with me. I was raised in Germany. I studied history. I know where this can lead."

— Nikki Pugh



Participants in the University of Virginia seminar, "The Science & Lived Experience of Autism," share a moment together at the close of the Action Advocacy Affair for Autism held Saturday, Feb. 11 at the University of Virginia Falls Church campus.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TIFFANY HWANG

Pioneering Change For Autism

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Despite a recent surge in attention and research over the past decade about autism, controversy exists. Autism elicits strong opinions that straddle a line between searching for a cure and respecting autistics for which autism is their identity. One statistic nearly everyone agrees upon though is that autism affects approximately one in 68 children and adults, and it is a lifelong condition.

In his course description for "The Science & Lived Experience of Autism," psychologist Vikram Jaswal, associate professor at University of Virginia, states that at least 10 percent of adult autistics do not communicate reliably, 90 percent are not regularly employed, and 80 percent remain dependent upon their parents throughout their lifetimes. In a recent interview for UVA Today, Jaswal, who is also the father of an 8-year-old autistic daughter, said that most of the research about autism is pretty gloom and doom and didn't reflect the experiences that he and his wife had with their child.

After his daughter's diagnosis, Jaswal changed his interest of studies at UVA from how preschool children learn, to research and advocacy for autism. Gaining a fellowship, Jaswal created the seminar, "The Science & Lived Experience of Autism." It put 20 UVA students "on the front lines" as Jaswal said, to examine studies in autism and work with stakeholders to create questions that reflect the interests of the autistic community.

Jaswal included nonspeaking autistic peers along with his UVA students in the seminars. The autistics participated not as research subjects but were asked for meaningful comments on class readings, what was important in their lives, and input for study and advocacy program designs.

The nonspeaking autistics are clients at Growing Kids Therapy Center in Herndon. Elizabeth Vosseller, speech-language pathologist, is director of Growing Kids Therapy Center. UVA and Growing Kids Therapy Center formed a community-based research program to create questions that focus on the concerns and interests of the autism community and to raise awareness and advocacy.

Vosseller, along with the Growing Kids Therapy Center staff, encourages the nonspeaking autistics to use letter boards as their communication tools. Without them, the students cannot answer questions, not because they don't understand the questions or know the answers but because they cannot speak reliably. In the UVA article published January 2017, "Students Learn First-Hand How People with Autism Feel" by Sandy Hausman, Vosseller said, "They've been set free from a prison of silence. They're really enjoying having a peer group, and as one of our students put it, "To be part of the discussion instead of the topic of the discussion."

MOTOR NOT DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDER

In an interview for the article, "Topic — Cure or Not Cure" published by UVA January 2017, Vosseller said that autism is a motor disorder, not a developmental disorder. She explained that speech begins in a part of the brain that controls motor skills. Language, on the other hand, lives in another part of the brain. People with autism "have an issue in the motor area for speech."

The autistics participated in Jaswal's seminar by reading many of the same articles read by their college-aged peers at UVA. The autistics communicated virtually and have had opportunities to meet up with the UVA students in Charlottesville while the UVA students have come to Northern Virginia. The autistics, who call themselves "The Tribe," commented on the weekly readings, using their letter boards to communicate, pointing letter by letter to spell out words and complete sentences which are then recorded by communication assistants and blogged to UVA.

On Saturday, Feb. 11, UVA students and their autistic peers, along with Jaswal and staff from Growing Kids Therapy Center met at the University of Virginia, Falls Church campus for a day-long Action Advocacy Affair. Their objective for the day's exchange was to begin planning the details of programs they'd eventually implement by discussing ideas for raising autism awareness and acceptance.

According to the agenda, after considering how best to raise autism awareness and acceptance, learn what the priorities and values of the autistic community are, and how best to address them, the students welcomed Del. Patrick Hope (D-47), Town of Herndon Mayor Lisa Merkel, and Del. Jennifer Boysko (D-86).

STEREOTYPES CHALLENGED

The event began with statements by the students that challenged stereotypes of autism. The autistics disagreed with descriptions of autistics as being not intelligent, violent, purposefully repeating behaviors, having restricted interests, and lack of feelings. Their words via the letter boards, validated a disconnect between how peer-reviewed science describes autism and how they, the autistics, describe autism.

Ryan McMahon, said, "Most bothersome is the idea we don't have the same capacities for love as NT [neurotypicals, or those without autism]."

Huan Vuong commented on education. "That I have an intelligent mind inside this body hasn't been proved in research," he said. "It is functionally impacting my daily life in school."

When asked how the students could educate people about autism, ideas poured forth from both the autistics and the UVA students.

"Space might allow for something like a TED-type conference with speakers and self-advocates," Diago Fortis said.

Danielle Campion suggested testimonials from The

SEE PIONEERING, PAGE 11

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Good, Bad and Missed Opportunities

Results of the 2017 session of the General Assembly.

GOOD THINGS

Progress in funding mental health and addressing the opioid epidemic on multiple levels were among the successes of the 2017 General Assembly session.

❖ In addressing the opioid crisis, the General Assembly passed important steps, including Del. Tim Hugo's bill to limit opioid prescriptions to a seven-day supply in most cases; increased access to naloxone, a drug that instantly reverses an overdose; needle exchange programs (to reduce the spread of HIV, viral hepatitis, and other blood-borne diseases); focus on infants born with opioid exposure.

❖ Increased funding for mental health included \$7.5 million to facilitate providing same-day access to mental health screening services by July 1, 2019. (The Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board began offering same day, in-person screening for mental health/and or substance use concerns to adults in July 2015 and extended same day access service to youth. The official launch date for youth walk-in service was Feb. 1, 2017.) Also supports for discharge planning and services for people with serious mental illness being released from jail.

❖ The budget included 3 percent raises state employees, increase for teachers and a larger increase for state police.

❖ The Virginia Board of Corrections was given added authority and resources to review deaths in local and regional jails.

❖ Negotiation and legislation will accelerate the City of Alexandria's massive undertaking to fix its sewer system that dumps raw sew-

age into the Potomac River whenever it rains. Wendell Berry's version of the golden rule: "Do unto those downstream as you would have those upstream do unto you."

❖ Scott Surovell's bill requiring Dominion to provide better information on coal ash pollution, disaster preparedness, and recycling.

❖ Eileen Filler-Corn's bill requiring that insurance cover up to a 12-month supply of hormonal contraceptives when dispensed or furnished at one time.

