

THE CONNECTION

CENTRE VIEW ♦ Chantilly ♦ Great Falls ♦ Herndon ♦ McLean ♦ Oak Hill ♦ Oakton
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Jonah Uffelman and Sammy Hayes as Robert and Janet on their wedding day in the Westfield Summer Stage production of 'The Drowsy Chaperone.' www.westfieldtheatre.com

Rousing Musical Comedy Opens July 11

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GMU Research Helps Water Quality

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Old Firestation #3 Reopens in Fairfax City

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PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



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SOLD!



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Helping the Potomac River Heal

Research by George Mason University scientists at the Potomac Environmental Research and Education Center supports the Potomac River.

PHOTOS BY GLENDA BOOTH



Dr. Chris Jones, Director, PEREC, described the center's work.



Dr. Reid Nelson described PEREC's fish ecology research.



Doctoral student Alexis Berger called PEREC a "special place."



Rob Hartwell, who grew up on the river, helped organize the event.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
THE CONNECTION

When Rob Hartwell was growing up on Mason Neck in the 1960s, "The waterfront was my playground. I could write my name in the algae with a stick," he told the 80 attendees at a June 28 gala celebrating George Mason University scientists' research at the Potomac Environmental Research and Education Center (PEREC) on Belmont Bay.

PEREC, which opened in 2017, has 11 professors and around 40 students with expertise in chemistry, ecology, geology, environmental science and education who conduct basic and applied research on aquatic habitats from the river's headwater streams to the Chesapeake Bay.

Dr. Chris Jones, Director, explained that since 1984, PEREC has monitored the water quality in Gunston Cove, downriver from the Noman M. Cole Pollution Control Plant, in cooperation with Fairfax County, to determine how wastewater plant effluent affects the cove's waters.

The Board of Supervisors' development decisions and resulting dense development patterns are major contributors to polluted runoff. The center's studies show that phosphorus removal has helped increase submerged aquatic vegetation which improves water quality and provides habitat for fish and their prey. The increased submerged aquatic vegetation is linked to a rise in banded killifish and sunfish and the overall fish population diversity has increased. "It shows what can be achieved if you put your mind to it," Jones said.

Using acoustic telemetry, Reid Nelson conducts fish ecology studies. River herring and striped bass have dramatically declined in the Potomac, he noted. He is also examining how long-lasting, polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) affect fish, and has found PFAS in two native aquatic plant species.

Nelson highlighted snakehead fish which are native to Asia. Many invasive species are problematic because they outcompete native species, disrupt native biological communities and degrade ecosystems. In 2002, news of a snakehead in a Crofton, Maryland, pond popped up. State scientists have documented

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The Potomac Science Center, PEREC's home on Belmont Bay.



Eighty people attended the June 28 gala.

them in the Potomac and its tributaries since 2004. In those years, tall tales viralized online, alleging that snakeheads could attack people, devour pets and walk on land. "They can breathe air," Nelson said. On their impact, he said, "White perch and banded killifish are increasing. The system has not collapsed."

PEREC scientists have also analyzed how wastewater treated at Alexandria Renew affects Hunting Creek, a Potomac tributary between Fairfax County and Alexandria. Their work "shows what happens when you lose SAV quickly. It changes the ecosystem. The SAV is not coming back," explained Jones.

Scientists with PEREC's Algal Ecology Lab study toxic benthic cyanobacterial blooms in the Shenandoah River. Authorities closed 53 miles of the river in 2021 because of harmful algal blooms.

Ph.D. student Alexis Berger studies bacteria, which influence all other trophic levels, she said. "PEREC made me a better scientist," she commented. "It is really a special environment here where all come together."

Attendee Tom Blackburn, McLean resident, remarked, "I have kayaked on the Potomac for more than 20 years and I've guided kayak trips out of Mason Neck State Park for ten. I pay a lot of attention to the changes in the river and the wildlife that rely on it. PEREC's research is critically important because it enables us to understand what is needed to improve the river's health." He is a member of the Board of Directors, Friends of Mason Neck State Park.

The celebration ended with a champagne toast. "We can never go back," Hartwell told the crowd.

The River's Problems

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson called the Potomac "a national disgrace, ... a river of decaying sewage and rotten algae." Since enactment of the 1972 Clean Water Act, some pollution has declined, mainly from what are called "point sources" -- factories, sewage treatment plants and farms.

What is the river's biggest challenge today? Jones contends that water clarity in places has worsened. He cites Hunting Creek as an example, because the submerged aquatic vegetation has vanished. He also laments invasive fish, like snakeheads and blue catfish that can outcompete and eat native fish.

The Potomac River is the drinking water source for over five million Washington-area people. Gala attendee Michael Nardolilli, Executive Director of the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB), offered this view: "We need back-up storage for drinking water. Arlington and Washington, D.C., are the most vulnerable. They have one source of water, the Potomac, and one day of backup." He is pursuing several options, including a new reservoir in Potomac, Md.

Polluted stormwater runoff is the only growing source of pollution to the river, reports the Potomac Conservancy, an organization that gave the river a B grade in 2023, up from a B- in 2022 and a D in 2011.

The Potomac Riverkeeper strives to make the river safe for swimming. See <https://www.potomacriverkeepernetwork.org/> and <https://www.potomacriver.org/2012/facts-a-faqs/safe-to-swim>.

Information: <https://perec.science.gmu.edu/> and <https://www.potomacriver.org/potomac-basin-facts/>

COMMUNITY NEWS AT A GLANCE



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Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Graduates Class

The 161st Recruit Class of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department graduated from the Fire and Rescue Academy and joined the department as Probationary Firefighters assigned to fire stations throughout the county.

— MERCIA HOBSON

GREAT FALLS: COMMUNITY NEWS AT A GLANCE

Rotary Club of Great Falls Installs New Officers

The Great Falls Rotary Club announced its June 20 officers' installation at the Great Falls Grange. The event introduced the 2024–2025 Rotary officials, praised “service above self,” and reviewed the club’s achievements and ambitions.

“In Rotary, one person is not an island,” June Melloni Kelly, incoming Rotary club president, said. “We work together to make things happen.”

Past president Connie J. Sawtell said 2023–2024 created “hope in the world.” Club volunteers reportedly served 2,300 hours on 26 projects.

According to the Great Falls Rotary Club spokesperson, the club honored Anil Bhatia and Dan Cardenas as co-Rotarians of the Year. Bhatia raised \$33,400, enabling 50 children in India with congenital heart defects to undergo cardiac surgery through the Gift of Life International pediatric cardiac surgery program.

Arborist Cardenas supported the Great Falls Citizens Association’s Oak Grove naturalization project and distributed 140 trees to Great Falls Elementary School children on Earth Day.

The club named Bill Canis and Richard Ashton co-Citizens of the Year. Canis helped establish the Great Falls Grange Foundation, led the Great Falls Citizens Association for ten years, and served with Boy Scout Troop 55. Ashton owns Classic Wines of Great Falls and hosts wine tastings and refreshments for many local organizations. The club recognized Leila Kump, Cynthia Stinger, Vishal Chawla, and Anil



PHOTO BY TERESA YURT

The Rotary Club of Great Falls holds its Officers’ Installation Ceremony Front Row: Neddal Abu-Taa, board member; Connie J. Sawtell, immediate past president; June Melloni Kelly, president; Liz Bouchard, vice president; Pat Williams, former Area 11 district Governor; (back row) Dan Cardenas, sergeant-at-arms; Steve Flannery president-elect; Raf Traboulsi, secretary; TJ Shea, treasurer; IB Barghout, board member; Leila Kump, board member; Amelia Stansell, incoming 7610 district governor; and Michael Broyles.

Bhatia as Paul Harris Fellows for donating \$1,000 to the Rotary Foundation or having donations made in their name.

Amelia Stansell, the incoming District 7610 Governor, was among the special guests, as were Pat Williams, the past Area 11 District Governor, and Michael Broyles, the incoming District Governor. “Working together; working with you; working for and having fun doing it — that’s the true magic of Rotary,” Kelly said.

— MERCIA HOBSON

FXCO PARK AUTHORITY/ NOVA PARKS



PHOTO BY NOVA PARKS

NOVA Parks celebrates the accomplishments of Melody Mobley, named a national recipient of the 2024 Diversity Leadership Award by the Society of American Foresters, celebrating her significant contributions and impact on forestry.

NOVA Park’s Melody Starya Mobley Earns National Award

Melody Mobley will be honored at the Society of American Foresters (SAF) National Convention 2024 in Loveland, Colorado, Sept. 17–20. “As the first woman of color to be a forester with the US Forest Service, I know we need to do more to connect diverse communities to nature,” said Mobley. “A perfect example of these diversity efforts is the Black and Hispanic Birding Program at Upton Hill Regional Park in Arlington. For several years, I have been working with NOVA Parks and a group of other partners, including the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia and the Arlington NAACP, to bring nature education to our diverse community.”

— MERCIA HOBSON



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County is in a drought. When using sparklers and other fireworks, create a clear level area away from buildings, structures, leaves, and other debris that can burn.

Drought Conditions Mean Fire Risk on 4th of July

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department says the county is under a drought warning going into July 4. The dry conditions increase the risk of fires. If you use fireworks, use them only outdoors and take precautions when using all fireworks, including sparklers.

