

CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station

Fishing Derby Fun In Fairfax City

NEWS, PAGE 6

Saturday's chilly weather didn't deter people from enjoying Fairfax City's annual Fishing Derby at Ashby Pond.

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Bicycling in Fairfax County Looking to Expand

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PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

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FCPS To Offer Four Days a Week In-school

Phased plan to start April 20 for most vulnerable students.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Some students in the Fairfax County Public Schools system could be poised to clean off the family dining room table by April 20.

Fairfax County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Scott Brabrand, in a phone interview the morning of April 6, said that FCPS will offer four days a week in-person school instruction to some students beginning April 20.

"This expansion to four days is really the next to the last step before returning kids to five days of instruction in the fall," said Brabrand. "It will help us get additional experience with more students that are in buildings and making sure we're doing our safety measures well."

FCPS is mindful of the CDC's most recent guidance related to physical distancing in schools and other measures, Brabrand said. The division will continue to implement mitigation strategies such as monitoring disease data and it will be expanding vaccination opportunities for students and staff.

FCPS will extend the first opportunity to return to four days of in-person learning to its

most vulnerable children. Any student struggling now, virtual or in-person as determined by school officials, will be offered four days a week of in-person instruction. Brabrand said that school staff is looking through students' academics, especially third-quarter progress, IEPs, and the 504 processes. That is happening this week and next week.

"By April 20, kids that had selected two days of in-person will have, as school staffing and capacity allow, the opportunity to do four days of in-person. ... All of that will help prepare us to have five days of in-person instruction in the fall," said Brabrand.

BRABRAND said the expansion is not a pilot program with small numbers of students but a significant expansion across all its schools. "We're going to have tens of thousands of additional students receiving in-person instruction. This is a major step forward and the last step before going to five days of in-person instruction."

Brabrand said that the in-person acceptance rates per school have varied from 20



PHOTO BY FCPS
Dr. Scott Brabrand

"We're going to have tens of thousands of additional students receiving in-person instruction. This is a major step forward and the last step before going to five days of in-person instruction."

— Scott Brabrand, superintendent

percent of students being in-person to 80 percent. That variability means in-person learning will look different at each school. Variability is one of the nuances in the expansion. The plan, though, is dependent upon staff availability. Staff "really stepped up," according to Brabrand.

Meanwhile, FCPS is working closely with the health department and monitoring additional opportunities for younger students to get access to the vaccine. Currently no one younger than 16 can be vaccinated but trials are underway for younger children, and vaccination could be expanded before the start of school in the fall.

"We may get authorization for kids even younger than 16, to have an aggressive campaign ... to vaccinate as many of our kids

who are eligible to receive the vaccine before school starts in the fall. That'll be another layer of safety and security for students and staff."

LOOKING BACK on the past 13 months of the pandemic, Brabrand said he would have appreciated receiving CDC guidance "sooner and clearer." "The confusion at the beginning of the pandemic set the course for a lot of confusion and mixed messages throughout the pandemic. Our first priority was keeping students and staff safe. We've gotten more clarity. We've gotten the guidance we've needed. And we're using that guidance to move our schools back to normal operations as quickly as possible and as safely as possible."

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Two Lawsuits Threaten Virginia Public Schools

Appellants ask courts to halt implementation of Student Transgender Policies; local FCPS Pride reacts.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The outcome of two lawsuits filed in Circuit Courts the last week in March threatens the treatment of transgender students in all Virginia school divisions, including Fairfax County Public Schools.

On Monday, March 29, Christian Action Network filed a Motion for Intermediate Relief pursuant to Va. Code § 2.2-4028 in the Circuit Court for the City of Lynchburg, Va., asking the court to postpone implementation of “Model Policies for the Treatment of Transgender Students in Virginia’s Public Schools.”

On Tuesday, March 30, the Founding Freedom Law Center (FFLC), along with The Family Foundation and Sarah Via, a parent from Hanover County, filed as appellants in the Circuit Court of the City of Richmond a Petition for Appeal From State Department of Education Guidance Document against appellees Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and Atif Qarni, in his official capacity as Virginia Secretary of Education over its recently adopted Model Policies for the Treatment of Transgender Students in Virginia’s Public Schools.

ACCORDING TO THE MODEL POLICIES, the fundamental guiding principle is that all children have a right to learn, free from discrimination and harassment. The policies will, among other things, allow students to use bathrooms, locker rooms, and changing facilities that conform to their gender identity or expression, as well as use pronouns and a name so reflective. The policies also address bullying, dress codes, and school record-keeping, holding educators and administrators accountable.

Jim Davids is Chief Counsel of the Founding Freedoms Law Center. He argued that the 30-page suit with exhibits seeks to stop the effective date of these policies to enable VDOE, as well as school boards, to have more time to study the effects of policies on transgender students and students “who have no gender dysphoria.”

But Virginia law approved March 4, 2020, requires each school board to adopt policies relating to the treatment of transgender students; policies pursuant to subsection B of § 22.1-23.3, Treatment of transgender students policies, no later than the beginning of the 2021–2022 school year.

Davids urged prudence, saying they were asking the court to send the document back to VDOE. He alleged legal errors and the need to remove constitutional violations of the guidance document. “Sit back; let’s walk through this together...We want to work with the Department and school boards to frankly avoid the injury that accompanies poorly thought out governmental policies.”



Jim Davids, Chief Counsel of the Founding Freedoms Law Center, holds up the 30-page lawsuit.



Kristen Allen represents a group of parents in Arlington called The Arlington Parent Coalition opposed to the recently adopted Model Policies for the Treatment of Transgender Students in Virginia’s Public Schools.

He referenced Japanese Americans’ internment during World War II and that it took thirty years for an apology. Davids claimed in his statement, “Most of these students (transgender) revert to their biological sex anyway before leaving adolescence.”