❖ School boards are required to have anti-bullying policies that includes notifying parents that their student was involved in a bullying incident.

❖ Use of FaceBook Live allowed members to stream floor discussion, and report to constituents and answer questions directly.

BAD BILLS

Gov. Terry McAuliffe has already vetoed some of these, and is expected to veto some others.

❖ Expanded access to concealed weapons; vetoed by Governor. SB1362 would allow anyone with a military ID card to carry concealed weapon; HB2077 would allow guns in emergency shelters and prevents state police or others from prohibiting them for any reason

❖ End funding of Planned Parenthood, vetoed by Governor.

❖ Anti-Sanctuary City Law HB 2000 says no locality shall adopt any ordinance, procedure, or policy that restricts the enforcement of federal immigration laws.

❖ As a reality check on the Virginia General Assembly, HB2025 would allow discrimination against LGBT community under guise of religious freedom, and passed 21-19 in the Senate and 57-37 in the House of Delegates.

❖ HJ 545 would allow special committees of the General Assembly to overturn regulations, upsetting separation of powers. Constitutional amendment (first resolution): "Provides that the General Assembly may suspend

or nullify any or all portions of any administrative rule or regulation."

❖ Photo identification required for absentee ballots.

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

❖ The biggest missed opportunity of the 2017 General Assembly session was the failure to advance any redistricting legislation, which passed in the Senate and died in the House of Delegates. It's clear that Virginia voters want an end to gerrymandering, but hopes for reform before the next census in 2020 are diminished.

❖ Mental Health in Jails: \$4.5 million was removed from the Governor's proposed budget that would have paid for desperately needed mental health screening in jails.

❖ Legislation to raise Virginia's threshold between misdemeanors and felonies from \$200 to \$500 failed. Virginia's threshold has not changed since 1981, unnecessarily focusing "police and prosecutors on minor crimes instead of violent crime while tainting thousands of Virginia's suffering from depression or drug addiction with felony charges for life," says Surovell.

❖ Ken Plum's bill to increase and index the minimum wage never made it out of committee.

❖ Bills to address student debt also died during the session, as did bills aimed at reducing student suspensions and expulsions.

❖ Republicans stripped language that would have brought \$6 million in federal funds to provide Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) to those at risk for unintended pregnancy at no cost to Virginia voters.

Thanks to Ken Plum, Scott Surovell, Marcus Simon, Jennifer Boysko, Adam Ebbin and others whose columns and responses helped inform this editorial. We welcome opinions and additions to this list.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

BULLETIN BOARD

To have community events listed in the Connection, send to connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/ by noon on Friday.

THROUGH MARCH 7

The U.S. Small Business

Administration is reminding businesses in Virginia that working capital loans are still available to small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and private nonprofit organizations affected by the severe storms and tornadoes on Feb. 24, 2016. Deadline to file is March 7, 2017. Visit disasterloan.sba.gov/ela or www.sba.gov/disaster. Email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov.

SATURDAY/MARCH 4

Hunter Mill Community Summit.

8:30 a.m.-noon at Frying Pan Farm Park 2739 West Ox Road, Herndon. Join Supervisor Hudgins and County leaders for presentations and discussions on this year's budget proposals. Email huntermillRSVP@fairfaxcounty.gov for more.

8th Annual Men's Conference. 8:30 a.m.-2:45 p.m. at St. Joseph Catholic Church, 750 Peachtree St., Herndon. Keynote speakers include Dr. Scott

Hahn, Dr. Ralph Martin & Fr. James Searby. Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Michael F. Burbidge. Visit <https://sjcherndon.org/> or call 571-215-8731 for more.

TUESDAY/MARCH 7

Application Deadline. The U.S. Small Business Administration is reminding businesses in Virginia that working capital loans are still available to small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and private nonprofit organizations affected by the severe storms and tornadoes on Feb. 24, 2016. Deadline to file is March 7, 2017. Visit disasterloan.sba.gov/ela. Visit www.sba.gov/disaster or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 8

NARFE Luncheon. 11:30 a.m. at Amphora Diner, 1151 Elden St., Herndon. Joyce Warner, Executive Director, Federal Education & Assistance Fund speaks about "Helping Public Servants in Need" at the National Active and Retired

Federal Employees Association luncheon. Reservations to Shirley Boning at 571-442-8910 or e-mail Shirley.boning@comcast.net no later than Thursday, February 23.

Saturday Night in the Suburbs. 7

p.m. at South Lakes High School, 11400 South Lakes Dr., Reston. A panel of high school seniors will be featured, talking openly about alcohol and drug use, teen parties, social media, parent supervision and enabling, and communication with parents. Middle school and high school parents are encouraged to attend. Visit www.unifiedpreventioncoalition.org/ for more.

League of Women Voters. 7:30-9

p.m. at Hunter Mill District Community Room B, 1801 Cameron Glen Drive, Reston. Learn about the opioid problem and what Virginia and Fairfax County are doing about it. Free and open to public. Visit www.lwv-fairfax.org for more.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 15

Home Buying Basics. 7 p.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Find

out what every new buyer needs to know from planning to financing, to shopping, to closing. Free. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library for more.

ONGOING

Exercise for Parkinson's. Every Monday, 1:15-2:15 p.m. Reston Sport&Health, 11445 Isaac Newton Square, Reston. This program brings together people impacted by Parkinson's Disease to participate in various physical exercises aimed at improving posture, balance and circulation and increasing strength, muscle control and mobility. Free. parkinsonfoundation.org. ckacenga@sportandhealth.com 703-621-4148.

Passages Divorce Care. Tuesdays 6:45 to 9:00 p.m. beginning Sept. 13 through Jan 7. Vienna Presbyterian Church is located on the corner of Maple Avenue (Rt. 123) and Park Street in Vienna, Virginia. Cost to cover materials \$20, scholarships available. 703-938-9050, www.viennapres.org, or send an email to Passages@ViennaPres.org



Mild Winter Means Early Allergy Season

Experts offer suggestions to prevent and treat allergy symptoms.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION



PHOTO COURTESY OF
BARBARA MACKIE

Allergist Dr. Barbara Mackie, M.D. advises patients who normally have seasonal allergies to begin taking medication early.

Those experiencing Itchy, watery eyes and seemingly endless sneezing know that spring allergy season is getting an early start this year thanks to this season's mild winter weather.

"Everything is blooming early because of the warm weather," said Dr. Barbara Mackie, M.D., allergist, of Privia Medical Group in Vienna. "People are spending more time outside because the weather is lovely, but they're experiencing allergy symptoms."