Fireworks need space. Create a clear level area away from buildings, structures, leaves and other debris that can burn. Clear debris from gutters. Keep a bucket of water and a hose nearby. Use only legal fireworks. According to the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, firecrackers, cherry bombs, and skyrockets are not allowed in Fairfax County.

— MERCIA HOBSON



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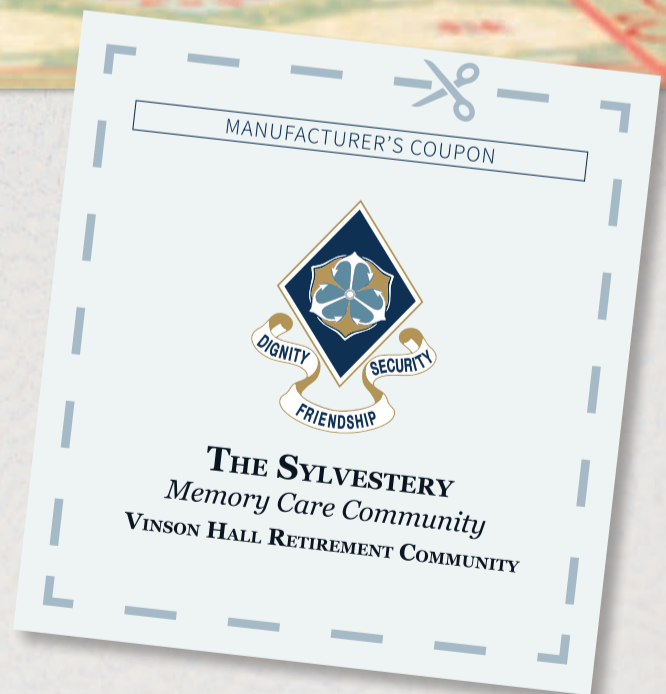
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Life is about making every day meaningful. At Vinson Hall Retirement Community, our Memory Support neighborhood, The Sylvestery, delivers compassionate care and day-to-day services for older adults with Alzheimer's or dementia. Our cheery, light-filled suites, hallways and gathering spaces make residents feel at home. Offering compassionate support from our licensed team 24/7, including stimulating social activities and soothing sensory therapies, The Sylvestery is a secure, joyful neighborhood that delivers peace of mind for you and your loved ones.

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COMMUNITY

Warm Welcome for a Missed Friend: Old Firestation #3

Fairfax City residents are delighted at the reopening of an icon.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Harry Demetriou owned and ran Fairfax City landmark, Old Firestation #3, for two decades. So when he died in July 2022, people mourned the loss of both him and his iconic restaurant on University Drive.

So when Imad Zein and his nephew Tony Hassan reopened it, City residents were thrilled – including the mayor. “It’s a beloved spot,” said Catherine Read. “It’s so good to see it open again.”

“We have a lot of regulars, and this is a beautiful community,” said Zein. “People gather together to support their businesses, and the people who come here feel like it’s their own home.”

And that’s partly because the new owners kept the décor and ambience as true to the original restaurant as possible. However, it did get spruced up with new paint, new flooring in the dining area, a resurfaced bar top, plus a new roof and air-conditioning units.

“It’s still the Old Firestation, but with a refreshed look,” said Hassan. “We have 14 TVs total, upstairs and downstairs, plus 120-inch projector TVs upstairs. I love this



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Participating in the ribbon cutting are (from left) Erik Hansen, Tess Rollins, Tara Borwey, Catherine Read, Imad Zein, Tony Hassan and Tom Ross.

City – the residents have really supported us. It’s amazing and a blessing that we’ve been so busy.”

Located at 3988 University Drive, across from Old Town Hall, the restaurant is open seven days a week from 11 a.m.-2 a.m., and the upstairs space may be booked for private

events such as parties, birthdays and receptions. Call 703-677-0147.

The menu has always featured many Greek specialties and still includes dishes such as gyros and souvlaki. But it also includes Old Firestation’s popular ribeye kebabs, fish and chips and half-pound Angus beef burgers.

And in keeping with the restaurant’s theme – after all, the building started out as an actual fire station – bartender Erik Hansen designed the cocktails with names such as First Responder, Fire Truck and Five Alarm Margarita.

“I love this bar,” said Art Von Herbulis, a City resident since 1964 and regular patron of Old Firestation. “It’s home; most everybody here I’ve known for many years. And I love the new owners and what they’ve done to it.”

“The food is really good, Tony aims to please, and the bartenders are great,” he continued. “I especially love their chicken wings, steak-and-cheese sandwich, Greek gyros and terrific steamed shrimp. And they have karaoke, plus live jazz and rock music, too.”

City residents Diana and Tony Tenorio are also returning regulars. “We’re so happy it reopened,” said Diana. “It has the same vibe, theme and feeling as before. We walk here and love supporting Fairfax City businesses.”

Her husband Tony likes the hamburgers because “they’re juicy and meaty and taste good.” And she enjoys the Greek dishes, dips and appetizers because “they taste like homemade. We love coming here, sitting at the bar to eat and chatting with the bartender.”

SEE OLD FIRESTATION #3, PAGE 17

Small and Mighty

Little League Softball makes history with state tourney appearance.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
THE CONNECTION

The Alexandria Little League 8-9-10s softball team made history after earning its inaugural spot in the July 2024 Virginia State tournament.

The accomplishment is a milestone for both Alexandria Little League’s softball program and the City of Alexandria. After debuting a softball team in the All-Stars tournament last year, Alexandria is now set to compete in its first-ever State Tournament.

The team is under the guidance of Head Coach David Zand, with Laynee Buckels and Leanne Buckels rounding out the coaching staff.

“The Alexandria Little League 8-9-10s softball team has showcased remarkable skill and teamwork this season,” said Little League president Laura Engel. “They have overcome challenges and exceeded expectations. Their passion for the game is pivotal in advancing girls’ softball in Alexandria and serves as inspiration for future generations of young female athletes in Alexandria.”



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Lucy Zand at bat during an Alexandria Little League 8-9-10s softball game.

“The Little League softball team serves as inspiration for future generations of young female athletes in Alexandria.”

— Little League president Laura Engel



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Manager David Zand, left, celebrates with the Alexandria Little League 8-9-10s softball team after securing a spot in the Virginia State Tournament to be held July 11-16 in McLean.

The State Tournament will be held in McLean from July 11 to July 16, where the Alexandria Little League 8-9-10s will represent Alexandria as they aim for the State title.

“This year we entered seven all-star teams - five baseball and two softball,” Engel said. “Three of these seven – possi-

bly four since one is still competing – are headed to state tournaments. This is very exciting for the city and especially for these players.”

For updates on Alexandria Little League, visit Alexandrialittleleague.org or on social media @alxlittleleague

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Carwash Crash Claims Fairfax Woman's Life

A Fairfax City woman lost her life last Saturday after being struck by a car at Flagship Carwash where she worked. City of Fairfax police identified her as Martha Clemencia Nguyen.

Officers responded June 29 at 10:56 a.m. to the business's parking lot, at 10874 Fairfax Blvd., for a report of an automobile that had crashed into three employees there.

According to police, "Investigation revealed that, after exiting the carwash bay in their vehicle, a customer struck a nearby car on the lot before hitting a group of employees. All three employees sustained injuries, one of which was life-threatening, and were transported to [Inova] Fairfax Hospital."

Tragically, Nguyen died as a result of her injuries. The driver remained at the scene, and City police are continuing their investigation into the circumstances leading up to the crash. They say it appears that neither speed nor alcohol were contributing factors.

Later that day, Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read issued a statement about the incident. "Our hearts go out to the victims, their families and others who witnessed this event unfold," she said. "Such an unexpected loss of life impacts our community, and we share the grief many are feeling who know the victims and bystanders."

— BONNIE HOBBS

David Arias Sandoval, 23, of Herndon Dead in Motorcycle Crash

Detectives from FCPD Crash Reconstruction Unit are investigating a fatal motorcycle crash in Chantilly.

Thursday, June 27 at 1:55 p.m. officers responded to a crash on Route 28 near McLearen Road in Chantilly involving a 2021 Kawasaki motorcycle, a Nissan Rogue, and a Volkswagen Taos. The motorcyclist, David Arias Sandoval, 23, of Herndon, was declared deceased at the scene.

Preliminarily, detectives believe the motorcyclist was traveling at a high rate of speed on northbound Route 28 when he attempted to pass a Nissan Rogue. The motorcyclist struck the Nissan, causing debris from the impact to hit the Volkswagen. The driver of the Nissan was transported to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. Detectives continue to investigate whether alcohol was a factor in the crash.

Detectives would like to speak to anyone who may have information about this case. Those with information are asked to please call the Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone – 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477)

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What's Happening Besides the Reston Farmers Market

JOHN LOVAAS



INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE

It was not easy for me to go to the Reston Farmers Market on opening day April 27 and just shop. I dutifully worked from a shopping list but, after 26 years managing the market, it was impossible for me not to schmooze with shoppers, vendors, co-Managers Fran, Keith, Anne, Ben and new volunteers along the way. Fran has organized a larger team to share market management duties now, making it impossible for me not to tease her about needing additional people to replace me!