VDOE developed the document in response to House Bill 145 and Senate Bill 161, enacted by the 2020 Virginia General Assembly last March. Thirty-four stakeholders throughout the Commonwealth provided input and offered expertise.

Local FCPS Pride, a community and network for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Allied employees and families in Fairfax County Public Schools, posted on its Facebook account, it was “appalled.” The group supports the newly released model policies regulating safeguards and treatment of transgender Virginia public school children K-12.

FCPS Pride has fought for years for regulations. In May of 2015, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) added gender identity to its nondiscrimination policy. In July of 2016, FCPS finalized and made immediately effective regulations on how the school system responded to transgender and gender non-conforming students, choice of names, bathrooms, and other concerns.



Victoria Cobb, president of The Family Foundation of Virginia



Robert Rigby Jr., co-President of FCPS Pride and 22-year veteran teacher in FCPS

Plaintiff Family Foundation of Virginia is a conservative nonprofit, faith-based organization. It lobbies against same-sex marriages, funding of abortions and holds a core principle that “Gender (is), beautifully expressed as either male or female according to God’s immutable design,” as cited on its Family Foundation website.

Victoria Cobb, President of The Family Foundation of Virginia alleged during the March 30 filmed FFLC news conference published to Facebook that the guidelines replace fundamental parental rights and protection of bodily privacy and safety rights for their youngest students.

Cobb said the Constitution of Virginia ensures that it is the fundamental right of parents to raise their children in accord with parent’s beliefs, and those rights do not get erased because Virginia chooses to dismiss them to fulfill its agenda and disregard the process outlined in Virginia law to produce the guidance document. Cobb alleges that the law took it a step further, stating that all schools shall adopt these guidelines as the minimum standards to operate schools.

Sarah Via is the mother of two children in the Hanover school district and was named in the lawsuit against VDOE. Via said she was concerned about what happens when her young daughter reaches middle school and wants to be modest but cannot choose when a biological male sees her body. The

Virginia Law

APPROVED MARCH 4, 2020

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 22.1-23.3 as follows: § 22.1-23.3. Treatment of transgender students; policies.
 - A. The Department of Education shall develop and make available to each school board model policies concerning the treatment of transgender students in public elementary and secondary schools that address common issues regarding transgender students in accordance with evidence-based best practices and include information, guidance, procedures, and standards relating to:
 1. Compliance with applicable nondiscrimination laws;
 2. Maintenance of a safe and supportive learning environment free from discrimination and harassment for all students;
 3. Prevention of and response to bullying and harassment;
 4. Maintenance of student records;
 5. Identification of students;
 6. Protection of student privacy and the confidentiality of sensitive information;
 7. Enforcement of sex-based dress codes; and
 8. Student participation in sex-specific school activities and events and use of school facilities. Activities and events do not include athletics.
 - B. Each school board shall adopt policies that are consistent with but may be more comprehensive than the model policies developed by the Department of Education pursuant to subsection A.
2. That the Department of Education shall develop and make available to each school board model policies pursuant to subsection A of § 22.1-23.3 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act, no later than December 31, 2020.
3. That each school board shall adopt policies pursuant to subsection B of § 22.1-23.3 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act, no later than the beginning of the 2021–2022 school year.

school administration will take that choice away from her.

Kristen Allen represented a group of parents in Arlington called The Arlington Parent Coalition. She, too, spoke at the news conference on March 30 in opposition to the guidelines. Allen said that parents could no longer protect their children in public schools and were concerned about children who struggle with gender dysphoria. “Current policies lead to damaging outcomes for these students while demanding transgender ideology indoctrination of all children,” Allen said.

“The members of FCPS Pride, including LGBTQIA staff, parents of LGBTQIA+ students, and LGBTQIA+ families in Fairfax County Public Schools, are shocked that these organizations would try to foster such an unfriendly and unwelcoming atmosphere in our schools for Transgender and Gender-Expansive children. But we acknowledge the ongoing work that FCPS is doing to make our schools welcoming and safe. We have every confidence that FCPS will continue its efforts to be inclusive of Trans and Gender-Expansive students at all levels, despite the unveiled threats of The Family Foundation. This smells of politics to us,” said Robert Rigby, Jr., co-President of FCPS Pride and 22-year veteran teacher in FCPS.

SEE LAWSUITS, PAGE 11

A Civic Duty

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)



As we probably learned and as we teach our children, voting is the most important of civic duties. By choosing our leaders at election time and by deciding questions on referenda, we set the direction for our communities, states, and nation. Voting is a way to express our values and beliefs.

In one of the contradictions that strain the legitimacy of what we teach vs. what we do is to teach our children, proclaim in civic pronouncements and require for Scouting citizenship merit badges an acknowledgement of the importance of voting while at the same time making it difficult and sometimes impossible for some people to vote.

During the colonial period and early years of the state of Virginia, only white land-owners could vote. The Reconstruction era after the Civil War brought Black men into the electorate, but in a matter of decades that free access

to voting was cut off by white supremacists who reasserted their power. An avowed purpose of writing a new constitution in 1902 was to disenfranchise Black men. It was successful in that the voting rolls were cut in half as most Blacks and poor whites were not able to make their way through the maze of requirements that one had to meet in order to vote. A blank sheet registration system and a \$1.50 poll tax to be paid three years in a row at least six months before an election kept many from voting. White people in the upper crust of local society made it through these hurdles as the voting registrar who was part of the governing machine would provide them assistance while everyone else floundered at trying to get through the process.

Regardless of their race, women in this country have been able to vote for just over a hundred years, and that right came after incredible struggle. The Civil Rights era and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 opened up the electoral process

for many Black people. Even now there are debates in the states about ways that access to the polls can be limited.

