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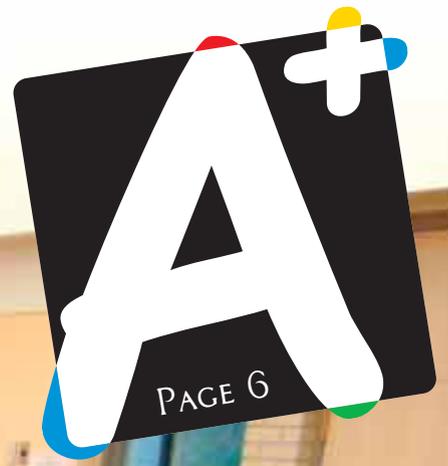
OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 8 ♦ CLASSIFIED, PAGE 10

STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION



Burke CONNECTION

About 50 constituents attend the annual Best of Braddock Honors and Picnic on Wednesday, July 12 at the Braddock District Supervisor's office.



Honoring Best of Braddock

NEWS, PAGE 3

Eagle Nest in Springfield
NEWS, PAGE 2

Battle of the Bands in Fairfax
ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 10

JULY 20-26, 2017

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



PHOTO BY CHRIS LEWIS

Part of Avery Higgins Eagle Scout Service Project: Scouts of Troop 991 watching their newly emplaced walkway at Hidden Oaks Nature Center being used for the first time.



PHOTO BY ED HAGGERTY

Scoutmaster Bill Mitchell (right) recognizing Eagle Scouts (from left) Nick Williams, David Cho, Ronal Mitchell and Avery Higgins.

Eagle Nest in Springfield

BY ED HAGGERTY

Eagle Scout is the highest advancement rank in the Boy Scouts of America. Troop 991 of Springfield recently advanced its 100th Scout to the rank of Eagle. To appreciate the significance of a Troop advancing 100 boys to Eagle Scout here are some pertinent facts that apply to all boys earning this distinction. There are seven ranks with Eagle being the highest rank. Not every Boy Scout attains the rank of Eagle, the national average is about 5 percent of all Boy Scouts. But those who have become Eagle Scouts in the past century have gone on to become Olympians, surgeons, civil rights leaders, Pulitzer Prize winners, and paragons of business.

At Troop 991, scouts progress at their own pace as they pass specific requirements and merit badges that reinforce the aims of scouting. To attain the rank of Eagle Scout, boys must fulfill additional requirements in the areas of leadership, service and outdoor skills.

Recently Nick Williams and Avery Higgins earned the rank of Eagle Scout to make numbers 99 and 100 Eagle Scouts for the Troop. Nick just finished his freshman year at Longwood University and Avery just finished his freshman year at James Madison University where he is in the computer science program.

When asked what the Boy Scouts did to help set him up for success Nick said, "They gave me a lot of principles to live by..." And when asked what do you remember most about Boy Scouts he said, "The friends I've made and the adventures we've had. Whether it be camping or doing a day trip, white water rafting – just having fun. Another thing that comes to mind is the service we've done and how we've helped people."

Avery said the Boys Scouts helped him with getting organized and being ready to undertake tasks. He said for example, "I feel a lot more comfortable now with things like planning a meal and grocery shopping." Avery's most fun memory was one year at summer camp with Nick, David, Ronal and



Nick Williams (center) with fellow scout David Cho (right) and beneficiary representative Bill Olsen (left) at Nick's Eagle Service Project, refurbishing Grayson's Tomb to include erecting a flagpole.

PHOTOS BY STAN MORGAN



Ronal Mitchell (right) and members of Troop 991 emplacing signs at Hidden Pond Trail during Ronal's Eagle Scout Service Project.

others who took pottery class together. "It was a lot of fun because we all got to hang out together and we were just making pottery and it was very relaxing. I wasn't ever any good at pottery, but it wasn't about making pottery, it was about friendships."

Troop 991 celebrates 100th Eagle Scout.

THE NEXT TWO Eagle Scouts from Troop 991 are finishing their senior years at Lake Braddock Secondary School. Eagle numbers 101 and 102 are David Cho who is interested in pursuing a career in the medical field and Ronal Mitchell who is accepted to the Engineering Program at Old Dominion University.