I do find myself challenged to fill some “extra time” on my hands. I’m turning to more involvement in community activities for which I had little time while managing the Market. Luckily, we have Fairfax County, our version of local government, since unincorporated Reston with its 63,000 population is neither a town nor city. The county is a large, ponderous organization which often struggles to address essential public policy matters efficiently, if at all. Several matters are in need of attention, ones affecting residents’ quality of life and others crippling businesses’ (especially small ones) ability to deliver goods and services or to make a living. A prime example of the former is a continuing shortage of affordable housing, and one of the latter is the burdensome process of approving permits required to open new small businesses.

Affordable housing continues to be in short supply in Fairfax County. While a few hundred new units actually were built in recent years, there has been little progress in most areas of the county, including glaringly, Reston. A couple of years ago new construction of 400 so-called affordable housing for median income residents here was proposed by a developer. Ultimately, after many months, the developer simply withdrew the proposal.

In another case, an energetic Reston charitable outfit proposed to repurpose a solid, abandoned south Reston office building to provide basic housing for low-income, senior women. After months of back-and-forthing with Fairfax County reps, the non-profit dropped their proposal. It would have served some of our neediest residents. I found this particularly unfortunate because their proposal would have made use of a potential resource which Reston has in abundance ... vacant and seemingly abandoned commercial buildings like the one in south Reston and four empty ones of seven large office buildings on Business Center Drive north of the toll road. Granted the empty monuments to the pandemic are not likely a free resource, but they certainly offer the prospect of greatly reduced per unit costs for housing to serve truly low-income residents such as elderly women. The concept has been known to

Fairfax Supervisors for years, but to date there has been no serious effort by Fairfax to make use of it. Why?

Then there are the small businesses dogged by incredibly bureaucratic approval processes for permits needed to even open a store. In our Lake Anne Village Center neighborhood alone at least four new small businesses recently were forced to jump through permitting hoops for more than a year each. The would-be business owners were frustrated beyond belief. Yet, the other day when I asked the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors why the permit process takes so long, he claimed that often the problems had more to do with improperly prepared required applications. His advice to would-be new businesses encountering excessive delays was to contact their local Supervisor and ask for his/her help in expediting county processes. Ok, asking a politician to get priority for a constituent is realistic when the machinery isn’t working well. But I find it hard to believe that it isn’t past time for serious, third-party analysis of the processes and the potential for weeding out unnecessary requirements and/or retooling and applying improved technologies to the operations. Furthermore, look at this from a political perspective. There is no question that businesses, particularly the small ones hurt most, tend to identify the source of their problems with the political party in power when they have them. Hmmm!

The more I think about it, the more I think I will be able to find enough issues to serve as grist for my excess available time!

SCHOOLS: COMMUNITY NEWS AT A GLANCE

School Board To Update School Boundary Policy Later This Month



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Attendees at last week’s Fairfax County School Board work session, which discussed the Governance Committee’s draft policy, protested in silence by carrying signs that said, “What are the facts to support this change?” and “#FairfactsMatters.”

The Fairfax County School Board scheduled action to amend Policy 8130 on adjusting school boundaries at its meeting on July 18, 2024. The revised draft policy, Policy 8130.8, is subject to updates. Updated policy will focus more on capacity, staff discussions indicate.

On Tuesday, June 25, the school board held a work session to consider the Governance Committee draft policy amid a silent protest, with residents holding up signs that read, “What are the facts to support this change?” #FairfactsMatters.”

The public cannot comment during work sessions, but attendees can view the meeting in person and access the video. The school board advanced the proposed amended Policy 8130.8.

The school board adopted the original boundary policy on July 1, 1986, and has since revised it seven times, beginning in 1986 with Policy 8130.1, followed in 1989, 1998, 2000, 2010, and

most recently, the seventh time, on May 9, 2013.

Superintendent Michelle Reid’s work begins if and after the school board approves the proposed updated policy, Policy 8130.8, on July 18. She will use Policy 8130.8 to review and propose future school boundary changes.

Before proposing any potential boundary changes, the school board must engage the community and vote on any recommended permanent boundary changes. Only then will there be an official implementation date.

— MERCIA HOBSON

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Your name and town will be published with your letter, other personal information will not be shared. If you are a student, your school name, age and grade will also be published.

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COMMUNITY NEWS AT A GLANCE



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FAIRFAX COUNTY

Award recipient Leila Gordon, executive director of Reston Community Center; John Townes, commissioner of the Civil Service Commission; Paul Davis, chairman, A. Heath Onthank Committee; Linnaea Jablonski, director of Department of Human Resources; Jeffrey McKay, chairman of the Board of Supervisors and Bryan J. Hill, county executive.

Winners of A. Heath Onthank Award

Three employees receive the county's highest government honor award.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors recognized Tajweer Beaufort, Leila Gordon, and Kim Young with the A. Heath Onthank Award, the highest government employee honor.

Tajweer Beaufort, Fairfax County Police Department, developed and led new police employment expos that enhanced recruitment. He focused on the "30x30 Initiative" to target 30 percent female police representation in recruiting classes by 2030 and launched the Fairfax Experience to hire diverse law enforcement professionals from college. His initiatives increased recruiting and hiring, creating the largest and most diverse Fall Police Academy cohort ever. Tajweer Beaufort was unable to attend the Onthank award recognition ceremony.

Leila Gordon leads the Reston Community Center. She has created a collaborative, multi-faceted art scene, reaching almost 100,000 community members through yearly arts programming. Gordon chaired the Fairfax County Public Arts Master Plan Facilities Task Force from 2011 to 2023. Last year, Gordon's community engagement efforts, in collaboration with the Department of Public Works staff, culminated in accepting a proposal for land for the planned Art Center.

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FAIRFAX COUNTY

Kim Young receives the A. Heath Onthank Award. With her is John Townes, Fairfax County commissioner of the Civil Service Commission; Paul Davis Jr., chairman of A. Heath Onthank Committee, Linnaea Jablonski, director of the Department of Human Resources, Jeffrey McKay, chairman of the Board of Supervisors, and Bryan J. Hill, county executive.

She guided the creation of a county COVID Memorial and advised on Mount Vernon High School theater renovation.

Kim Young is a senior interpreter at Hidden Oaks Nature Center. She supervised volunteers, students and staff in building and managing native gardens at the center, promoting native flora and public education. She has provided meaningful watershed education experience for close to 2000 elementary and middle school students, webinars, local garden clubs, and Eagle Scout candidates. The Hidden Oaks Nature Center Master Gardeners' native plant acreage has risen 1,000 percent in five years and 150 percent in 18 months.

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The Khe Sanh exhibit at the USMC museum in Quantico.



The Respite Room in Quantico.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

National Museum of the Marine Corps Dedicates Respite Room

Marine Corps Heritage Foundation marks PTSD awareness month with dedication ceremony.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

On the top floor of the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, the open room is hot and dry, and looks down on the surrounding hills like Hill 881 in an exhibit that is set up like Khe Sanh Marine Base in South Vietnam, circa 1968. The Khe Sanh Marine Base was a hot point in the Vietnam War where many Marines were killed, and for those that survived, this replica room could bring on a bout of post traumatic stress from their time as a combat soldier there. If this happens, there is now a Respite Room set up in the museum where they can go and gather their thoughts for instances like this.

Michael D. Salmon, USMC retired, father of this writer, photographed scenes pictured here on his tour of duty in 1967 at the Khe Sanh Marine Base, Vietnam. The US Marine base in Khe Sanh.

“Some of our visitors are working through post-traumatic stress, and the museum’s exhibits may trigger an emotional response. The Respite Room is a way for us to recognize that and provide support for them,” said Major General James W. Lukeman USMC (Ret), President and CEO of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation. This Respite Room was the idea of a museum docent volunteer and donor of the MCHF who suffered from PTSD after serving in Vietnam.



A local villager who was hired to do laundry and clean around the base at Khe Sanh.



During Vietnam’s rainy season at the US Marine base in Khe Sanh.

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL D. SALMON



Michael D. Salmon, USMC retired, father of this writer, photographed these scenes on his tour of duty in 1967 at the Khe Sanh Marine Base, Vietnam. The US Marine base in Khe Sanh.

On June 12, the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation held the dedication ceremony for the Thomas L. Murtaugh, Ph.D. Respite Room, where visitors can gather their thoughts in a quiet space away from the activity of the main exhibit areas. According to the Foundation, “the Respite Room features a calming environment with soft lighting,

tranquil colors, and soothing decor. Comfortable seating and wooden wall panels help to block out exterior noise, creating a serene space where visitors can find peace and quiet amidst the museum’s powerful exhibits.”

The room was named after Dr. Thomas Murtaugh who worked at the Veterans Administration for 24 years as a Clinical and Research Psychologist and was internationally known as an expert in the diagnosis and treatment of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Although the respite rooms are adopted by the military to help combat veterans, PTSD can affect anyone who experienced trauma. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, “Post-traumatic stress disorder is a disorder that develops in some people who have experienced a shocking, scary, or dangerous event.”

The opening of this room is timely as the museum prepares to open galleries covering the Corps’ history from 1976 to the present, and this may present a situation where veterans that were part of that history may also

be visiting in person.