The Virginia General Assembly has put the Commonwealth on the path to supporting citizens carrying out their civic duty with several of the most progressive voting laws in the country. A headline in the New York Times last week proclaimed that "Virginia, the Old Confederacy's Heart, Becomes a Voting Rights Bastion." Over a fourteen-month period and two legislative sessions the General Assembly has passed and the Governor has signed bills to repeal a voter ID law, enact a 45-day no-excuse absentee voting period that permits early voting, made Election Day a holiday, and established a system for automatic voter registration for anyone who receives a Virginia driver's license. The Virginia Voting Rights Act follows some of the provisions of the earlier federal law but applies to localities in the state to ensure that voting remains accessible.

In Virginia we will continue to say that voting is one of the most important of our civic duties, and now we will have a legal structure that demonstrates we believe it!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Making a Path to Acceptance a Bit Easier

To the Editor:

I'm a parent to a transgender daughter in fifth grade in FCPS.

I'm disappointed but not surprised by the Family Foundation's lawsuit. While I ruffle at the perpetuation of myths surrounding trans and gender-expansive youths (along with continued arguments based on "biological sex"), there is a part of me that wants their concerns aired out and examined. I've personally tried to have these conversations with concerned citizens, including faith leaders because I think there is common ground in protecting students from trauma. The piece they are missing is that all children want to feel safe in shared spaces such as locker rooms and bathrooms, and casting transgender students as the cause of this trauma is misplaced.

As to privacy concerns, I look to Gavin Grimm and the invasions he faced at the hands of "concerned citizens," and I want to agree that children and students, cis and trans deserve privacy, which means not classifying them by the body parts they possess. I think the Model Guidelines are important to start these conversations and listen to each other. But I absolutely stand behind trans students first and foremost, particu-

larly those living in abusive home situations that necessitate the school's delicate handling of their gender identity and to whom that information is disclosed.

These policies will save lives, but I hope they also serve to educate people who have never sat in a room with a transgender person and listened to their experiences with an open heart. When I hear a fearful speech about including trans students with their cis peers, I hear echoes of those arguments some white folks made to protest desegregation and integration in schools. That's the lens through which I view this vital step forward.

What I hope comes out of these policies is increased awareness about the experiences of our transgender students. To keep their needs in mind just as we keep other diverse students in mind. As a parent to a child who socially transitioned in elementary school, my wish was that her transition had not been the first time her school administration had sat with these questions about what is equitable and right.

FCPS has been very accepting, but we still faced challenges when it came to explaining pronouns to teachers and administrators and advocating for my daughter to use the bathroom that made her comfortable. (She never used the restroom at school, which was very concerning to me as a parent. In part, this is because her principal

voiced concerns in front of my daughter about her using the girls' restroom.) The public's education on trans issues should not be resting on the shoulders of trans students alone. These policies lighten the load and make their difficult path toward acceptance a bit easier.

FCPS has been amazing at listening to the guidance and beginning the process of training faculty and staff about the issues trans students face. I hold them to a high standard, and they have really shown up for my student. Even when there are bumps in the road, my daughter has been overwhelmingly supported and accepted.

Olivia Johnson
Burke

Leave Lee District Name

To the Editor:

I am writing to respond to Mike Salmon's recent article in the Springfield Connection concerning a Zoom meeting held by Lee District supervisor Rodney Lusk about the possibility of renaming the Lee District.

Since when did the distinguished Lee family name become a dirty word here in Northern Virginia? The rich heritage of both the Washington family and the Lee family provide so much tour-

ism for our state. They provided a foundation from which our country emerged.

I am firmly opposed to changing the name of the Lee District. It is a very recognizable name that has been in place a long time.

With all the problems we are facing right now why should we waste time, energy, money and political capital arguing over a name change? This is political correctness run amok.

I am a 60-year-old lifelong Alexandrian and although I am a resident of the city of Alexandria proper, I spend a lot of time in the Lee District. It is like a second home to me. My family doctor's office is in the Rosehill Shopping Center, I shop and dine out in Lee District, and I do research in the Franconia Museum where curators Carl Sell and Don Hakenson are tireless workers preserving our local heritage.

I attend sporting events and concerts in the Lee District and I am a member of the National Capitol Model Soldiers Society, which holds its monthly meetings at Edison High. I visit friends at their homes in the Lee District.

So please leave the traditional name of the Lee District alone. Changing the name would only divide the community and create confusion and distrust and we don't want that, do we?

Greg Paspatis
Alexandria





The new Building 1 (in white) will be adjacent to the existing courthouse.



An aerial view of the Judicial Complex shows the new buildings (in gray) in foreground, at right.

‘A Great Place for the Courts and the County’

Sweeping changes planned for Fairfax County Judicial Complex.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Judicial Complex is 48 acres of county land adjacent to downtown Fairfax City. It currently contains the former Massey Building site, the county courthouse, historic courthouse and jail, adult and juvenile detention centers, Burkholder Building, historic Legato School and two parking garages.

But big changes are coming, courtesy of the county’s master plan for the complex, which it recently unveiled during an online meeting. It involves five new buildings, including one dedicated to workforce housing.

“This is a 20-year process,” said Project Manager Joan Beacham, with the county’s Department of Public Works and Environmental Services. “And we’ve started a concept study for Building One.”

For 23 years, the Massey Building was the seat of Fairfax County Government until the current county Government Center opened in Fair Oaks. It then housed the Fire and Police departments’ administrative offices. But the

nearly 50-year-old building’s asbestos made it a health hazard, so the 13-story structure was demolished, with site restoration completed in spring 2020.

That cleared the way for the project to proceed further; and during the meeting, Roger Weber, with SOM – which is creating this plan with the county – presented details of what’s proposed. And he said they’re nearing the end of the planning process.

“The land is bounded by Chain Bridge Road and Main Street,” he said. “There’s a lot of historic buildings on this complex, plus challenging conditions – for example, streets and traffic flow that could be improved. We started this process in June 2018 and now we’re finalizing the Master Plan.”