One of the keys to surviving allergy season is staying ahead of it. When thermometers are rising above 60 degrees for more than three consecutive days, pollen from plants begins to move through the air. The tree pollen count has reached high concentration levels in the Washington, D.C. re-

gion, according to The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology's National Allergy Bureau Pollen and Mold Report.

"Most of the time seasonal allergies, whether it is spring or fall, are caused by pollens that are associated with grass, trees and weeds," said Dr. Victoria A Garrison, M.D. a Student Health Services physician and a professor in the School of Nursing at George Mason University in Fairfax, "In areas that are damp or humid, mold spores can also be a factor. When people have allergies to these substances, the immune system will react and cause symptoms like sneezing, watery, itchy eyes, runny nose, sore or itchy throat, congestion and fatigue."

"Mild winter temperatures cause plants

to pollinate early," added Maureen Moriarty, DNP, assistant professor of Nursing at Marymount University in Arlington. "This problem may be compounded by a rainy spring season, leading to increased mold levels that can drive allergy symptoms in sufferers through fall months."

Instead of waiting for full-blown symptoms, Mackie recommends beginning medications early. "What I usually tell patients who normally have seasonal allergies is to take their maintenance medications early so they're covered when allergy season hits," she said.

"Being prepared can often help slow down symptoms of allergies," added Kathy Grilliot, director of Clinical Education Respiratory Therapy Program at Northern Virginia Community College's Medical Education Campus in Springfield.

"Before the season starts, it is a good idea to start taking a nasal steroid. This medication takes a few weeks to gain full effect so starting before the allergens are everywhere can really help to control symptoms. Eyes can also have allergic reactions, so see a specialist to have a good eye drop for allergen control."

For those who might be perplexed by the distinction between allergies and a common cold: "If it's lasting more than three days

with no fever, it's probably not a cold," said Mackie.

Some precautions that allergy sufferers can take to decrease their exposure to allergens include wearing a face mask when outside during times when the pollen count is high and resisting the urge to open car and house windows when the weather is warm, especially if the wind is blowing. "Take off your shoes when you enter your house so that allergens don't get spread around the house," said Grilliot. "Be aware where you place clothing that has been outside when you enter your house to prevent allergens from entering your home."

"I advise patients to rinse their hair and take a shower to get the pollen off before going to bed at night," added Mackie. "Otherwise you're getting pollen on your pillowcase and sheets and breathing it in all night." There are certain times of day when allergy sufferers should avoid being outside. "Mid-morning, afternoon and early evening are peak times for pollen," continued Mackie. "When it's windy, don't go out because of the pollen."

Pets can spread pollen as well. "Dogs get spring fever too and want to be outside, but they can bring pollen into the house," said Mackie. "Wipe off their coats and paws when they come inside."

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Saturday, April 1
12 pm to 2 pm
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South County Secondary School
Saturday, April 29
11 am to 1 pm
Co-sponsored by Supervisor Dan Storck, South Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, South County Federation, and South County Secondary School

To register as an employer or student, or for more information, please visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield/teenjobfair.htm

Musical Good Times at CenterStage

“Rock of Ages” produced by Reston Community Players.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Return to the glorious days of 1980s’ rock. It was a time of big rock bands, big electric guitar solos and plenty of big hair matched with big egos. It is all coming back courtesy of the Reston Community Players with “Rock of Ages,” a musical nominated for Tony Awards including Best Musical.

What can audiences expect? “Rock of Ages” director Joshua Redford said, “As the song goes, ‘Nothin’ but a good time.’ The music is the best of ‘80s rock. It is one big concert with scenes thrown in for good measure.”

With 15 cast members and a five-piece band led by music director Matt Jeffrey right on stage, CenterStage will have a rock concert atmosphere. “The band is as much a part of the show as any musical I’ve seen.” said Redford. Favorite songs from Styx, Whitesnake, REO Speedwagon, Pat Benatar, Twisted Sister and others will be heard.

“Choreographer Chris Dore, has put together very energetic and fun routines. The choreography is unlike anything you’ve seen at RCP before. Each



PHOTO COURTESY OF RESTON COMMUNITY PLAYERS

Joshua Redford, director, “Rock of Ages” at CenterStage, Reston Community Center

member of the ensemble is an exceptional dancer,” said Redford.

As for the show’s plot to go along with the live music; an aspiring rock star, Drew, and aspiring actress, Sherrie, are trying to prevent developers from turning the Sunset Strip into a strip mall.

Claire O’Brien Jeffrey plays Sherrie. She described Sherrie as “a small town girl, living in a lonely world.” She has come to L.A. from Kansas to pursue her dream of being an actress, despite her parents’ objections. She’s sweet and ambitious and probably a little too trusting of other people. She is determined to make her dreams come true.

Where & When

Reston Community Players present “Rock of Ages” at CenterStage, Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Hunters Woods Village Center, Reston. Performances: March 10, 11, 17, 18, 24, 25, 31 and April 1, 2017 at 8 p.m., March 19 and March 26 at 2 p.m. Tickets: \$21-\$25. Call 703-476-4500 or visit www.restonplayers.com

For Melrose Pyne who plays a groupie-like waitress, “There is just something special about a jukebox musical. The audience is already familiar with the music so it’s like you can feel them breathing and experiencing the material with you in a way that’s different than most musicals.

“You don’t need to be an ‘80s baby to love this show. The music is amazing, the dancing will blow your mind, and you’ll be up dancing and singing with us by the end of this show. The wigs alone are enough reason to come,” said Pyne.

CALENDAR

Send entertainment announcements to www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

Diva Central Dress Drive with Reston Community Center
Through Friday, February 24, collection in building lobbies 11911 Freedom Drive & 11921 Freedom Drive, Reston Town Center Help promote confidence and self-esteem by providing high school students with new or lightly used formal dresses, shoes, jewelry, handbags & accessories, collected on behalf of Reston Community Center. restontowncenter.com

Poets and Painters. Through Feb. 26, various times at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Exhibit is “Springtime in Winter: An Ekphrastic Study in Art, Poetry and Music.” A reception on Wednesday, Feb. 22 from 7-9 p.m., will feature readings and music created to complement the works of eight fine artists. Visit www.artspaceherndon.com or call 703-956-9560 for more.