The intense sounds of fireworks can also trigger PTSD in combat veterans or anyone who has experienced gunfire.

Belvoir Museum Facilities

At the National Museum of the United States Army in Fort Belvoir they are following a similar path with visitors and veterans, but do not have a “Respite Room,” by name.

The museum is full of memorabilia and artifacts, like the Marine Museum, that could trigger an emotional response.

“Museum staff and volunteers have been familiarized with how to recognize and respond to support a visitor who might benefit from some additional information or assistance, such as sharing the times for reduced-sensory showings of the feature film, anxiety coping devices, a sensory-sensitivities navigation map or noise canceling headphones,” said Susan Mullen, public affairs officer at the museum. Museum staff can also provide a visitor with a quiet decompression space when needed, she added.

ROCK THE BLOCK



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Scorpion Rose Rocks the Block in Fairfax City

Rock band Scorpion Rose performed on the Old Town Square stage, last Friday night, June 28, during Fairfax City's monthly Rock the Block extravaganza. Attendees listened and danced to the music, while enjoying a variety of food and beverages from local vendors on a hot summer night.

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ENTERTAINMENT



The band Speidel, Goodrich, Goggin & Lille will perform on Wednesday, July 10, 2024 at the Free Concerts at Burke Lake Park in Burke.

JUNE 8 TO AUG. 4

Workhouse Minhwa Exhibition. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Immerse yourself in the beauty of Minhwa, an exploration of the essence of Korea's beauty, vibrant colors, flora and fauna, and timeless narratives. The exhibit is located in the McGuire Woods Gallery, W-16 2nd Floor. Visit the website:

<https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/blowing-the-winds>

COLLEGE ACCESS FAIRFAX HOLDS FREE CLINICS

College Access Fairfax will hold free clinics throughout the summer at various locations in the county to help parents and students complete or correct the FAFSA or VASA financial aid forms. Clinics are currently scheduled on:

Wednesday, July 10, 6-8 p.m. at Mason District Government Center.

Both the student and a parent/guardian must attend the clinic. Applicants should bring a laptop to all clinics except Fairfax High School. Spanish translation will be available. For more information, to register for a clinic, or to request a one-on-one appointment, visit College Access Fairfax's website. These services are free of charge.

PARK AUTHORITY, MASTER GARDENERS OFFER FREE VEGETABLE GARDEN CLINICS

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

Join expert gardeners at a variety of locations as they provide valuable insights, answer questions, distribute soil sample kits, and offer complimentary analyses of

plant and pest issues. These clinics are scheduled to run from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on the following Saturdays: July 13, Aug. 10 and Sept. 14. Clinics will be held concurrently on each of these dates at eight locations across Fairfax County:

Pine Ridge Park, 3401 Woodburn Road, Annandale
Baron Cameron Park, 11300 Baron Cameron Ave., Reston
Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean
Grist Mill Park, 4320 Mt. Vernon Memorial Highway, Alexandria
Grove Point Park, 6432 Bowie Drive, Springfield
George Mason Park, 9700 Braddock Road, Fairfax
Hogge Park, 3139 Glen Carlyn Road, Falls Church
Nottoway Park, 9537 Courthouse Road, Vienna

FAIRFAX COUNTY FARMERS MARKETS READY FOR 2024 SEASON

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

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

WEDNESDAYS
McCutcheon/Mount Vernon
Through Dec. 18, 8 a.m. - noon
Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria

Oakmont
Through Nov. 6, 8 a.m.-noon
Oakmont Recreation Center, 3200 Jermantown Road, Oakton

Wakefield
Through Oct. 30, 2-6 p.m.
Wakefield Park, 8100 Braddock Road, Annandale

THURSDAYS
Annandale
Through Nov. 14, 8 a.m. - noon
Mason District Park, 6621 Columbia

Pike, Annandale
Herndon
Through Nov. 7, 8 a.m. - noon
Old Town Herndon, 700 Block of Lynn St., Herndon (by the Red Caboose)

FRIDAYS
McLean
Through Nov. 15, 8 a.m.-noon
Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean
Kingstowne
Through Oct. 25, 3-7 p.m.
In the Giant parking lot, 5870 Kingstowne Towne Center, Alexandria

SATURDAYS
Burke
Through Dec. 21, 8 a.m.-noon
VRE parking Lot, 5671 Roberts Parkway, Burke
Reston
Through Dec. 7, 8 a.m.-noon
Lake Anne Village Center, 1609-A Washington Plaza, Reston

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

Visit the Farmers Market website for complete information about this year's markets - including details on SNAP benefits for eligible households available at designated locations. Contact the Community Horticulture Office at 702-642-0128.

NOW THRU AUG. 11

WMAI Inaugural Exhibition. 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Serving Together, Creating Together is an Inaugural Exhibition of art by participants in the Workhouse Military in The Arts Initiative (WMAI). Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/serving-together>

FARM HARVEST FRIDAYS
Every Friday at 2 p.m. - May 31 through October. At Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Enjoy live music, a guided harvest from Annie, the Giving Garden urban farmer, produce tastings, and more. Throughout the season, the farm will produce over 50 varieties of fruits, vegetables and herbs, including strawberries, zucchini,



A Pathway Homes' Artist Reception takes place on Wednesday, July 10, 2024 at the Fairfax County Government Center.

beets, spinach, carrots, peppers, eggplant, tomatoes, and more.

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES: DOUBLE FEATURES

July 20. At Tysons Corner Center, The Plaza, McLean. First set: 4:00-6:30 p.m. 2nd set: 7:00-9:00 p.m. Summer Concert Series will offer two live performance sets on each date, with the first band at 4-630 p.m. and the second from 7-9 p.m. The series will feature local bands such as Party Fowl, Cazhmiere, Billy Twilde, and more. Come out and enjoy takeout and cocktails from our restaurants while jamming to your favorite groove!

FCPA'S SUMMER ENTERTAINMENT SERIES

Fairfax County Park Authority's Summer Entertainment Series presents more than 190 exciting performances at 17 locations all summer long. Choose from an array of free, live performances featuring classical to bluegrass music and everything in between. Enjoy performances from outstanding local and national touring groups including:

(July 11) Speidel, Goodrich, Goggin & Lille - Fryling Pan Farm Park: Embark on a musical journey through multiple genres held together by fantastic harmonies, top-notch musicianship and a killer band.
(July 18) The United States 257th Army Band - Fairfax County Government Center: Join us as "The Band of the Nation's Capital" performs a variety of music including classical, rock, jazz and more.
(July 19) Yellow Dubmarine - Royal

Lake Park: Enjoy and sing along to all of your favorite Beatles hits.

(July 20) Saved by the '90s - Mosaic District: Strawberry Lane: Throw it back to the '90s with this huge, interactive cover band.
(July 25) Frank Solivan & Dirty Kitchen - Fryling Pan Farm Park: Experience this Grammy-nominated band perform a torrent of mind-blowing bluegrass.
(Aug. 16) The United States Air Force Strings - Mason District Park Amphitheater: Join the official string ensemble of the U.S. Air Force for an evening of music ranging from classical symphonic selections to classic rock, bluegrass and patriotic compositions.
(Aug. 18) Cheryl Wheeler with Kenny White - Mason District Amphitheater: Sing along to folk music with famed singer-songwriter Cheryl Wheeler and pianist and singer Kenny White.
(Aug. 23) Deanna Bogart - Grist Mill Park: Hear Deanna Bogart's dazzling keyboards, soulful saxophone, smoky vocals and cut-above songwriting.
(Aug. 24) Bruce in the USA - Arrowbrook Centre Park: Jam on to your favorite tunes by Bruce Springsteen and The E Street Band.
(Aug. 31) Cloud Cult - Arrowbrook Centre Park: End your summer on a high note with Cloud Cult, a band known for their unique alternative-orchestral-folk-rock sound and hailed as one of the "Top 10 Green Bands" by Rolling Stone. Performances are held outdoors and may be canceled in the event of inclement weather. Call 703-324-SHOW (7469) before leaving home for inclement weather updates.

ENTERTAINMENT



The WMAI Inaugural Exhibition takes place now through Aug. 11, 2024 at Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton.

FREE SUMMER CONCERTS AT NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MARINE CORPS

The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation has announced its annual Summer Concert Series schedule at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, Virginia. The series will feature military bands performing music from traditional patriotic tunes to contemporary works and pop hits. All shows begin at 7 p.m. Guests are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or picnic blankets. The Museum, Rifle Range and Museum Store will remain open for extended hours until the concerts begin. Tun Tavern hours will be extended until 6 p.m. Outdoor concessions will be available during the performance. Admission and parking are free and open to the public for all concerts. Visit marineheritage.org/eventcalendar-368789.

SCHEDULE:

- ❖ **Thursday, July 11:** “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band, whose mission is to provide music for the President of the United States and the Commandant of the Marine Corps, will celebrate their 226th birthday at the museum with a special concert.
- ❖ **Thursday, July 25:** The U.S. Navy Band Cruisers will play pieces from across musical genres, from jazz to rhythm & blues, classic rock to pop, and their own original material.
- ❖ **Thursday, August 22:** “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band will present a varied repertoire ranging from traditional concert band selections to the patriotic marches that made it famous.
- ❖ **Thursday, August 29:** “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band returns to close the Summer Concert Series for 2024.