Weber said the changes will be done incrementally, over two decades. “We’ve reached out to the stakeholders and public as much as we could, and we’re excited about some of the ideas we got, along the way,” he said. “The Master Plan represents a synthesis of all those ideas.”

Some 1.4 million square feet of uses are on site now, but Weber said they’ll grow by about

2.1 million square feet in the future. And new programs added there will need more space, too. Most of the existing buildings will be preserved and enhanced, and new ones will join them. Three of the new buildings will provide more space for the existing ones. And some functions will be consolidated; for example, both fire and police evidence will be stored in one facility.

AMONG THE PROJECT’S GOALS are the creation of a welcoming and accessible complex, compatible with the surrounding community; sustaining a safe and secure judicial complex; and respecting the integrity of the on-site, historic resources. To do all that, said Weber, “We’d try to realign the roads to better serve the complex. We’d have more of a regular street grid, instead of a loop, like now.”

The judicial campus currently features 645,000 square feet of open space, and the same amount will be retained. However, explained Weber, “We’ll make sure it’s really usable and helps people circulate through the site. A navigable campus core and a pedestrian-friendly street grid will help orient people

within the complex.”

The historic courthouse will be a focal point, in addition to a judicial core and a public area. And the overall complex will be more integrated with neighboring Fairfax City.

“The entrance off Chain Bridge Road will be moved to align with the planned extension of South Street in Old Town and will be better for pedestrians,” said Weber. “There’ll also be a modified, north-south entry from Main Street to the courthouse. The courthouse grounds will become a ceremonial, public park, and a new plaza will welcome people to the courthouse.”

Indeed, paths and plazas will create a judicial mall of linked, open spaces providing easy access between facilities and parking garages. Envisioned as a green, reflective area and gathering space, this mall will contain the historic courthouse grounds, courthouse plaza, upper and lower greens, a promenade and sidewalk additions/enhancements.

New and relocated programs could add an extra 300,000 square feet of uses to the complex. Potentially to be relocated from offsite are: The Office for Children, about 140,000 square feet; Health Department admini-

SEE JUDICIAL COMPLEX, PAGE 11



A ceremonial promenade will become a pedestrian gateway.



Paths and plazas will create a judicial mall linking the facilities and parking garages.

Garrett O'Connell, 5-1/2, and dad Jon, hold the trout Garrett caught. Grandpa, Dr. Brian Hummel, joined them on this fun day.



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/ THE CONNECTION

Fishing Derby Fun in Fairfax City

Fairfax City's annual Fishing Derby was Saturday morning, April 3, at Ashby Pond – which had been stocked with 400, rainbow trout. Forty people participated in each of three sessions, bait was supplied, and Trout Unlimited of Northern Virginia cleaned and bagged each catch.



Farah Ahmadi, 5, casts her line into the water.



Teddy Angelides, 12, patiently waits for a nibble on his line.



Ava Ung, 5, proudly holds her fish, while sister Mila, 8, looks on.



Steve Marshall and son Colin, 12, just finished fishing.

At Monticello Woods Park in Springfield, the gun law sign still stands.



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/ THE CONNECTION

Gun Sign in Springfield Seems Out of Place

The county-wide gun ban has been in place since last fall.

BY MIKE SALMON THE CONNECTION

With the uptick in gun violence across the country, there's no doubt that the presence of guns in a public place is drawing attention. Last fall, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved an ordinance amending the county code, to prohibit the possession, carrying or transportation of firearms, components and ammunition in county buildings, parks, recreation and community centers, and at or adjacent to permitted events.

At Monticello Woods Park in Springfield, there is a sign reminding park goers that guns aren't allowed in parks, but it seems out of place in such a tranquil setting.

According to Judy Pedersen, Public Information Officer at the Fairfax County Park Authority, guns are banned in all FCPA parks but the site must be posted and have signage. This sign is more common than it seems. "There are many parks that are already signed but with 429 parks it takes time to get the signs, and place them," Pedersen said. "It is an ongoing process," she said.

Changes to the ordinance last fall came after legislation passed during the Virginia General Assembly session and signed by Gov. Ralph Northam, allowing local governments to regulate weapons and ammunition in public buildings, parks

and other areas, along with entities controlled by the locality. The Board of Supervisors has advocated for expanded local authority on guns in public facilities for decades, first including an initiative in the 1996 Legislative Program, county information said.

"The prohibition takes effect immediately. As required by law, the county will post signage at the entrances to all areas where firearms, components and ammunition are prohibited. Violations of the prohibition constitute a Class 1 Misdemeanor," the county website states.

There are 429 parks in the county and a sign prohibiting guns to be carried in the park is not posted in every park, but Monticello Park is isolated to some extent at the end of a road in a neighborhood that backs up to the Springfield Interchange. The park is in Lee District.

"Ending gun violence is not a simple problem with simple solutions. We must attack this issue from many angles including widely supported restrictions. Our Board's decision to ban guns from government property takes us one more step in the right direction. For years, our Board has fought for this authority from the General Assembly and last year we finally won. I was proud to be able to finally cast my vote in support of this ordinance," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeffrey McKay (D).

Estate Planning During Pandemic

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

With the nation sadly surpassing 500,000 Covid related deaths, morality is much more on the mind of many. Yet this year's wills survey, conducted annually by a caregivers foundation, shows that while the Covid-19 pandemic increased people's desire to get a will, most have not taken action.

Why is early estate planning important? There is common agreement that it's best to get ahead of deathbed planning. There are many terrible stories of the sick in hospital beds attempting to tell loved ones where money, accounts, insurance and other financial information could be found in order to carry on without them. And although those without family or with limited assets might be tempted to forego a plan, estate plans have value for everyone.

If a will or trust is not available to follow a decedent's wishes, then state law determines the distribution of assets, which may not align with the person's desire or family situation. Further, having a medical directive relieves uncertainty during times of difficult health situations or in the event of incapacitation.