When asked what he liked the most about Boy Scouts, David said, "I got to make a lot of connections with a lot of new people and I got to learn things I wouldn't have learned from the average school setting." He went on to say that he learned many practical things from earning the merit badges such as personal fitness, personal finance, cooking and first aid.

Ronal reinforced this point when asked what the Boy Scouts do to set you up for success he said, "It will teach you a lot of great skills that school doesn't emphasize." When asked what he is looking forward to in Boy Scouts he said, "Seeing the new Boy Scouts grow and achieve."

Scoutmaster Bill Mitchell has been leading Troop 991 since 2011. He has been a Cub Scout and Boy Scout Leader for 12 years, having served as Assistant Den Leader, Cubmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster, and Unit Commissioner. He is the recipient of numerous awards.

When asked what is his proudest memory he said, "That's hard to say. Among the top was last fall when one of our patrols won first place at the camporee against about 15 other boy patrols."

TROOP 991 is over 50 years old and is chartered by Ravensworth Elementary School's PTA. It is a boy led troop with 16 boys who all participate regularly. Nine have received leadership training and either are performing or have performed in leadership positions. There are trained adult mentors and the ratio is one adult to every four boys. To learn more about Scouting or to contact Troop 991 enter zip code 22150 at beascout.scouting.org/Why_Scouting/BoyScout.aspx.

Ed Haggerty, Assistant Scoutmaster and a retired Marine, has been with Troop 991 for three years and loves it.



PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD

Enhancement or Beautification in the Braddock District — “Gardening Friends of Kings Park Library” — Norene Gerstner is an avid gardener who has served the Braddock District for 21 years as a volunteer working at the Kings Park Library. She has been a leader in conceptualizing and implementing the one-of-a-kind garden surrounding the library along with her group, which includes Helen Critchfield, Irene Powers, Linda Wirth, Juvy Flor Chaney, and Bruce Wallachy. Gerstner, who was recognized in 2003 for her efforts, will be retiring this year.

Honoring Best of Braddock

Highlighting the unique contributions of his constituents, Braddock District Supervisor John Cook and the Braddock District Council held the annual Best of Braddock Honors and Picnic on Wednesday, July 12, at his office on Burke Lake Road in Burke.

For the picnic portion before hand, about 50 constituents feasted on catered barbecued pork, chicken, and brisket from Red, Hot and Blue, and chatted with their local leaders, including Supervisor Cook, state Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34), Del. Eileen Filler-Corn (D-41), and Del. David Bulova (D-37). Afterwards, the Best of Braddock Honors were held where Girl Scout Troop 1795 presented the Color Guard and recited the Pledge of Allegiance. The names of the award winners were entered into the Congressional Record by U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) as well as the state record in Richmond.

“This is our annual opportunity to say thank you to all of the people in the District who go the extra mile and contribute

to the community,” said Cook. “We know what makes the county such a great place to live is our spirit of volunteerism and the people who give back to the community and make it a great place to live.”

Honorees not attending the ceremony included Jeremiah Bethea, who was honored for being an all-conference, all-regional, and all-state pole vaulter at Annandale High School, and Kyle Gatesman (Young Person of the Year) who has excelled in numerous areas related to math, science, computer science and music.

Among those honored: Morton Berger, who died in March, was given a posthumous special recognition for his Volunteer in Police Service (accepting in his honor was his wife, E.C. Buckminster); Young Person of the Year Katie Pope for an impressive record of community service to a number of civic, church, and charitable organizations; while Irene Merrill of Annandale was honored for continually improving the “Briarwood Court News” newsletter.

— STEVE HIBBARD



PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

Meghan Walker of Springfield has been honored as Citizen of the Year in annual Best of Braddock Honors and Picnic on Wednesday, July 12. Pictured with Walker are David Bulova, Chap Petersen, Eileen Filler-Corn, and John Cook.

Meghan Walker of Springfield Named Citizen of the Year

As the president of the Friends of Lake Accotink Park (FLAP) since 2014, Meghan Walker of Springfield has managed a myriad of support efforts broken down into advocacy/directed support, cultural, and environmental support for the Friends of Lake Accotink Park.