FREE CONCERTS AT BURKE LAKE PARK

Mark your calendars for 7 p.m. every Wednesday night from June 26th through August 21st at Burke Lake Park for an incredible line-up of bands, food trucks, 2 Silos beer, and Peterson’s Ice Cream. The atmosphere is informal, so bring a picnic blanket, lawn chairs, and relax with friends and family.

SCHEDULE:

- July 3** - The Nighthawks
Food truck: Roaming Coyote

July 10 - Speidel, Goodrich, Goggin & Lille
Food truck: DC Slides

July 17 - The Magic Trio
Food truck: Babu-Ji

July 24 - The Skip Castro Band
Food trucks: DC Slides & Empanadas de Mendoza

July 31 - The English Channel
Food trucks: DC Slides & Babu-Ji

August 7 - The Road Ducks
Food trucks: Babu-Ji & Empanadas de Mendoza

August 14 - SoHo Down
Food truck: Roaming Coyote

August 21 - Riptide
Food truck: Roaming Coyote

KIDZ KORNER EVENTS IN FAIRFAX CITY

FUNDAY MONDAY: Mondays, 10:30 – 11:15 am at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. For more information: <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts>

SCHEDULE:

- July 15** – Miss Mollie Bubble Party
- July 22** – Miss Mollies’ Musical Fun
- July 29** – My Gym “Olympics” theme
- August 12** – Music Together Sing and Groove
- August 19** – Drew Blue Shoes Magic!
- August 26** – Storytime with Fairfax Library: “Ice Cream” theme

KIDZ KORNER: Saturdays, 10:30 – 11:15 am at Old Town Square, 10415 North Street, Fairfax. For more information: <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts>

SCHEDULE:

- July 13** – Peter McCory “The One Man Band”
- July 30** – Mad Science of DC: “Up Up and Away”
- August 3** – My Gym “Olympics” Theme
- August 10** – Superhero Training with “The Hulk”
- August 17** – Children’s Music with Marsha (of Marsha and the Positrons)

TYSONS CORNER CENTER EVENTS

❖ **Farm Harvest Fridays**
Every Friday at 2 p.m. – May 31 through October
Enjoy live music, a guided harvest from Annie, the Giving Garden urban farmer, produce tastings, and more. Throughout the season,

the farm will produce over 50 varieties of fruits, vegetables and herbs, including strawberries, zucchini, beets, spinach, carrots, peppers, eggplant, tomatoes, and more.

Summer Concert Series: Double Features

July 20 at The Plaza
First set: 4-6:30 p.m. 2nd set: 7-9 p.m.
Summer Concert Series will offer two live performance sets on each date, with the first band at 4-6:30PM and the second from 7-9 p.m. The series will feature local bands such as Party Fowl, Cazhmiere, Billy Twilde, and more. Come out and enjoy takeout and cocktails from the restaurants while jamming to your favorite groove!

SUMMER SUNDAY CONCERTS IN THE PARK BY THE ALDEN

Due to the renovation of McLean Central Park, The Alden at the McLean Community Center’s Summer Sunday Concerts in the Park will be held at Lewinsville Park this year. The free concerts will be presented on the porch of the historic house in the park at 4 p.m. on Sundays, June 16 through July 28. The park is located at 1659 Chain Bridge Rd.

SCHEDULE

- Sunday, July 7,** 4 p.m. The Gordon Sterling Trio
- Sunday, July 14,** 4 p.m. Lil’ Maceo
- Sunday, July 21,** 4 p.m. The Billy Coulter Trio
- Sunday, July 28,** 4 p.m. Justin Trawick

THURSDAY/JULY 4

Fourth of July 5K Fun Run. Join Great Falls TrailBlazers for the annual Fourth of July 5K Fun Run. Meet behind the Great Falls Library on July 4 and the race/walk will begin sharply at 8 a.m. This pet-friendly event is open to all ages. The trail makes a loop and goes through the woods so if you want to bring a stroller it is best if it has large wheels like a jogging stroller. Visit the website at GreatFallsTrailBlazers.org or the Facebook Page for more information and a link to Run Sign Up. Free T-shirts to the first 200 runners who finish the race.

FOURTH OF JULY IN CLIFTON

Schedule: 3:45 p.m. - Parade Line-Up at Dell/Kincheloe
4:00 p.m. - Parade Start
4:30 p.m. - Ayre Square flag raising
5:00 p.m. - CBA Potluck and Celebration



Justin Trawick performs Sunday, July 28, 2024 at Summer Sunday Concerts in the Park at Lewinsville Park.

Please remember to bring a side or dessert to share! The CBA provides bbq, beer and some drinks. Please bring your own water bottles.

SATURDAY/JULY 6

Country-Western Dance. 7-9:30 p.m. At Lincolnia Senior Center, 4710 North Chambliss St., Alexandria. The Northern Virginia Country-Western Dance Association will hold a country-western dance. Lessons, 6:00-7:00 p.m. Open dancing, 7:00-9:30 p.m. A DJ provides music. Couples and singles of all ages are welcome. Admission for NVCWDA members \$10; non-members \$15; children under 18 accompanied by a paying adult \$5. Smoke-free, alcohol-free. BYO refreshments. Visit www.nvcwda.org.

WEDNESDAY/JULY 10

Pathway Homes’ Artist Reception. 5:30-7:30 p.m. At Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Pkwy, Fairfax. Pathway Homes, Inc. is hosting an Artist Reception as part of its 11th Annual Summer of the Arts Exhibit, where Pathway Homes’ residents who have mental health challenges showcase and sell their own art, poetry, and crafts. More than 83 pieces from 18 artists will be on display at this free reception that gives an opportunity to meet these talented people and celebrate their artistry. Pathway Homes is a nonprofit providing mental health services—starting with safe, stable housing—to individuals marginalized by poverty and inequity. Art and creativity are an integral part of recovery for Pathway Homes’ residents. Artists receive 100 percent of the proceeds. The exhibit takes place and is open to the public July 2 - July 31, 2024, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM (Weekdays).

WEDNESDAY/JULY 11

Senior Movie Day. 10 a.m. At LOOK Cinemas at Reston Town Center, Reston. Featuring the movie “Puss in Boots, the Last Wish.” RA presents Senior Movie Day, a free movie on the fourth Wednesday of the month. For ages 55-plus. Sign-In and Register online through the www.RestonWebtrac.com account.

THURSDAY/JULY 18

40th Anniversary Celebration! 4-6 p.m. At Insight Memory Care Center, 3953 Pender Drive, Suite

100, Fairfax. Featuring a fun-filled afternoon celebrating with Insight friends new and old! They’ll be gathering at Insight-Fairfax to look back on their journey and celebrate everyone who has helped shape where they are today.

FRIDAY/JULY 19

Wright at Twilight. 6:30-9 p.m. At Woodlawn & Pope-Leighey House, 9000 Richmond Highway, Alexandria. Enjoy the iconic Pope-Leighey House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, at twilight! Sit back with complimentary snacks and a glass of wine, as you watch the changing light bring out the beautiful architectural details of the house. Play games in the yard, listen to period music, and tour the house at your leisure as the sun slowly sets.

SATURDAY/JULY 20

Community Pool Party. 4 p.m. At Lake Newport Pool, Reston. Reston Association will honor the 60th anniversary year of Reston’s founding with a community pool party, cookout and celebration. The event is free for all RA members and recreation passholders. This 60th anniversary celebration will include music, a cookout with complimentary food and non-alcoholic drinks, pool games, raffle prizes and more. Residents are also encouraged to share their memories and photos from 60 years of Reston with a large “memory wall” that’s aimed to evoke shared stories and experiences in the community over the years. Admission for non-members/non-passholders is \$20 for children and \$30 for adults. Everyone interested in attending is asked to register online at www.reston.org/events.

FREE SCHOOL ENTRY PHYSICALS AND VACCINES

Fairfax County Public Schools announced that the Inova Cares Clinic (ICC) offers free school entry physicals and vaccines during Back to School Pediatric Health Fairs. This is for Medicaid-eligible or uninsured children five and older and 7th and 12th graders who require vaccines. Attend the clinics on July 20 (9 a.m.-1 p.m.) at Herndon Inova Cares Clinic for Families, 600 Herndon Pkwy., (703) 464-6094, and August 17 at ICC-Children-Falls Church. Visits to ICC are by appointment only. Book your appointment at 703-698-2550.

FARMING

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME



Shepherd Cory Suter assists shearer Catherine Fox as a member of his Lambmower crew gets her shearing and hoof trim.



Elf, face revealed, accepts gentle positioning by his shearer as variation in color in the underside of the fleece shows higher concentrations of lanolin or wool fat which aids sheep in shedding water from their coats.



Catherine Fox and Chocolate Chip both take a minute's break during their shearing.

Beyond Sustenance Farming in Northern Virginia

Only a few take on the challenge of marketing farmed products.

BY SUSAN LAUME
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

There aren't many real farms left in Fairfax County. Few silos, the storic monuments to farm operations, remain standing against the sky now to mark where farms once stood. One can find a few dilapidated silos, part of the historic buildings registry of Lorton Prison's farm operations, at Laurel Hill Park in Lorton.