What is the process at death? Probate is the court supervised process of "proving and recording" a will and transferring assets. Transfers follow a will or state law. Probate also is required when there is solely-held property or other assets without a "pay upon death" designee. Wills use an executor, supervised by the court, to administer the transfer of assets.

Without a will the estate also could remain in court longer, with associated higher court costs, even with a small estate.

A trust can be an alternative or complement to a will, which might allow the estate to avoid the probate court process. In a trust, a trustee, designated by the 'trustor' (trust creator,) stands in to make decisions related to assets in the trust to benefit a third party beneficiary.

Why do people delay making an estate plan? David L. Whiting, principal attorney for the Oak Hill Law Group, Herndon, says there are several reasons. "First, mortality is an uncomfortable topic; as is thinking about what a child or other loved one will have. Second, the rules are complicated and can seem overwhelming. It is easier to push decisions to the end. And third, some feel a plan is unnecessary if there are no children or there are not a lot of assets." Some worry about the expense of document preparation.

Is it difficult to form an estate plan, during the pandemic? Professionals who provide estate planning services are often working from home these days; attorneys, accountants, and financial planners. Most



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Prepare, notarize, and witness basic estate documents for faster, less costly completion of your final wishes

"It's important to confront difficult questions and difficult planning issues while you are still at your best."

— Attorney David Whiting, of Oak Hill Law Group, Herndon



PHOTO BY COLLEEN DANNER

Attorney David Whiting, of Oak Hill Law Group, Herndon

may work on-line with fees ranging from a few hundred to several thousand dollars. The Virginia State Bar Association provides an on-line attorney referral service as a starting point for finding those practicing estate planning.

For those who feel comfortable with a 'do-it-yourself' approach, there are several on-line services and apps which might be less expensive, such as FreeWill, Willing, Nolo, LegalZoom, and RocketLawyer. They typically provide templates and instructions, or basic flat fee services at lower cost; from no fee, to with-fees at \$39 - \$329 per document. Bear in mind that discount services and apps are basic, when your actual needs may be more complex.

Whiting warns against trading short term gain for long term loss by not getting professional help; even though it's hard to set money aside for something which may not be needed for decades to come. He suggests shopping around for an attorney with whose fees and practice you can feel comfortable. He says, "Since you will be talking about very personal situations, trust and a comfort level are critical. It's important to confront difficult questions and difficult planning issues while you are still at your best."

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Bicycling picked up with the pandemic.



Commuting by bike is part of the picture.

Bicycling in Fairfax County Looking to Expand

Meetings planned this month to develop the 'Active Fairfax Plan.'

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

With the warm weather approaching, Fairfax County is holding a series of meetings to hear thoughts about active transportation in the county, and this input will be used in their Active Fairfax Transportation Plan to integrate the existing Bicycle Master and Trails Plans. Throughout April, every Supervisor's district will have virtual public meetings to find out how county residents travel by biking, walking, rolling, hiking, running and riding in and around the local communities.

Bruce Wright, the President of the Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling (FABB) supports the county's trail network, and is looking at linking certain parts of the network to improve ride-ability. While much work has been done in this area, there are a few spots that are unclear for a cyclist connection. "I hope that the county puts more emphasis on

making these connections," he said.

Officials are looking to work with transportation partners to develop a vision to help shape the future of active transportation in Fairfax County by consolidating previous active transportation planning efforts into one cohesive document that is easy-to-digest and track performance, the county officials said. Using this document, officials want to encourage livable street design through the development of tools and products that ensures a transportation network that connects and encourages people to take transit. Eventually this plan will be used to update the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan.

On the bike riders level, this is local riders' chance to advocate for more funding,



Officials are looking for commuting options under the Active Fairfax Plan.

Meetings Schedule

District Meetings on Active Fairfax Plan

Braddock -	Mon., April 26	7 p.m.
Dranesville -	Tues., April 20	7 p.m.
Hunter Mill -	Mon., April 19	7 p.m.
Lee -	Mon., April 12	6:30 p.m.
Mason -	Thurs., April 8	7 p.m.
Mount Vernon -	Thurs., April 22	6:30 p.m.
Providence -	Wed., April 2	7 p.m.
Springfield -	Tues., April 27	7 p.m.
Sully -	Wed., April 21	7 p.m.
Conversacion comunitaria de transporte activo en espanol -	Thurs., April 15, 2021	7 p.m.
Lunch & Learn -	Tues., April 13	12 p.m.
Lunch & Learn -	Fri., April 23	12 p.m.

actions to curb speeding by motorists, more signage, lighting, bike parking, and other ideas to make Fairfax County more bicycle-friendly.

More Bike Options

According to the Capital Trails Coalition, the region already has 469 miles of existing trails but there are 152 projects, making up 408 miles of trails that need to be built or connected to complete the network. In Fairfax County, there is the Backlick Run Trail near Springfield, the Fox Mill sidepath, the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway Trail, the

Reston Parkway sidepath, the Richmond Highway Trail, the Route 7 sidepath, the VRE Trail, and the West Ox Road sidepath. The "sidepaths," are bike talk for a trail parallel to the road.

While most of these extensions are under one mile, some are significant like the Virginia Railroad Express Trail, which is a path 16.48 miles long, or the Route 7 sidepath that is 11.89 miles long.

For those who cannot make the virtual meetings, the survey can be taken online at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/bike-walk/activefairfax>

Improvements in Store for Busy Springfield Intersection

At Old Keene Mill and Rolling Roads, orange cones are everywhere.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

One of the biggest intersections in Springfield got a little bit busier in recent weeks when the Virginia Department of Transportation broke ground on an intersection widening project at Old Keene Mill and Rolling Roads in the western part of the Springfield

District. This project is the first step in the widening of Rolling Road from Old Keene Mill Road to the Franconia-Springfield Parkway and Fairfax County Parkway interchange.