FPA Television Series. Through Feb. 28, various times on Verizon FiOS TV and Cox Communications in Fairfax County, and by Comcast in Reston. The specials will air on FPA CHANNEL 10, FPA INTERNATIONAL CABLE 30, and FPA SPIRITUAL TV 36. Fairfax Public Access (FPA), will premiere a special series of new movies and documentaries throughout February, in recognition of Black History Month.

Painted Passion at ArtInsights. Through March 5, various times at the ArtInsights Gallery of Film and Contemporary Art, 11921 Market St., Reston Town Center. An exhibit of romantic couples from Disney and Star Wars as created by official studio artists. Call 703-478-0778 for more.

Photography Competition. Through March 11, various times at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Showcase the works of local photographers, with cash award to the winner. Awards reception on Saturday, Feb. 27, 7-9 p.m. Visit www.artspaceherndon.com or call 703-956-9560 for more.

Slave Life Exhibit. Through March

31, various times at the Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. \$7 adults, \$6 students, and \$5 seniors and children age 5-15. Artifacts excavated from around Sully’s 18th-century slave cabins. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully-historic-site/ or call 703-437-1794 for more.

Ice Skating in the Pavilion 8 a.m.-11 p.m. open daily through March. College Night Skate, Rock N Skate, Cartoon Skate at the Ice Skating Pavilion

Every Thursday, 6-9 p.m.; every Friday, 8-10 p.m. Skate Shop, 1818 Discovery Street, Reston Town Center. 11900 Market Street. Receive \$2 off admission with valid college ID. Live DJ & music, games & prizes; skating continues until 11 pm. Share the ice with Scooby-Doo, Cat in the Hat and more. 703-709-6300 skating@restontowncenter.com restontowncenter.com/skating

All-comers’ Group Fun Run at Potomac River Running. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Reston Town Center, 11900 Market Street, Reston. For beginners or competitive runners, come out for a fun, low-key run that is safe and social. Call 703-689-0999 potomacriverrunning.com.

Over-40 Softball League. A Fairfax-based league is looking for enough players to form another team. Players must be at least 40 years of age to be eligible. All games are doubleheaders - played on Sundays at Bready Park in Herndon between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. If interested, email skeduman@aol.com for more information.

“A Bird in the Hand” through spring 2017 Reston Town Square Park, 11990 Market Street, Reston Town Center. See and explore Patrick Dougherty’s monumental public art sculpture made from tree saplings. Presented by GRACE in collaboration with IPAR. 703-471-9242 restonarts.org

Teen and Adult Art Classes ArtSpace Herndon Every Monday from 5:30-8:30 p.m. 750 Center Street, Herndon. Drawing and Mixed Media with Melanie Stanley - During Fall and Winter of 2016. Cost: \$45/class. The class will use a variety of techniques for drawing, painting, mark making, and collage using fine arts tools and materials. Students will be taken down a creative path to

learn to use drawing tools and brushes more effectively. Register by emailing Melanie, and she will send you the supply list and payment options/information: ridingfree2@gmail.com. 703-956-9560. www.artspaceherndon.com.

FRIDAY/MARCH 3

Songwriter’s Competition. 7:30 p.m. at Bethesda Blues & Jazz Supper Club, 7719 Wisconsin Ave., Bethesda. Luke Brindley, of Reston, made the cut in the Folk/Acoustic category of the the third annual Bernard/Ebb Songwriting competition and is now a finalist to perform in a live concert performed by the competition’s finalists. Tickets are \$10 and \$15, at www.bethesda.org.

MARCH 3-11

GRACE Art: Celebrating Creativity. Various times at the Greater Reston Arts Center (GRACE), 12001 Market St., Suite 103. celebrates Youth Art Month with two exhibitions dedicated to the artistic achievements of the area’s youth. Opening reception and family day, March 4, 12-4 p.m. Visit restonarts.org or call 703-471-9242 for more.

SATURDAY/MARCH 4

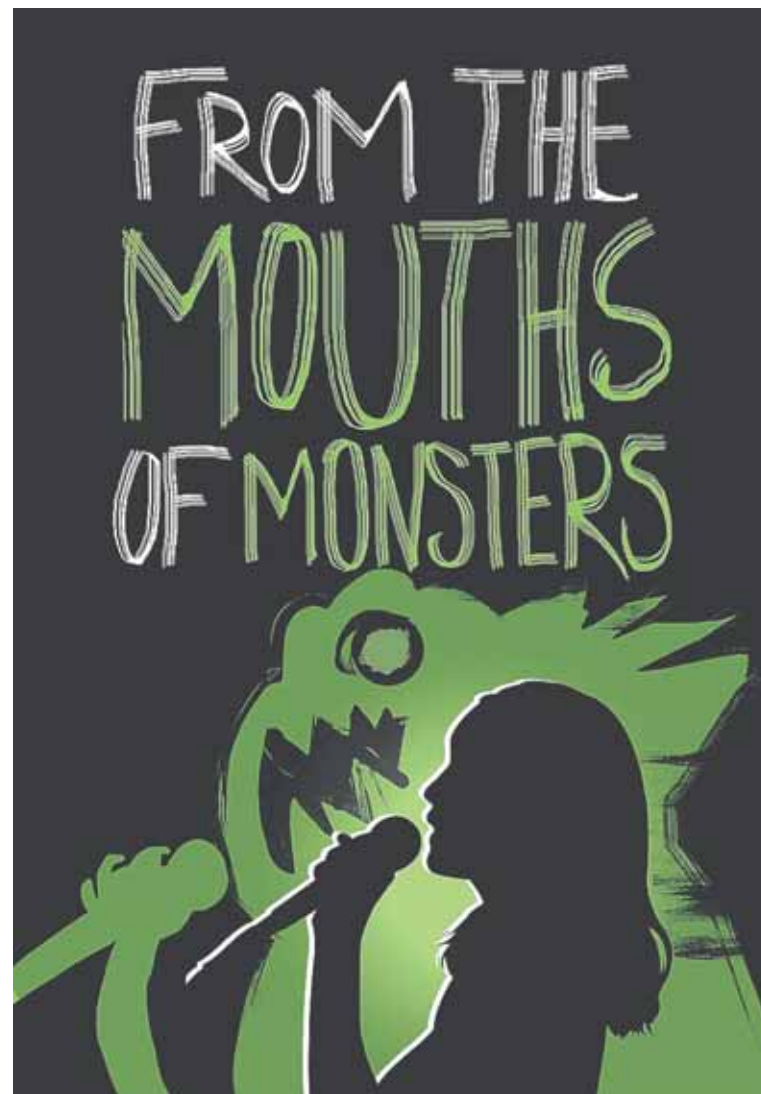
Family Fun Saturdays. Throughout the day at Fountain Square, Reston Town Center, 11900 Market Street, Reston. Activities include:

- ❖ Carousel Rides, noon-5 p.m.
- ❖ Free S’Mores and Hot Chocolate, 1 p.m., while supplies last
- ❖ Fairfax Jubil-a-ires Performance, 1-3 p.m.
- ❖ Free Ice Skating, 1-4 p.m.