Only a few Northern Virginians now attempt making a farm living as development continues to close in, plowing over fields once plowed for crops when life here was agricultural. Farms are replaced with suburban living. A search finds just a few modern farmers here offering herbs or vegetables, often at roadside stands during the growing season. The most well known remaining farms, such as Cox Farm and Frying Pan Park, offer a taste of past farm life more as entertainment than farm products.

So it's a bit surprising to learn of a small farm snuggled into a five plus acre plot in Fairfax, called Suters Glen Permaculture Farm. The farm is home base to 15 working sheep and their shepherd, Cory Suter, and his family. The sheep, who work in a "lamb-scaping" enterprise (lambmowers.com) are a big part of the story here. In providing their care, Suter adheres to a philosophy called "permaculture farming".

While many know of crop growing methods such as organic, hydro-culture, and nat-



Additional members of the Suter Glen Farm flock await their turn for service after several hours of fasting to protect their digestive systems while positioned for shearing.

ural farming, few have heard of permaculture, another type of subsistence farming. Permaculture seeks to minimize disruption to natural systems, and protect organic and natural processes; thereby providing long-term sustainability of the land by using more environmentally friendly methods than conventional farming; applied to crops and livestock. Instead of disrupting natural ecosystems, permaculture attempts to mirror them. Use of such methods might have saved area farms in the early 19th century, when soils were depleted here, well before the Civil War, by over-dependence on and regular planting of tobacco, as a cash crop,

ultimately leaving fields non-productive for any crops for years.

We visited modern day Suters Glen at a special time — their annual sheep shearing. Although sheep are generally considered low maintenance in terms of needed care compared to other livestock, shearing is an important requirement. Sheep are typically shorn only once or twice a year for the 10 to 12 years of their lives. Wool is a natural part of the sheep's makeup, growing continuously to protect them from the weather. In the wild, losing this wool would be accomplished less efficiently by rubbing against trees. For domestic sheep, Spring is the opportune time

to shear as preparation for keeping the sheep cooler in the warmer months and reducing the risk of parasitic and other infections and disease. Early Spring can be comically confusing when young lambs are present and who tend to recognize the finished wool bundle from its scent more readily than their actual mother ewes.

Wool can be a significant product at commercial farms which specialize in wool producing breeds. Here there is no ready market for fleece. Suter typically donates his wool to artists or non-traditional schools with interest in artistic and practical skills development. Rather than cash, Suter says he more often receives thanks, or perhaps a nice knitted cap.

At Suter's farm, the sheep's primary occupation is as landscapers. Although goats may have the greater reputation for their indiscriminate ability to eat anything, sheep are consummate grazers. They are capable of eliminating thorny brambles, unwelcome invasive tree seedlings, bamboo shoots, and onion grass. Suter explains, "They are better at weeds than lawn grass, depending upon grass seed used..." (See Connection, May 1-7, 2024, pg 16-17 for more on "lamb-scaping" activity). Suter says, "Some customers schedule as many as six sessions per year; while most use them once or twice a year, often for the experience of seeing the lamb mowers in action." The sheep crew ate their way to about \$34,000 in landscaping income in 2023, and revenue is expected to increase this year.

SEE SHEEP SHEARING, PAGE 15
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

FARMING

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME



Individual handling provides an opportunity for trimming hooves.



Leader of the pack, Elf, accepts shearing even around his face, eyes and ears where his Babydoll Southdown breed produces wool, unlike some bare-faced breeds.



Minty Chippy, a first year lamb, who will not need to be shorn this year, wants to know what all the fuss is about

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



First year lambs examine a newly shorn ewe, at first not recognizing their moms who smell different after shearing.



Pomegranates, a distinctive ruby-red fruit, normally grown in warm climates, grow on Suter's Glen Farm.



Cory Suter's permaculture farm includes a large protected area for growing berries and vegetables, including nine varieties of blueberries.



Cory Suter's permaculture farm includes a large protected area for growing berries and vegetables, including nine varieties of blueberries.

Sheep Shearing

FROM PAGE 14

In case you have not had the pleasure of getting to know sheep, here are a few facts about them. Sheep are highly social animals, happier in a group, called a flock. In fact, Suter says, lone sheep have been known to die of loneliness. The males are called rams; the females, ewes; and castrated males are wethers. A fleece is the wool from one sheep. They form strong social orders within their flocks, sometimes using "butting" to maintain their ranking po-

sitions. Their milk is twice as fatty as cow's milk; although used in making cheese, the milk is not very appealing to drink. There are more than 200 species of sheep. Suter's flock are Babydoll Southdown, a species originating in Sussex England, appreciated for their small size, fuzzy faces, and laid back personalities which makes them good pets. Better known species include Merino, from Spain, and Rambouillet, from France, which are known for their fine wools used in clothing; and the Scottish breed, Cheviot, known for their hardiness, white faces, and their wool's elasticity when used in garments.

Joining Suter at the farm for two days of work, is part-time professional sheep shearer Catherine Fox of Celtic Fox Farm, Amissville Virginia (<https://www.facebook.com/celtic.fox.farm>), who "concentrates on serving small farms in the area." She is one of only four or five shearers who service the wider Maryland/Virginia metro area. Fox began shearing to care for her own small flock of Alpacas. While sheep are mostly acclimated to the shearing process and accommodating, it still takes a gentle nature, patience, stamina, and

SEE SHEEP SHEARING, PAGE 19

HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Posing in character are (from left) Scarlett Spano, Jonah Hilbert, Jonah Uffelman and Sammy Hayes.



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

Jonah Uffelman and Sammy Hayes as Robert and Janet on their wedding day.

Musical Comes to Life in a New York Apartment

Westfield Summer Stage presents
'The Drowsy Chaperone.'

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Each year, Westfield Summer Stage gives audiences the chance to see some of the most talented high-school thespians from throughout Fairfax County. And its upcoming production, "The Drowsy Chaperone," is no exception.

Featuring a cast and crew of nearly 60, plus a live orchestra of 13, this rousing musical comedy takes the stage Wednesday-Thursday, July 12-13, and Wednesday-Thursday, July 19-20, at 7 p.m., and Sunday, July 14, at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$17 at the door and \$15 via www.westfieldtheatre.com, and performances are at Westfield High, 4700 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly.

Gregory Stowers, who was the theater teacher at Katherine Johnson Middle School in Fairfax City and will hold that post at Justice High in the fall, is directing Westfield Summer Stage for the fourth year. And although the actors only get 3-1/2 weeks to rehearse, he said things are going really well.

"We have lots of recent high-school graduates who are going to study musical theater in college," he said. "And I'm amazed at how quickly they've become performance-ready for this show. In every sense of the word, they're young professionals."

The story is a play within a play and is narrated by a character simply called "the man in the chair." He loves musical theater and, while listening to a recording of his favorite show, "The Drowsy Chaperone," he

talks to the audience about it – while that entire musical comes to life in his apartment – as if the actors were on a Broadway stage.

"I chose this show because it came out while I was in high school, and it was the show we were obsessed with, like kids today are with the musicals, 'Hamilton' and 'Six,'" explained Stowers. "And it's a love letter to Broadway, is tongue-in-cheek and has great music."

In addition, he said, "I wanted to give the students a chance to grow as actors by playing characters not their ages and different from their own experiences. And the audience will relate to the man in the chair because he's going through a down period in his life and uses the magic of theater to escape."

Since the story takes place in the 1920s, the characters dress accordingly. The young women will wear flapper dresses with feathers and beads and will have short, bobbed hairdos with headbands. And the young men will be dressed to the nines in tuxedos and tails because the action takes place during a couple's wedding day.

"At the end of the show, audiences will appreciate that, somehow, love will find a way," said Stowers. "It reminds people that, even in the darkest times, there is a light somewhere."

The couple getting married are Janet and Robert, and new Fairfax High grad Sammy Hayes portrays Janet. "She's the ingenue, leading lady – a famous actress grappling between her love of the stage and her love for Robert," said Hayes. "In the show they're performing, she's giving

up her career to marry him. She's confident, flirty and intelligent. And she's always been independent, her own person and a successful performer."

Hayes loves her role because "the show is super dramatic and over the top, akin to typical shows of that time, so all of Janet's movements, emotions and songs are really heightened and exaggerated. And it's fun to play someone so far away from reality and a character with such a large arc across the show, while she tries to figure out who she is and what she wants."

Hayes also sings "Show Off," which is her favorite song because "Janet gets to do a bunch of silly things, like spinning plates and dancing, while trying to show off her talents to the press." She said the show's entertaining for all ages, with humor for everyone and lots of big production numbers with everyone onstage. And, she added, "People will enjoy seeing the dances and colorful costumes."

Jonah Uffelman, a new Madison High grad, plays Robert. "He's a classic leading man from the Roaring Twenties," said Uffelman. "Like Gene Kelly or Fred Astaire, he's a dancer who acts – although badly – on the side. He's outgoing, cheesy, melodramatic, campy and over the top in the show. The audience only gets to see the actors' onstage personas."