She has also invested time in maintaining close professional contact with Braddock District Park Authority Board Member Anthony (Tony) Vellucci, various Park Authority staff such as Lake Accotink Park Supervisor Julie Tahan, fellow Friends groups such as Friends of Accotink Creek (FACC) and Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley (FLBSV), and a number of community association presidents to advance causes within Lake Accotink Park for both the park and FLAP.

And during this time she also served as the Treasurer of the Danbury Forrest Community Association, where she helped to secure DFCA approval of an easement for the Park Authority to construct a switchback trail that spanned both DFCA and FCPA property rectifying an unsafe trail access to Lake Accotink Park. She spoke on behalf of the community association at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

She has judged cardboard boats and dog costumes for Park Authority events. She has provided significant inputs to the master plan process; and she has been a substitute host/master of ceremonies during the Park Authority’s Summer Entertainment Series Braddock Nights at Lake Accotink Park.



Young Person of the Year — Kiley Foster is a rising second-grader who has volunteered with “Girls on the Run” events and participated in clean-up days at Lake Accotink. The activity that has meant the most to her was when she and others at her church made Christmas ornaments and cards for service members overseas, one of whom was her cousin. Pictured are Kiley Foster with David Bulova, Chap Petersen, Eileen Filler-Corn, and John Cook.



Most Can-Do Public Employee — Suzanne Metz of Springfield, a physical education teacher at North Springfield Elementary School, organized the “Walk to School Day” (she dressed up as a safety cone). During National Bike to Work Week, she organized a “Bike to School Day” in which over 40 students participated. She is also the director of the annual fifth-grade play, rallying volunteers to assist with sets and props. This year, she has been instrumental in working with the PTA to establish a physical education-themed summer camp where every slot was filled. Pictured are Suzanne Metz with David Bulova, Chap Petersen, Eileen Filler-Corn, and John Cook.

Help Prepare Children in Need for School

Many opportunities to contribute; tax-free back-to-school shopping is Aug. 5-7 across Virginia.

We live in an area where many, if not most, families have the means and desire to do almost whatever it takes to give their children the best chances for success.

But for thousands of students, families lack the financial resources to equip them for success on the first day of school and beyond.

In our affluent area, there are many poor families, families who are barely making it, families who are not able to indulge their children in a shopping spree before school begins, families who are already having trouble making up for the meals their children would be getting at school.

EDITORIAL

In Fairfax County Public Schools, more than 27 percent of more than 184,000 students are poor enough to qualify for subsidized meals. That's more than 50,000 children in Fairfax County who are going through the summer without their usual access to breakfast and lunch. In some schools, volunteers pack snacks for the students to take home on weekends. For many of those children, having a fully equipped backpack on the first day of school is out of reach.

In the City of Alexandria, about 60 percent of the Alexandria Public Schools students are poor enough to qualify for subsidized meals. That's more than 8,000 of the city's 13,000-plus students.

In Arlington, more than 32 percent of the county's 23,000-plus students are poor enough to receive subsidized meals; more than 7,000 students.

Help these students get started on the right foot by contributing to one of the many local backpack drives.

The Virginia sales tax holiday for school supplies and clothing (and preparedness and energy savers) is Aug. 4-6. This is a little extra savings that could be paid forward to students in need.

The three-day sales tax holiday starts the first Friday in August at 12:01 a.m. and ends the following Sunday at 11:59 p.m. During the sales tax holiday, you can buy qualifying school supplies, clothing, footwear; hurricane and emergency preparedness items; Energy Star and WaterSense products without paying sales tax.

Each eligible individual school supply item must be priced at \$20 or less, and each eligible article of clothing and footwear must be priced at \$100 or less. For other details see www.tax.virginia.gov/virginia-sales-tax-holiday

Where To Give in Fairfax County

❖ **Fairfax County Collect for Kids** is a public private partnership that provides local children from economically challenged families with the school supplies they need to begin the school year, and has provided more than 100,000 supply kits and backpacks since

2010. Collect for Kids is made possible through a partnership with Kids R First, Fairfax County Public Schools, the Fairfax County Office of Public and Private Partnerships, Apple Federal Credit Union and numerous community-based organizations (some listed here) and businesses in the Fairfax County area who are working together to provide supplies in a more cost-effective and efficient way. See collectforkids.org/resources.