According to VDOT, the intersection project consists of adding a second left turn lane from Rolling Road to westbound Old Keene Mill Road, adding a dedicated right turn lane to eastbound Old Keene Mill Road,

upgrading the traffic signal and improving the intersection alignment. This work should be completed later this year, VDOT said.

The second phase of this project is the Rolling Road Widening phase which will widen Rolling Road from two to four lanes between Viola Street near the parkway, and Old Keene Mill Road, upgrade traffic signal and put in a shared-use path for bicyclists and pedestrians. Con-

struction on this part of the project is scheduled to begin in 2024, the VDOT website reads.

The price tag on both projects together is \$78.9 million, and this funding comes from federal, state, county and Northern Virginia Transportation Authority funds. Initially, officials looked at putting the utilities underground in this area, but "this is no longer being pursued due to cost," VDOT said.



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON

Looking north along Rolling Road, crews are busy relocating the curb to allow another lane to fit in this tight space in western Springfield.

Cicada Stroll Bingo!

This spring, Fairfax County and parts of Northern Virginia will be among the regions of the Mid-Atlantic states that see millions of Brood X cicadas emerge from 17 years of living underground. These periodical cicadas rise to the surface to shed their shells, find a mate, lay eggs, and die, after fulfilling their mission in life. And since Virginia is for Lovers, Fairfax County is celebrating this season of love by encouraging curious visitors to witness this rare event with a fun-filled Cicada Stroll Bingo adventure and giveaway.

The Brood X cicadas are expected to begin emerging from the ground in early May, with peak emergence in the Northern Virginia area happening towards late May and early June. While the greatest concentration of cicadas may be found in natural settings, they will be visible in enormous numbers throughout the region as this particular brood is one of the largest insect emergences in the world.

Visit Fairfax, the official tourism organization of Fairfax County, has created a fun-filled Cicada Stroll Bingo Card that encourages visitors and locals to look for and snap photos of cicadas in various settings around Fairfax County.

A sampling of these spots include:

Cicadas Near the Water, where cicadas may be trying to cool down at one of Fairfax County's waterfront parks like Great Falls,

Burke Lake, or Pohick Bay.

Cicadas on Public Art, where cicadas may be posing at the colorful murals at Mosaic or taking in the sculptures along Reston's splendid public art trail.

Cicadas at Historic Sites, where cicadas may be soaking up some culture learning about George Washington at his Mount Vernon estate or checking out Sully Historic Site.

Cicadas at a Brewery or Winery, where cicadas may be looking for the perfect mate to flirt with over a locally poured beer or a crisp glass of Virginia wine.

Bingo players can upload at least two photos from their completed Bingo Card to Visit Fairfax's image library for a chance to win a Cicada Care Package filled with fun items, including a custom cicada facemask. Winners will be randomly selected beginning in May. The bingo card and more information can be found at FXVA.com/cicadas.

"While some may view the arrival of the Brood X cicadas as a nuisance, we here at Visit Fairfax choose to look at it as an exceptional opportunity for visitors and residents to witness one of Earth's most remarkable natural occurrences – and have fun at the same time," said Barry Biggar, President &



Cicadas return in 2021: Play Visit Fairfax's Cicada Stroll Bingo Card & win prizes! Details here: FXVA.com/cicadas

CEO of Visit Fairfax.

Whether visitors are curious onlookers, cicada enthusiasts, or science and insect aficionados, this periodical cicada brood emergence offers a memorable way to take a getaway this spring. Fairfax County's 100-plus hotels, hundreds of restaurants featuring spacious and safe indoor and outdoor dining experiences, and the region's incredible

"While some may view the arrival of the Brood X cicadas as a nuisance, we here at Visit Fairfax choose to look at it as an exceptional opportunity for visitors and residents to witness one of Earth's most remarkable natural occurrences – and have fun at the same time."

— Barry Biggar, President & CEO of Visit Fairfax

swath of cultural attractions and parks are ready to welcome travelers to the area. For more travel tips and trip planning resources, visit FXVA.com. To learn more about Fairfax County's COVID-19 precautions and travel tips, please visit FXVA.com/covid.

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.

SATURDAY/APRIL 10

Community Market Opens. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. The Workhouse Arts Center will open its second season of the Community Market. As the official participant of the National Cherry Blossom Festival, the Workhouse will present special activities on the opening day of the Market celebrating Japanese culture, cherry blossom themed art and of course, providing for an opportunity for local vendors to offer a myriad of crafts, food, and other products to the community.

NOW THRU APRIL 13

Free Finance Classes. 7-8:15 p.m. Via Zoom. Sponsored by St. John's United Methodist Church, Springfield. Free Personal Finance Mgmt Classes, taught by accredited finance counselor. Classes deal with budgeting, credit/debt management, saving and investing, etc. These are individual classes taught once a week. Register at website www.saintjohnsumc.org to receive Zoom link from the instructor.
April 13 -- 7:00 - 8:15 p.m. Tax Efficient Charitable Giving

APRIL 6 TO MAY 20

Free Citizenship Classes. 7-9 p.m. Online Zoom Classes. Free on-line ZOOM classes spon-

sored by Lord of Life Lutheran Church and Congregation Olam Tikvah. Classes meet Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7-9 PM, April 6-May 20.

ZOOM link will be sent to registered students. Students register at www.lordoflifeva.org.