Visit cornerstonesva.org/rest-on, email ON@cornerstonesva.org, or call Cornerstones at 571-323- 9555 for more.

Children’s Cooking Class. 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Il Fornaio, 11990 Market St., Reston Town Center. Pizza-making cooking class for kids. \$18.95, includes pizza, soft drinks and gelato. For reservations, visit banquets.reston@ilfo.com or call 703-437-5544 for more.

Silver Line 55+. 6 p.m. at the Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation, 1441 Wiehle Avenue, Reston. Dinner and “An Evening of Memories” honoring NVHC’s Jubilee.



On March 17-19 Herndon High School Theater presents “From the Mouths of Monsters”, various times at Herndon High School Auditorium, 700 Bennett St., Herndon. \$5 for students, \$15 for adults, appropriate for students in grades 7-12. Visit herndonhighschooltheatre.ticketleap.com for more.

\$20 for members/\$25 for nonmembers. Reservation deadline Wednesday, March 1. Call 540-521-

1692 or email mssheinman@yahoo.com for more. **Atlas Intersections Festival.** 8 p.m.

Derek Jasper's 'Epiphany' at NextStop

An evening of mind reading and the unusual.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Local audience demand has been so robust that Evan Hoffmann, NextStop Theatre's artistic director, said he "had to bring back Derek Jasper to the NextStop stage for a third time. It will be an evening of live entertainment like no other."

Jasper is a magician, mentalist, deception expert, and Herndon native. "Jasper wows NextStop audiences each time he performs. He is very impressive, so I am thrilled to bring him back."

A South Lakes High School graduate, Jasper gives performances that combine sleight of hand, psychology, and confidence games. Add in magic, comedy, mystery, and his elegant style and the evening is meant to be

a wondrous one. The audience becomes part of the show as he brings the magic close to them, along with surprises.

Jasper has performed for over 15 years. It all started when he "read the original stories of 'Sherlock Holmes' and fell in love with this idea of being able to look at someone and seemingly know everything I could possibly need to know about them," said Jasper.

"Then I started to develop my skills in observation, psychology, and other various

skill sets such as hypnosis and memory development," added Jasper. After more than 1,500 live performances and shows, Jasper indicated his shows are not about "fooling people but connecting with them."

At the Dulles Corridor's NextStop Theatre, Jasper will perform his "Epiphany" show. He will be a solo performer close to the audience with not only a beautiful set, but "some interesting prop choices" meant to captivate, he said.

The "Epiphany" show itself will be "sculpted around the idea of observation," said Jasper. "As a mentalist, I am trained to notice all of the 'little details'



Derek Jasper performing "Epiphany" at NextStop Theater.

that people would normally not notice. 'Epiphany' is all about me taking the audience behind the curtain and showing them the world through the eyes of a mentalist."

Jasper wants to invite audiences who have seen him before or are new to his special kind of magic, mind reading, and a touch of the unusual and the bizarre. "I would like the audience to leave the theater with a better understanding of the world around them. I want them to have their minds

challenged and experience something they wouldn't be able to anywhere else in the world," said Jasper.

Where & When

NextStop Theatre presents "Epiphany" with Derek Jasper at 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Performance Friday, March 10 at 8 p.m. and Saturday, March 12 at 7:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. Tickets \$25. Call Ovationtix at 866-811-4111 or visit www.nextstoptheatre.org

CALENDAR

at the Atlas Performing Arts Center – Lang Theater, 1818 Library St., Ste. 500, Reston. Northern Virginia based performing arts modern dance company performs. Visit www.gindance.org.

TUESDAY/MARCH 7

Color Me Happy. 7 p.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Adult coloring session. Coloring pages, pens and pencils provided. Free. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library for more.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 8

Healthy Diet Ideas for Diabetes. 7 p.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Nutritionist Natalie Kannan presents ways you can help control your diabetes and pre-diabetes through managing diets and changing eating lifestyles. Free. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library for more.

MARCH 8-9

Farm Animals Bedtime. 7-8 p.m. at Frying Pan Farm Park, 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon. Learn how animals such as cows, pigs and goats get ready for some shut-eye. Bring a flashlight or lantern along, and please dress for the weather. Call 703-437-9101 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/fryingpanpark/.

SATURDAY/MARCH 11

Family Fun Saturdays. Throughout the day at Fountain Square, Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St., Reston. Activities include:
 ♦ Dog Adoptions with Lucky Dog Animal Rescue, 11-3 p.m.
 ♦ Free Sweet Treats, 1 p.m., while supplies last
 ♦ Balloon Artist, 1-4 p.m.
 ♦ Live Music, 2-4 p.m.
 Visit cornerstonesva.org/rest-on, email ON@cornerstonesva.org, or call Cornerstones at 571-323-9555 for more.

Children's Cooking Class. 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Il Fornaio, 11990 Market St., Reston Town Center.

Pizza-making cooking class for kids. \$18.95, includes pizza, soft drinks and gelato. For reservations, visit banquets.reston@ilfo.com or call 703-437-5544 for more.

Lecture about County Borders. 7 p.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Local historian Jim Lewis tells the story behind the evolution of the Fairfax and Loudoun County boundary line. Free. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library for more.

Purim Comedy Night. 7:30 p.m. at the Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation, 1441 Wiehle Ave., Reston. Featuring comedians Bengt Washburn and Matty Litwak and the Shticklets. \$36. Call 540-521-1692 or visit www.nvhcreston.org/ for more.

SUNDAY/MARCH 12

Lucky Leprechaun 5K. 8:30 a.m. at the Fountain Square and Streets Race, 11900 Market St., Reston Town Center. 3.1 mile race and kid fun run. Register at praces.com/luckyleprechaun or call 703-689-0999.

Nonprofit Event. 1-5 p.m. at The Avant at Reston Town Center, 12025 Town Square St., Reston. CTaBois, founder of the International Association for Self-Proclaimed Artists and Writers, is holding her first art exhibition to benefit the effort in Thailand. Visit www.ctabois.com for more.