❖ **Cornerstones** will work to provide backpacks and other necessities to 3,000 Reston and Herndon area students. You can buy backpacks and other items online and have them delivered to Cornerstones. Or deliver the backpacks to Cornerstones Administrative Office Aug. 7-11, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., 11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 210, Reston. In addition to backpacks, Cornerstones also requests donations of new underwear for elementary school age children, and Payless gift card donations (\$25) so young clients can get a new pair of shoes. Contact Cornerstones at 571-323-9568 or volunteer@cornerstonesva.org. Visit www.cornerstonesva.org/donations/drives/back-to-school/

❖ **United Community Ministries** annual Back to School campaign is underway. Donations are needed by Friday, Aug. 4. A gift of \$40 completely outfits one student. Please drop checks and backpacks off at UCM's main office (7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria, 22306) weekdays from 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. For more information, contact Emily Griffin at emily.griffin@ucmagency.org or by 571-255-8973 or visit www.ucmagency.org/back-to-school-2017.html.

❖ **Britepaths**, participates in the Collect for Kids Back to School Program each summer and is working to help more than 2,500 students in central Fairfax have everything they need to succeed this fall. Cash donations help purchase supplies at a steep discount. Donate backpacks or calculators by Aug. 5. Larger size backpacks especially needed. Donate cash through Aug. 31. Checks are welcome. Make checks payable to "Britepaths," write BTS in the memo line of the check. Mail to: Britepaths 4080 Chain Bridge Road, 2nd Floor, Fairfax, VA 22030. If delivering in person, Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., except for holidays. Call 703-273-8829. Visit www.britepaths.org.

Drop-off sites until Aug. 5:
 — Cinema Arts Theatre At Fair City Mall, 9650-14 Main St, Fairfax, VA 22031
 — Cox Farms 15621 Braddock Road, Centreville, VA 20120
 — Del. Kathleen Murphy Constituent Office, 6888 Elm St., Ste 1C, McLean, VA 22101
 — GAP Solutions, Inc. 205 Van Buren St, Herndon, VA 20170; Drop off in Suite 205
 — Gathering Grounds Cafe At University Mall, 10637 Braddock Road, Fairfax, VA 22030
 — Dr. Gene Sweetnam, OD 5204A Rolling Road, Burke, VA 22015
 — Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax, VA 22031

— Pure Performance 3805 Pickett Road, Fairfax, VA 22030

— Quest Diagnostics 14225 Newbrook Drive, Chantilly, VA 20151

— Solaris Laser and Skin Care 513 Maple Ave. W, Vienna, VA 22180

— Spine and Joint Institute 9990 Fairfax Blvd. #115, Fairfax, VA 22030

— STEM exCEL 4010 University Drive, #104, Fairfax, VA 22030

— Sugar Mama's Ice Cream 11208 Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22030

— Union Bank Burke 6050 Burke Commons Road, Suite A, Burke, VA 22015

— University Mall Theatre At University Mall, 10659 Braddock Road, Fairfax, VA 22032

— Westminster School's Camp Griffin 3819 Gallows Road, Annandale, VA 22003

❖ **FACETS** is seeking to equip more than 300 students in need with backpacks filled with supplies. Use the checklist at the link below as a guide for purchasing backpacks and supplies. Place purchased supplies in backpacks or other bags and deliver to FACETS. Drop off supplies through Aug. 4, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday, 10640 Page Ave., Suite 300, Fairfax VA 22030. Contact FACETS at 703-272-3710 or visit facetscares.org/summerbacktoschooldrive/

❖ **Northern Virginia Family Service** is able to buy supplies at a value that beats retail price. Every \$1 donated by July 27 can purchase \$2 worth of school supplies. Mail checks (payable to NVFS, with BTS in the memo line) to: Northern Virginia Family Service, Attn: Back to School, 10455 White Granite Drive, Suite 100, Oakton, VA 22124. Donations of new backpacks and new school supplies will be accepted on Friday, July 28, and Monday, July 31, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. at 13868 Metrotech Drive, Chantilly, VA 20151 (between Lotus Vegetarian and PetSmart – our storefront has white-washed windows). www.nvfs.org/support/back-to-school/

❖ **Foundation for Fairfax County Public Schools** www.fcpsfoundation.org/donate.html accepts online donations only – to purchase school supplies in bulk quantity

❖ **Apple Federal Credit Union** www.applefcu.org/appleweb/collectforkids accepts online donations and backpack donations at local branches.