"I love playing him," said Uffelman. "It's the first time I've tap-danced in a show since eighth grade, and it's one of my favorite things to do. I like how utterly dramatic and ridiculous Robert is in his songs and lines. He's a total parody of twenties' film stars."

He especially likes the song, "Accident Waiting to Happen," a duet sung by Jan-

et and Robert. In it, said Uffelman, "I roller skate blindfolded across the stage while singing. The title is also a double entendre because Robert says that, since he's in love, he's completely uninhibited and fearless."

Calling "The Drowsy Chaperone" a musical within a comedy, Uffelman said it's "wonderful because, while thinking how absurd this show is, people will enjoy it because the actors know it's absurd – which is the whole point of the show. And overall, it's a great summer show because it's light, fun and appropriate for everyone."

Portraying the drowsy chaperone – who's the man in the chair's favorite character – is new Langley High grad Scarlett Spano. "Her name is Beatrice Stockwell, and she's an established Broadway diva who loves having her moment on the stage and demanding attention whenever she appears," said Spano. "I love her character because she shines right through 'The Drowsy Chaperone.'"

"So many times throughout the show, she defies the story's plot to savor her time in the spotlight, even if it doesn't make sense to the action," continued Spano. "She's confident and demanding, knows what she wants and goes after it. She's made her mark in the world and won't give it up, or move over, for anyone new who comes along, like Janet."

However, Stockwell's character in the musical is chaperoning Janet's and Robert's wedding, making sure things go smoothly. "She's also Janet's best friend and is very nurturing," said Spano. "But Beatrice doesn't want to do what's expected and let Janet have the spotlight."

SEE WESTFIELD SUMMER STAGE, PAGE 19
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RESTAURANT

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Across from Old Town Hall, Old Firestation #3 is open seven days/week.

Old Firestation #3

FROM PAGE 6

During the City's summertime Rock the Block events at Old Town Square, across the street, Old Firestation sets up its own space outside where customers may listen to the outdoor music concert with friends while enjoying food and drink from the restaurant.

And at Old Firestation's official ribbon cutting, Tara Borwey with Fairfax City Economic Development, said, "I'm happy to see this space activated again and being part of community events. Tony and Imad have done a great job renovating the place, and it's a welcoming spot for George Mason students, too."

Mayor Read praised them, as well. "A business that's been in the City for a very long time becomes part of people's story – part of their narrative," she explained. "And it becomes part of the memories you make with your family, friends or classmates. When that business is shuttered, it's truly like someone has died – and in this case, someone did."

"When Harry passed away and the doors were closed, it really left a hole in the fabric of our community. And when we saw that someone was fixing it up and something was going on in here, there was a lot of excitement. People wanted this place back; it was like getting a friend back." So, she said to the new owners, "You've done a tremendous service to the City of Fairfax to bring back something so beloved, and it's all appreciated."

"Besides being a wonderful restaurant and a place where people can gather, you are a great community partner and you are preserving a very important memory for our

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From left, Imad Zein looks on while Tony Hassan speaks.



Imad Zein tells attendees how much he likes Fairfax City.

City," continued Read. "You're also giving the Fairfax residents a place to make new memories, going forward. So I thank you, Tony and Imad, very much."



An array of tasty appetizers, including hummus and wings, at Old Firestation #3.



Posing after the ribbon cutting are (from left) Catherine Read, Tess Rollins, Tara Borwey, Imad Zein, Tony Hassan and Tom Ross.

Old Town Fairfax Business Association Executive Director Tess Rollins said Old Firestation #3 was the first place she went to when she first came to the City. "I used to perform an acoustic act on their stage and upstairs," she said. "So it's really cool that you reopened this space. This community is about all its small businesses and how hard they work. So, congratulations – I'm so glad you're back."

Next, Hassan said he chose to open a business in Fairfax because "it's vibrant now. Seeing all these new restaurants open up [downtown], it helps all of us out." Zein then thanked the City and all of Old Firestation's friends and regulars for

supporting them.

Lastly, Councilmember Tom Ross said he and his wife went there for dinner on their 52nd anniversary. "We could have gone to a fancy restaurant, or anywhere, to celebrate, but we came here," he said. "We were overjoyed – what a great place, and the restoration is gorgeous."

"This is such a wonderful location in Old Town, and I was thrilled to hear the owners call Fairfax a vibrant place, because it hasn't always been. But that's what we envision for this City – an exciting place where people of all ages and backgrounds can come and enjoy a meal, company and community. That's what it's all about."

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Obituary

Miriam Edith Willcox (née Johnson) of Reston, Virginia, age 101 peacefully passed away on Saturday June 1, 2024 at Tysons Woods Assisted Living Facility in Vienna, Virginia. She was the wife of the late Donald Denison Willcox for 35 years.

Miriam was born on May 21, 1923 in Chicago, Illinois to Gustav and Edith Johnson. She met her husband, Donald in Chicago and they were married in 1950. They moved to Webster Groves, Missouri in 1954 where they raised their three children, Andrew, Jared and Katherine. Miriam is lovingly remembered as a mom who always encouraged and supported her children's interests and passed on her love of the wonder and beauty of nature. In 1976, she and Donald moved to Ridgefield, Connecticut where he retired and together spent time enjoying their home, gardening, entertaining and exploring Connecticut until his passing in 1985. Soon thereafter, she moved to Warrenton, Virginia in 1989 to be near family. In Warrenton, Miriam pursued her passion for gardening and became a Master Gardener as well as served as president of the Francis Fauquier Garden Club. She volunteered at the Warrenton Welcome Center and in various community activities. She enjoyed being near her family and especially having the opportunity to spend time with her grandchildren. In 2009, Miriam moved to Reston, Virginia and continued to be involved in gardening, playing bridge and organizing charitable activities. In 2018, she moved to Waltonwood Assisted living in Ashburn and lived there until 2024 where she spent her final months at Tysons Woods.

Throughout her long life right up until her final year, Miriam was someone who was a "giver" and a "doer". Wherever she lived, she was a catalyst in forming a community within her neighborhood. She brought people together and her generosity and love emanated through all that she did. She was always ready with a plant cutting to share or a plate of home-made cookies. She embraced life and gave of her time and talents to all she knew.

Miriam is survived by her children Andrew Willcox, Jared Willcox and wife Deborah Comstock Willcox, Katherine Willcox-Bein and husband Jonathan Bein, step-son Donald Denison Willcox III and wife Laura Calk, and her grandchildren J D Willcox and Rebecca Willcox and partner Doug Burr. She was predeceased by her grandson Jonathan Alexander Bein in 2004.

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FARMING

Sheep Shearing

FROM PAGE 15

muscle to literally up-end and maneuver many individual sheep in a flock for their shearing and hoof trims. Fox is paid a farm visit fee plus \$12 to \$24 per sheep. Baby-doll Southdown sheep, like those at Suter Glen, take longer to shear, having wool on their faces and everywhere, raising the cost of their shearing to the higher fee range. Careful trimming around eyes, ears, and sensitive parts slows the process, making Suter Glen's flock of 15 a two day job for the part-time shearer. Fox's farm adds to her income with the sale of eggs from her flock of layers, along with the sheep shearing and horse clipping. As with sheep wool, the Alpaca fiber market is not strong here, with no ready markets or co-ops now in operation that once existed. The federal government once stockpiled wool and fiber for use in making uniforms. Wool was removed from the Pentagon's list of strategic materials in 1960, according to the Department of Agriculture. Government wool and mohair program subsidies were eventually eliminated in the 1990s.

How do the sheep feel about the shearing process? Suter says it can be a bit stressful, especially their first time, but for the most part they sit calmly. There is little restraint used and they have the opportunity to watch the shearing of other flock members to allay any fears. Their largest inconvenience may be the withholding of grain and grazing to assure empty stomachs, all four of them in sheep, to lessen the risk of gastric difficulties while they are positioned for shearing. Each sheared sheep eagerly heads to the pasture after shearing to browse.

With no income from wool, Suter Glen adds a cottage rental and farm tours to increase its revenue stream. The farm's impressively large blueberry and vegetable house boasts nine different varieties of blueberries and shares acreage with figs, blackberries, persimmons, and pomegranates.

For many area preschoolers who have visited to tour the farm, Suter's Glen provides a view into farm life they will find nearly nowhere else in Northern Virginia.

Clifton Pedestrian Killed, Another Injured in Centreville

The Fairfax County Police Department said detectives from their Crash Reconstruction Unit are investigating the Monday, June 24 fatal pedestrian crash in Centreville. Around 9:50 p.m., officers responded to the intersection of Braddock Road and Pickwick Road in Centreville for two pedestrians struck by a vehicle. Preliminarily, detectives determined the driver of a 2012 Jeep Grand Cherokee traveling east on Braddock Road attempted to make a left turn on Pickwick Road when he struck Luvia Mirasol Vasquez Mateo, 46, of Clifton, crossing Pickwick Road, not in the crosswalk, with another adult man. The police said that both men were transported to the hospital. Mateo, with life-threatening injuries, was pronounced deceased at the hospital. The other pedestrian sustained injuries considered non-life-threatening. Detectives do not believe speed or alcohol were factors in the crash and will continue investigating its circumstances. The vehicle's driver remained at the scene.