APRIL 6 TO MAY 2

"AZUL" Exhibit. At The Loft Gallery, 313 Mill Street, Occoquan. Fiber Art by Marisela Rumberg, who shares with us "AZUL" - a collection of work featuring the color blue in different hues juxtaposed with other colors that look great together with azul. Virtual reception: Wednesday, April 7 at 12 p.m. Facebook LIVE at <https://www.facebook.com/loftgalleryoccoquan>. Visit www.MariselaRumberg.com

GREENDROP GRAND OPENING

The new GreenDrop for charitable donations has come to the Greater Springfield Volunteer Fire Department's parking lot, 7011 Backlick Road, Springfield. Time to clean out and declutter, help the Earth, recycle and help a charity. Donations of clothing and household items will benefit the Red Cross, the Purple Heart or the Nat'l Fed of the Blind. Visit the website: www.gogreendrop.com

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

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NOW THRU APRIL 17

The 2021 Vienna Photo Show will be on display at the Vienna Community Center now through April 17. The exhibit will be open 8 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Friday and 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturdays. The entrance fee is \$5. Ribbons will be awarded in seven categories: animals, architecture, nature, pictorial, photo-journalism, portraiture, and scenic. Visit viennava.gov/photo.

NOW THRU APRIL 18

Blossoms Galore at Mosaic Gallery. A new exhibit at the Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic gallery in Fairfax offers its own interpretation of the beauty of nature in a show titled "Art Blossoms 2021", featuring artists from the Torpedo Factory Artists' Association. Additionally, there's a special cherry-blossom themed gift for purchasers spending \$200 or more. The Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic is a satellite gallery sponsored by the Torpedo Factory Artists' Association, and is located at 2905 District Avenue, #105, Fairfax.

APRIL 9-10

Drive-Thru Play "Midnight Mystery." At BASIS Independent McLean, 8000 Jones Branch Dr., McLean. Audience members will view the performance from their cars as they drive from scene to scene in the parking lot. Midsummer Mystery follows a community theater's matinee of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" that loses its magic when a wealthy donor's car becomes drama central, and the potent potions within it fly away. Can a clever stage manager connect the clues in time to call the theater's future depends on it!

SATURDAY/APRIL 10

Cherry Blossom Community Market & Workshops. Starts at 11 a.m. At the Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. Spend the day browsing the cherry blossom-themed Workhouse Arts Center Community Market and participate in several workshops, including origami making, haiku contests, and Japanese drumming. Enjoy art work inspired by the spring blooms in all of the Workhouse galleries, snap photos with the beautiful LOVEworks sign, and admire the property's own cherry trees. Admission is always free. (<http://www.workhousearts.org>; 703-584-2900)

SATURDAY/APRIL 10

Nature Photography. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. Work on developing your photography skills with the "Nature Photography for Beginners" class at Lake Fairfax Park. Explore a trail and learn how to use a DSLR and tripod to capture images of the hidden wonders in the natural world. Try out a variety of techniques to compose creative images of animals and landscapes. Learn how to upload, enhance and print images, too. For beginning photographers age 16 to adult. Be sure to bring your own DSLR camera. Cost is \$24 per person. Call 703-471-5414.

SUNDAY/APRIL 11

Atomic Spy's Son. 2-3:30 p.m. Online. At The Cold War Museum, 1734 Farm Station Road, Warrenton. What's life like in a Cold War U.S. family when Dad is an atomic spy for the Soviets? Cost: \$20. Visit the website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/atomic-spys-son-discovering-the-reality-of-your-fathers-secret-life-tickets-137043377431>

Announcements

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Legals

ABC LICENSE

East Wind Restaurant LLC trading as East Wind Restaurant, 10414 Main St, Fairfax, Fairfax County, Virginia 22030-3301. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Khoa Nguyen, Owner. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

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FROM PAGE 9

HOPE FOR THE WARRIORS SCHOLARSHIPS

Beginning now, through April 30, applications are being accepted for the Fall 2021 semester for the Hope For The Warriors Military Spouse and Caregiver Scholarship program. Since 2006, Hope For The Warriors has awarded Military Spouse and Caregiver Scholarships twice a year. The program recognizes and rewards post-9/11 spouses and caregivers for their strength, fidelity and resolve despite adversity as they assume critical roles in the financial well-being of their families. Scholarships vary from \$1,500 to \$2,500 and applied

toward higher education at an U.S. accredited university, college or trade school. Honorary Scholarship – awarded to those seeking graduate or post-graduate degree. New Beginnings Scholarship – awarded to those pursuing an associate degree, entry level classes or training. Restoring Family Scholarship – awarded to spouses of the fallen. Restoring Hope Scholarship – awarded to a Master of Social Work student. Restoring Self Scholarship – awarded to those pursuing a bachelor's degree. For more information on Hope For The Warriors, visit hopeforthewarriors.org.

Judicial Complex Vision Unveiled

FROM PAGE 5

trative facilities, up to 72,000 square feet; records storage, about 21,000 square feet; and Fire Department evidence storage, about 2,000 square feet. Plus, the court's new Diversion First and Community Re-Entry Center would require approximately 75,000 square feet.

Regarding the proposed, new buildings, here's what's planned:

- ❖ Building 1: Police Department evidence storage and an office; four stories, 182,586 square feet;

- ❖ Building 2: Health Department, Office for Children, other county offices; five to seven stories, 210,300 square feet;

- ❖ Building 3: Office; five to seven stories, 150,000 square feet;

- ❖ A building for the court's Diversion First and Community Re-Entry programs; three stories, 92,000 square feet; and

- ❖ A building for workforce housing, four stories, 240,000 square feet.

"Building 1 would be to one side of the courthouse and would have secure, underground parking for courthouse users," said Weber. "This building expands the 21st-century vision of the courthouse."

He said a ceremonial promenade will become a pedestrian gateway, and a central green will run east-west along the courthouse, connecting people between the buildings and the public parking garage. There'll be multimodal accessibility via bikes, scooters and a ridesharing dropoff.

"The existing police parking lot by the Adult Detention Center [ADC] will go away," said Weber. "Buildings 1, 2 and 3 will have underground parking, and we'll add parking along some of the streets. And employees and the public could park in the existing, public-parking structure."

OVERALL DEVELOPMENT would be done in phases.

- ❖ Phase 1 is the construction of Building 1, the realignment of the South Street entryway, ADC renovations – including the roof

replacement, and the creation of the courthouse plaza.