Opening Reception. 2-4 p.m. at Reston Art Gallery & Studios, Lake Anne Village Center, 11400 Washington Plaza W # B, Reston. Joan Kelly's new show called "New Directions," which continues through March 29. Visit www.restonartgallery.com/ for more.

MARCH 12-29

"New Directions" Exhibit. 2-4 p.m. at Reston Art Gallery & Studios, Lake Anne Village Center, 11400 Washington Plaza W # B, Reston. Joan Kelly is the artist behind this show. Visit www.restonartgallery.com/ for more.

TUESDAY/MARCH 14

Farm Animals Bedtime. 7-8 p.m. at



Trout Fishing Day

Kids' Trout Fishing Day, Saturday, March 18 from 8 a.m.-noon at Snakeden Branch Stream between Soapstone Drive and Lake Audubon. Snakeden Branch will be well stocked with hundreds of trout. All necessary equipment will be provided and Trout Unlimited members will help clean the fish. Registration is required. Ages 2-12. To register, reserve a fishing rod go to <http://bit.ly/2017TroutFishingDay>. To volunteer, contact Ha Brock at 703-435-7986 or habrock@reston.org.

Frying Pan Farm Park, 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon. Learn how animals such as cows, pigs and goats get ready for some shut-eye. Bring a flashlight or lantern along, and please dress for the weather. Call 703-437-9101 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/fryingpanpark/.

THURSDAY/MARCH 16

Farm Animals Bedtime. 7-8 p.m. at Frying Pan Farm Park, 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon. Learn how animals such as cows, pigs and goats get

ready for some shut-eye. Bring a flashlight or lantern along, and please dress for the weather. Call 703-437-9101 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/fryingpanpark/.

MARCH 17-19

From the Mouths of Monsters. Various times at Herndon High School Auditorium, 700 Bennett St., Herndon. \$5 for students, \$15 for adults, appropriate for students in grades 7-12. Visit herndonhighschooltheatre.ticketleap.com

for more.

MARCH 17-APRIL 1

Emerging Visions: Interactions. Various times at the Greater Reston Arts Center (GRACE), 12001 Market Street, Suite 103, Reston. After viewing Shih Chieh Huang: Synthetic Transformations, students were asked to explore different interpretations and aspects of interactions. The final selections will be on view in the gallery. Opening reception, March 18, 6-8 p.m. Visit restonarts.org or call 703-471-9242.

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21 Announcements **21 Announcements** **21 Announcements** **21 Announcements**

ABC LICENSE
Hen Penny, LLC trading as Hen Penny, 1820 Discovery St., Reston, VA 20190. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer on and off premises/Keg Permit license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Alireza Azima, Managing Member
NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

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21 Announcements

21 Announcements

OBITUARY Mary Rust Sutphin

Born: January 4, 1936

Died February 22, 2017

Mary R. Sutphin, 81, passed away peacefully at home in the company of her faithful companion Gizmo. She was a long-time Leesburg resident and a graduate of Herndon High School. She was predeceased by her husband Delbert Sutphin, her parents, Claude and Mary Rust, and her sister Martha Hummer. Mary is survived by brother Robert Rust; her children Mary Keith Cramer (Bo Herrman) and Lin Sutphin (Jacquelynn); eight grandchildren Janice Muldoon (Matt), John Cramer (Leslie), Trae Sutphin, Robert Cramer (Liz), Tyler Peacher, Luke Herrman, Lincoln Sutphin and Grant Sutphin; and eight great grandchildren Marcus Sutphin, Emmie Cramer, Eva Cramer, Madison Muldoon, Malachi Cramer, Brantley Burlingame, Obidiah Cramer, and Anna Cramer.

The family will be receiving visitors at Colonial Funeral Home in Leesburg, VA on Monday February 27 from 6-8PM and on Tuesday February 28 from 11AM to 12PM. Services will be held at 12PM at Colonial followed by interment at Union Cemetery in Leesburg.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be sent to the Loudoun County Volunteer Rescue Squad, P.O. Box 1178, Leesburg, VA 20177 in gratitude for their kindness and service.

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Still "Dating"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

It's not as if I haven't written about this date: 2/27, before (try last week, Ken), but as I sit at my desk and stare at the calendar hanging on the wall to my front right, the date jumps out at me. Not that I approach it with any fear or trepidation, but I do approach it for days, weeks and even months, calculating my past and contemplating my future. Cancer has a way of marking time, and leaving marks — figuratively and literally.

Mostly I have weathered the cancer storm, eight years and counting/hoping. And as much as I don't want to define myself as a cancer patient/survivor and live my life waiting for the other shoe to drop, it's difficult not to when your feet are so swollen from years of chemotherapy that you're now forced to wear your sneakers without laces. What I lose in support, I gain in comfort. Shoes I can't wear any more. The leather soles don't cushion my feet enough to not fatigue my legs. The shoe can't drop if I'm not wearing it, right? Hardly. It can drop at any time. Certainly it can drop after my quarterly scans, hearing that tumor and/or fluid growth has recurred or anytime in between when new symptoms appear and persist (for two to three weeks, my oncologist has advised). The trick is; heck, there is no trick.

And as much as I'd like to live this date as any other, the date on which one is diagnosed with non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV and given a "13-month to two-year" prognosis by an oncologist, is a date that cannot be lived normally. February 27, 2009 is a date, to invoke Franklin Delano Roosevelt, that will live in my infamy. February 27, 2009 was a Friday. We had scheduled a mid-morning appointment. My brother, Richard (my one surviving immediate family member), met my wife, Dina and I (Team Lourie as I've become accustomed to calling us) in the lobby of the HMO and together we took the elevator up to the third floor (can you say somber?) where we were to meet an oncologist — a man whom I had never met or heard of before, to learn exactly what the previous week's biopsy being malignant, meant.

After the awkward introductions, the oncologist spent the next 10 minutes or so examining me in an adjacent room. Upon completing the examination, we all reassembled in the doctor's office where he proceeded to review/read the results/assessments from the previous seven weeks of tests/examinations from the pulmonologist, the radiologist, the thoracic surgeon and the associated diagnostic procedures completed: X-Rays, CT Scan, P.E.T. Scan, and of course, the biopsy. The medical opinions started off bad and got worse: stage IV, non small cell lung cancer, a "terminal" disease. In listening to the reports, there seemed to be little doubt as to the diagnosis. And so it was clear to my oncologist how to proceed: chemotherapy infusions to begin as soon as possible; to occur every three weeks for six cycles with face-to-face appointments and CT Scans to follow. And though it wasn't, and it hasn't been pretty, generally it has — presumably, kept me alive and in reasonably good spirits, all things considered, and some of those things considered have included some non-Western alternatives.