Police ask anyone with information about this crash to contact the Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips can be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone at 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477)

GREAT FALLS: COMMUNITY NEWS AT A GLANCE

Women's Club of Great Falls Scholarship Fund Raises \$100,000

The Women's Club of Great Falls Scholarship Fund Committee held its Kentucky Derby-themed fundraiser in May. The organization was "successful, for the second year in a row, in raising \$100,000 for our George Mason and Northern Virginia Community College Scholarships," said Connie Colabatisto. "We have added two more four-year student scholarship recipients [for the 2024-2025 school year.]" The scholarships go to local area students attending George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College.

One of the 2023-24 scholarship recipients, Sumita Chopra, said that this scholarship has helped her dream of becoming a high school transition specialist to help students with disabilities plan their future.

A 2022-23 year student recipient, Iqra Mian, said, "It [the scholarship] allowed me to focus more on my education and studying ... and has alleviated the financial stress."



PHOTO BY TERESA YURT

Sumita Chopra is a high school transition specialist whose education was supported by a Women's Club of Great Falls Scholarship Fund Committee scholarship.

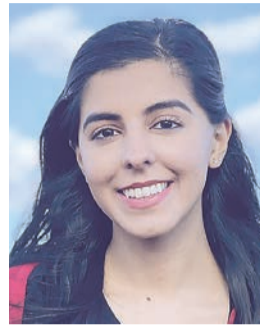


PHOTO BY TERESA YURT

Iqra Mian, whose higher education learning was supported by a scholarship from the Women's Club of Great Falls Scholarship Fund Committee, helped her focus on her education rather than financial stress.

— MERCIA HOBSON

Donate Supplies to The Lamb Center

The Lamb Center, a nonprofit, daytime drop-in center for people experiencing homelessness, needs the following supplies, this month: Travel-sized toiletries (alcohol-free only), surgical face masks (not N95), men's jersey boxer briefs (M-XL), men's white T-shirts (M-XXL), sturdy 9-inch paper plates - no Styrofoam, sturdy 16-ounce paper bowls - no Styrofoam, paper napkins, toilet paper and paper towels.

All supplies may be brought to The Lamb Center at 3160 Campbell Drive in Fairfax City. Donation hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.; and Saturday, from 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Westfield Summer Stage Presents 'The Drowsy Chaperone'

FROM PAGE 16

Spano's favorite song is "I Am Aldolpho," sung by student Aquilles Ailus in the role of Stockwell's unintended love interest. "It's so goofy, has a lot of plays on words, and takes all the stereotypes about theater - and people's assumptions about the arts - and exaggerates them to the max," said Spano. "He's trying to stop the wedding and mistakes Beatrix for the bride, so it's really funny."

She said audiences will love this show because "there's a character for everyone to root for, and they'll really like the set. Since the story takes place in a New York City apartment, the characters enter through the fridge. And even though it's set in a peculiar place, the whole story comes to life in it."

New Woodson High grad Jonah Hilbert plays the man in the chair. "He's a divorced, middle-aged man living alone in his apartment," said Hilbert. "On this day, he's kind of sad, so he plays the record from his favorite

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musical, 'The Drowsy Chaperone,' watching it before his eyes.

"He also explains the show to the audience and gives them background about the actors. He does it with a dry sense of humor and sometimes sings along with the songs. Throughout the show, you learn about his own failed marriage, his views on the world and his personality. I love playing him because, when they're doing the big musical numbers, I get to watch from the best seat in the house - the chair onstage."

Hilbert especially likes the song, "Toledo Surprise," a big ensemble number that's the act one finale. "Everyone's involved, and each person gets their moment to shine," he said. As for the show, Hilbert said audiences will be "blown away by the talent of the area students who've come together to put on this production in a very short amount of time. And overall, it's about the healing power of art, even if imperfect."

Two of the ensemble members are Sienna Nguyen and Meghan Bernet, rising

sophomores at Centreville and Chantilly high schools, respectively. "Toledo Surprise" is also Bernet's favorite number because "there's lots of Golden Age dances in it, such as the Charleston."

She's delighted to be part of this show because "it keeps me busy during the summer and I get to hang out with my theater friends that I don't usually see because they go to other schools. And the stage manager, Sierra Lockrem, was my theater teacher at Franklin Middle School."

Nguyen likes the opening number, "Fancy Dress," best because it sets the scene for the story. "All the members of the cast are in it, and it's in-your-face, loud and poppy," she added. And she, too, is thrilled to be in this show.

"It's fun because you meet people you wouldn't have gotten to know otherwise, because they're from schools all around here," said Nguyen. "And you get to make lasting friendships with people who share the same interests with you."

"I'm Fine. How Are You?"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

It's been an odd week. For no apparent/obvious reason that I can think of, cancer was not front and center on my mind. It was more back and to the side. Though I had to re-order my two cancer medicines - and presume they would arrive in the mail in time to maintain my daily schedule, had an email exchange with the oncology pharmacist about when I could eat relative to when I last took my cancer medicine, and even received emails from my oncologist about a recent test result, nevertheless; it's been an easy, not-preoccupied-with-cancer week. An even week is cancer, cancer, cancer. In fact, almost every week is an even week, in one way or another. And there are many ways.

Perhaps I've developed a sort of mental muscle-type memory/knowledge where a routine I've maintained going on 15 and 1/2 years to include treatment, lab work, scans, medicine, foods to eat/foods to avoid, who to email about what, when to email, when to expect a response, prescription procedures/timing, in-person appointments, video appointments, video presentations, referrals, costs, et cetera, happen at their respective intervals/as per usual and barely leaves a dent in my fender, euphemistically speaking, if you know what I mean? To continue the imagery, this car has been running a long time. And I'm pretty happy, all things considered, and I consider all things, happy with how it has been performing.

Let me make myself clear, if I haven't already done so: none of what passes for my normal life as listed in the two previous paragraphs bothers me in the least. Rather it represents a kind of maturity/experience unique to patients given a "terminal" diagnosis who go on - somehow, to live enjoyable and fulfilling lives until But since I'm not presently 'until,' I can only speak to how and why I'm still living life relatively normally. Moreover, this paragraph is not saying that living 'until' is somehow easy because you've developed a routine or lived long enough to gain perspective and appreciation for what life you've actually lived. Hardly. It's more a "Why me?" Not to be confused with "Woe is me" which is a phrase I have never said - or felt. It's more about the peculiarities of surviving when initially when this one was "prognosed" to live "13 months to two years" - back in Feb. '09. But here I sit, pen in hand, trying to embrace a future - and a present, I was supposedly not going to have.

Yet, I have a present and presumably a future. And I've had it for so long, that it has become entwined, entangled, embedded and "embalmed" (to quote Curly from a long ago Three Stooges two-reeler), in my life. At this point in my unexpected time, it's all become second nature sort of. Not ho-hum. More like really? So as to not look a gift-oncologist in the stethoscope, I, as anyone who knows me knows, couldn't be more grateful for the amazing good-life-luck I've had. And since I'm not looking for any trouble here from whomever is in charge, I will continue to go about my business looking forward. And as important as looking forward is, appreciating the present is equally important. Moreover, there are going to be good weeks and bad weeks. Having any kind of week after all these years should be enough. As you all know, there are no guarantees with cancer.

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

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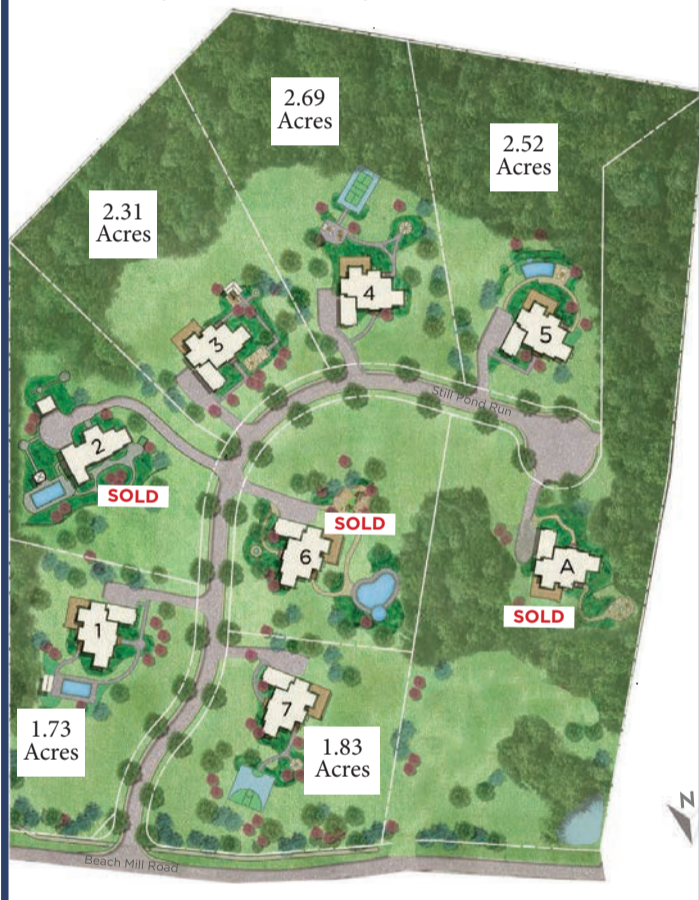
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