- ❖ Phase 2 is the demolition of the old police, evidence-storage facility and the Burkholder Building, the slight relocation of the current retaining wall along Chain Bridge Road and construction of a new sidewalk there.

- ❖ Phase 3 entails the historic courthouse renewal, Legato School relocation, police parking-garage demolition, and installation of separation controls in the public-parking garage, plus the construction of Building 2 and the workforce housing.

- ❖ Phase 4 entails construction of Building 3 and the Diversion First and Community Re-Entry facility, plus the historic jail renewal.

- ❖ Phase 5 would be the courthouse expansion and the public-parking garage and Juvenile Detention Center potential renovations/replacements. This phase looks beyond two decades from now.

"There'll also be two daycares, plus other uses onsite, such as a coffee shop," said Weber. "And all the buildings' sizes and scales will be revisited over the next 20 years, as the needs arise and/or change. We want it to continue to be a great place for the courts and the county."

Beacham said traffic studies will also be done. "The two entryways into the courthouse campus will each have two lanes in each direction, plus on-street parking," she said. "And having a second entrance off Main Street will alleviate some of the bottleneck that happens there now."

"Nonprofits will be moved from their current locations into Building 1," she continued. "And 200-250 workforce housing units will be built for those in middle-income brackets – teachers, public servants, firefighters, etc."

Beacham said they'll preserve the exterior of the historic courthouse and replace its antiquated, interior systems. And the Legato School will stay onsite but moved to the corner of West Street. "At this time, we don't have a user identified for Building 3," she added. "But it could be a public/private partnership."

Two Lawsuits Threaten Virginia Public Schools

FROM PAGE 3

ACCORDING TO FCPS PRIDE, The Family Foundation of Virginia sent a letter to all school boards and superintendents in the state to back off whatever they were doing. "It can't hurt for us to email our school board members and superintendents (in Fairfax, Dr. Scott Brabrand at sbrabrand@fcps.edu) with "support for trans and gender expansive children, and a plea not to back off of what it is doing," FCPS Pride posted.

"These guidelines are long overdue and

will save lives. If we are truly committed to fostering a caring and inclusive culture in our schools, transgender and gender-expansive students must be treated with the same dignity and respect as everyone else. They need to know they are safe and accepted," said Karl Frisch, Providence District Representative on the Fairfax County School Board. "These lawsuits are little more than a mean-spirited attempt to turn the clock back on equality in Virginia. Our students deserve better than bigotry and hate."

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Being Driven Only Slightly Crazy



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

So this is what it's like to be out of the house and driving around: mask on, surgical gloves in the console, hand sanitizer in the glove box; not so different than before my than before my two covid-19 vaccinations. Today, Sunday, April 4, is my "day of liberation," as I've heard it called, the day two weeks after your final shot when the vaccine is supposed to reach its peak effectiveness. Not that I anticipate acting/living any differently than I have for the past 12 months, nevertheless; the shackles feel like they're off a little bit. I can now go out and about and be less fearful for my life.

Still, I'm not going to throw caution to the wind. Considering I'm a 66-year-old man with cancer, the definition of "comorbidity," which places a covid-19 target squarely on my back, front actually given the location of my chest/lungs, I am unlikely to ever unmask. And underlying that "comorbidity," is that my oncologist thinks that I have non small cell lung cancer, stage IV, and my endocrinologist thinks I have papillary thyroid cancer, stage IV; two for the price of one, you might say. As a result of this dual diagnosis, I tend to envision my future with lingering trepidation. Ergo, I don't see myself footloose and fancy free anytime soon. Presumably, my doctors talk with each other about my "unique" two-cancer status, but I wouldn't know, would I? As the Brits often question the end of their sentences.

I know that I can email them anytime I want though, but the covid-19 norm is that we see each other on video, not in person. And not that I'm overly concerned, but a face-to-face appointment, one that occurs while we're in the same examining room, might one day save my life. In addition, one other day, I'd love to have a Team Loure meeting with both my doctors present in the same examining room at the same time which would allow me to be my own judge and jury to determine a prudent way forward.

Though this kind of meeting would alter my "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" philosophy (since in the 12-plus years since my diagnosis, we've never had a group-think like this) still; to quote my late father, the idea has merit." And even though my father died in early December, 2006, I still hear his parental advisories and invoke them at most every turn, especially when I recycle his jokes. Most notably: "You're very seldom wrong, but this time, you're right." If I heard that once in my life, I've heard it a thousand times, maybe literally.

Thankfully I, along with my brother Richard, inherited our father's sense of humor and positive attitude. Whenever I've contemplated a change in my treatment, whether because of a blip on my radar, or an anomaly in one of my diagnostic scans, generally speaking, I've viewed it all as just another cancer-treatment step that has to be taken. No big deal. And diagnosis to date, fortunately, I've taken more steps forward than backward even with my primary cancer being changed recently to thyroid from lung. For clarity in the midst of this turnabout (which I'm not exactly sure is fair play), I remember asking my oncologist what type of cancer I had now, after being diagnosed originally with non small cell lung cancer in Feb., 2009. He said I still have lung cancer, but I also have thyroid cancer (lucky me). When I followed up by asking him which is better to have, he unequivocally said thyroid cancer which is the only cancer for which I am currently being treated. The immunotherapy that I had been taking to fight the lung cancer has been stopped for almost a year. As far as my current treatment indicates, I have thyroid cancer (though both cancers are stage IV and are considered "termina

In a "Three Stooges" episode entitled "Restless Knights," Curly was asked how he wanted to die: "to be burned at the stake or have his head chopped off." Curly replied: "I'd rather be burned at the stake." His explanation: "a hot steak is better than a cold chop." All cancers/protocols considered, I'd rather be diagnosed with thyroid cancer, so long as there are no covid-19 complications.

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



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