So here I am, nearly eight years to the date when my old life (pre-diagnosis) ended and my new life — as a cancer patient, began. I wouldn't call it a metamorphosis, more like an upheaval. Somehow though, as the time, treatment and routine passed, I began to assimilate and integrate my new reality into my age 54 and a half head and figure a way forward. I can't say it's been fun, but the more I can laugh and find humor in my less-than-ideal circumstances, the more positive I can be about the negative. A negative which has already done enough damage on its own.

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

NEWS

Pioneering Change

FROM PAGE 5

Tribe and UVa students, and to share their prior expectations and how they've changed. Others suggested trivia games, art displays, and interviews.

The discussion turned to how best to go into the community with scientific professionals and members of the autistic community working together as equal partners. Formation of focus groups, interviews, and use of Dropbox for autistics to suggest their needs were all mentioned. Benjamin McGann said, "Create website run by autistics."

Critical to the conversation and key was a balance of power between NTs and autistics. Concern for equal representation was the rallying cry. Emma Budway said, "Everyone has one vote."

Needs for autistics included better opportunities for training teachers and communication partners, shattering stereotypes, creating adult autistic day care centers, and increasing funding.

The students evaluated the system as it is today. The shared consensus was that that NTs dominate opinions about the lives of autistics. "They have the best of intentions," Michelle Cox said, "but leave autistics out." Thuy Vuong, Huan's brother, agreed: "The system segregates rather than integrates." Mentioned also was that there was too much emphasis on autistic children and not enough emphasis on autistic adults.

Specific outcomes they hoped to see to their action plans included a more educated and interested community, greater inclusion especially in schools, empathy, better communication and educational opportunities, and changed laws.

CONVERSATIONS WITH POLITICIANS

During the segment "Conversations with Politicians," Hope listened to the students' concerns and requests. He addressed funding: "People should have access to services and government should provide it for those who cannot afford it. It should be a core function of government. But funding is always debated."

He added, "It's easier to track young students. Twenty-one-year-olds need housing, healthcare, and employment and have very different needs from younger people."

When asked about who is responsible for funding, Hope answered: "We need to ask these questions at local, state, and national levels. If the family is not there, the government needs to be there to take care of them."

Asked if an online network could be created to connect autistics who need a place to live and families or people who would be willing to host them, Hope replied, "We could use a tax break as an encouragement or incentive to house or employ the autistic individuals."

He added, "5 to 10 percent of the workforce could be designated to autistics or disabled."

Hope explained how to achieve new jobs. "Rewrite job descriptions with the goal of achieving a certain level of disabled employment," he said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TIFFANY HWANG

Ian Nordling and Benjamin McGann, nonspeaking autistics, spell out their statements to Del. Jennifer Boysko (D- 86) during the Action Advocacy Affair for Autism.

"People push back on Medicaid but don't know who it helps," Merkel said. "People aren't thinking broadly, and the right conversations are not happening. My town is small; we don't make these laws but serve more as a 'customer service' role. But at that level, there's a similarity between working with those with language differences and communication differences."

Merkel said, "Northern Virginia is wealthier, [than other areas in the state] but there are also more people with more diverse needs." When asked how to get community inclusion at the town level, Merkel responded about the importance of attending town-hall meetings as a way of educating the town and staff."

Asked what was her best takeaway from attending the Autism Advocacy Affair that day. "I think," Merkel said, "The greatest thing to take away is the assumption of competence."

Boysko discussed various means of bringing stakeholders together and referenced a similar advocacy and support scenario for autistics modeled after one involving senior populations in her district.

"Over the course of a three-year period," Boysko said, "they met monthly with stakeholders to talk about problems and goals and what they wanted to accomplish."

She added, "My job is to listen and make the community a better place."

"The fact that you are here is making incredible waves," said Ian Nordling to Boysko. "We are getting somewhere, slowly but surely."

Education for autistics was a concern to many of the young adult autistics there that day, but McGann looked beyond himself and asked about changing educational standards for all special needs students. "You are making a difference, as are we," he said to Boysko, and added, "How can we change the education standards for all special needs students?"

Boysko explained that No Child Left Behind contributed to problems because of the emphasis on testing and that she disagreed with the testing emphasis.

As the Advocacy Affair drew to a close, McGann asked a favor of Boysko. "Spread the word," McGann said. "Tell others what you saw today. If you believe in us, they will too."

He added, "Too many people look at us like dummies whose communication partners are manipulating us. That is not the case."

PEOPLE

Winners Named in 8th Annual Fine Art Photography Competition

First Place Winner had never entered a photography competition.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Professional and amateur photographers as well as art enthusiasts gathered Saturday, Feb. 25 at the Post Gallery, ArtSpace Herndon located in the Historic Downtown District to celebrate the 8th Annual Fine Art Photography Competition and Exhibit.

According to Exhibit Manager Anna Schoenfeld, the call for art drew 225 submissions from across Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia with 75 photographers vying for recognition and the \$800 in cash prizes. While many photographers used striking colors, presented strong compositions or went for a reaction, technical competence dominated.

In her welcoming remarks to the audience, Signe Friedrichs, executive director of Arts Herndon, said, "These photographs show how a group of artists with a range of themes and skills can be brought together to exhibit work ranging from realistic black and white to colorful abstract images into one spectacular exhibit."

Carla Steckley, who judged the competition in 2015 and returned to judge this year's competition, selected 37 photographs to be named finalists out of the 225 submitted images. Steckley explained there were so many excellent works; it took her two weeks to finalize her selections. "I kept coming back to them again and again, changing my mind," Steckley said. "I re-evaluated until I reached my decision but only due to the deadline." She added that she judged the images name-blind, meaning the photographers' names were covered up or omitted.

In making her decisions, Steckley looked first for technical skills. "Exposure, composition, light," she said. "Sharpness where it needed to be sharp." As she progressed through the images, Steckley looked for photographs that were unique; ones that asked more questions than they answered.

Before Steckley announced the winners of the competition, she cautioned her audience. "Just because you did not get an award, please remember this is my opinion," she said. "I'm proud of you and your photographic abilities. I wanted to give more awards."

Judith Guenther received a merit award from Steckley who had high praise for Guenther's black and white photograph, "In the Grid" shot inside a high domed modern structure with arched overhead beams and rays of slanted sunlight directed toward two interior human figures. Steckley said, "Color in geometric forms can be confusing. Black and white was appropriate for this picture. It works very well with the light and lines all directed toward the subjects."



1st place winner, "Serpentine Vapors at Yosemite" by William Toti.

8th Annual Fine Art Photography Competition Exhibit Awards

MERIT, In the Grid by Judith Guenther
MERIT, Despair by Mark Chen
HONORABLE MENTION, Revival by Light by Mary Ann Setton
HONORABLE MENTION, Rue Obscure Villefranche-Sur-Mer by Robert Pierce
HONORABLE MENTION, Solitudes by Sarah Salomon
HONORABLE MENTION, Silk Mill Tags by Nicol Hockett
HONORABLE MENTION, Laughter by Gerard Rugel
3RD PLACE WINNER, Protected by Peter Foiles
2ND PLACE WINNER, Porch by Joanne Rojcewicz
1ST PLACE WINNER, Serpentine Vapors at Yosemite by William Toti



William Toti, who had never before entered a photo competition, stands beside his photo, "Serpentine Vapors at Yosemite," selected as the 1st place winner in ArtSpace Herndon's 8th Annual Photography Competition & Exhibit. The call for art drew 225 submitted photos from professional and amateur photographers across the DMV.

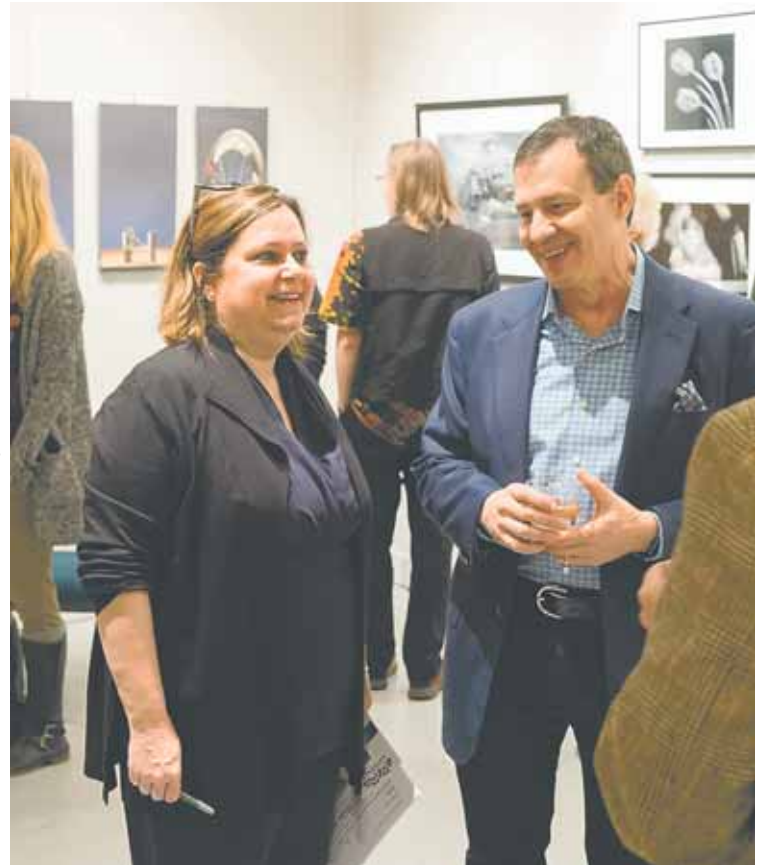
Third place winner was "Protected" by Peter Foiles. As Steckley reviewed the image's winning characteristics during her remarks to the audience, she said, "I've never seen more creative nudes. Beautifully done. The angle of woman's glance. The black background, unobtrusive. And the lighting on the woman's hair is important." She added: "[The photograph] is so unique and not offensive." When Foiles approached the podium to receive his award, Steckley asked him about the creative process for his photo. Foiles said, "A lot of the credit goes to the models who came up with the idea."

Second place winner was the photograph, "Porch" by Joanne Rojcewicz. Steckley commented that the boy's expression in the image was perfect; if he'd been smiling it wouldn't have worked. Once again she referenced light leading the eye to subject matter, the young boy's face.

"Serpentine Vapors at Yosemite" by William Toti took the first place award.

Steckley shared with the audience that

PHOTOS BY ALEJANDRO SAENZ



Signe Friedrichs, Arts Herndon executive director, congratulates William Toti, 1st place winner in the 8th Annual Photography Competition and Exhibit.



A guest at the 8th Annual Photography Competition and Exhibit views a selection of the 38 photo finalists.

she had difficulty deciding between Yosemite and another of Toti's works that was also a finalist. Ultimately she chose Yosemite she said because photography is all about the light. The white serpentine mist crossing the mountains draws the eye back and forth across the photo leading the viewer to the sun and its ribbon of light.

In an interview, Toti explained that this was his first competition. "I thought I'd give it a shot," he said. "I've been afraid not to be accepted." He added, "Art is very subjective. I go for bright, bold, vibrant colors and I build up a color palette."

Toti acknowledged he tried to model his work after the French photographer, Henry Brisson, known in photography for waiting for the "decisive or defining moment." Brisson pioneered photojournalism and portrait photography waiting for the moment that would tell his story best. Toti said he's tried to find defining moments for his photographs and then he adds his color palette. "I'm still learning. Every time I go out

... I learn more."

Ruth Tatlock attended the reception and awards ceremony. She had spied what was to be the winning shot earlier in the evening. "I love this photograph," she said. "I've been there; the fog is beautiful." Tatlock remarked that the photo reminded her of the words of John Muir, a naturalist who wrote considerably about Yosemite and the works of Ansel Adams, known for his landscape photographs of Yosemite National Park.

Toti's winning framed photo and those of the other finalists will be on exhibit and available for purchase opportunity at the Post Gallery, ArtSpace, 750 Center Street, Herndon, VA 20170 through March 11. The gallery is open Tuesday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. and closed Sunday-Monday.

For more information about ArtSpace Herndon, its classes, rentals, future calls for arts, and how to support the nonprofit organization either through volunteer service or donation to help defray the cost of exhibits and other programs, visit www.artspaceherndon.com.