❖ **Fairfax County Board of Supervisors** Offices will be collecting backpacks during the month of August. See website for office locations and hours of operation. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/government/board/about-the-board-of-supervisors.htm

❖ **Fairfax County Public Schools** Backpack donations at the Gatehouse and Willow Oaks Administrative office locations. www.fcps.edu/

❖ **Western Fairfax Christian Ministries** accepts online donations and backpack donations. Check website for more details. Deliver Backpacks to WFCM (July 17-Aug. 11, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.) to WFCM's Office at 4511 Daly Drive, Suite J, Chantilly, VA 20151. Please bring backpacks to the back door of the Food Pantry. wfcmvva.org/how-you-can-help/annual-backpack-program/

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An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

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 Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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LETTERS

When Will Trump Catch Up?

To the Editor:

Bloomberg news reported that a study by the U.S. Department of energy showed our current grid can perform with wind and solar power. A leaked draft of the Energy Department's highly anticipated study on grid reliability finds that renewable energy doesn't harm grid reliability; that market trends, not regulation, have driven the shift to cleaner, safer forms of energy; and that technology like energy efficiency and demand response are actually helping to increase reliability.

These findings contradict statements made by high-level Trump administration officials – including Energy Secretary Rick Perry, who has raised concerns about the impact of renewables on the grid. In the last few months, we've seen the Trump administration repeatedly risking public health by try-

ing to move us backwards towards coal, slashing the EPA's budget and tearing down limits on mercury, smog, and carbon pollution.

Donald Trump put a politician who sued the EPA over a dozen times, and helped raise nearly \$4 million from corporate polluters in charge of protecting our kids from pollution.

Instead, we should be putting more funds into the EPA for programs like The Solar Training Network, which addresses a critical need for high-quality, local, accessible training in solar installation and related skills. This is smart policy that can support economic transition as coal is dwindling in supply, harming our environment, and no longer cost-effective.

This study from experts and President Trump's own administration show his attacks on clean energy are unfounded – renewable

energy does not threaten grid reliability. Trump administration allies, including the former head of Trump's Energy Department transition team, are already scrambling to downplay the significance of this report because it demonstrates how their attempts at attacking clean energy are out of step with the realities of America's electricity markets and how they operate.

Despite President Trump's best efforts, the unstoppable shift to clean energy is already underway, driven by American states, cities, and businesses that see the economic opportunity climate action presents.

There's a reason why the private market is trending toward clean energy like wind and solar – it's safe, affordable, and reliable. When will Donald J. Trump catch up?

Kelsey Crane
Fairfax

WEEK IN BURKE

Burke Man Sentenced in Possession of Firearms

Yusuf Abdirizak Wehelie, 26, of Burke, was sentenced to 10 years in prison for possession of firearms by a convicted felon.

Wehelie pleaded guilty on Nov. 15, 2016. According to the statement of facts filed with the plea agreement, in December 2015, Wehelie met with an FBI undercover employee (UCE #1) and engaged in a consensually recorded conversation. During the conversation, Wehelie discussed his background and told UCE #1 he was a felon, referring to his felony conviction for burglary in Fairfax County. As a convicted felon, Wehelie is prohibited from owning, possessing, or transporting firearms. In January 2016, UCE #1 asked Wehelie if he would be willing to move firearms and he willingly agreed to do so.

According to the statement of facts filed with the plea agreement, in February 2016, during a consensually recorded meeting, Wehelie met with an FBI undercover employee (UCE #2) in Baltimore. UCE #2 showed Wehelie four 9mm automatic pistols with can-style suppressors and eight 20-round magazines. Unbeknownst to Wehelie, the four pistols had been rendered inoperable before they were provided to him. UCE #2 informed Wehelie that the firearms had the ability to fire up to 1,200 rounds per minute in fully automatic mode. Wehelie told UCE #2 he had fired a weapon before but "needs more practice." After viewing, handling, and being fully advised of the firearms' capabilities, Wehelie concealed all four firearms in towels, and then loaded them into a duffel bag. Wehelie was paid \$300 by UCE #1 for transporting the firearms.

FAITH NOTES

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. Deadline is Friday. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

Metropolitan Community Church of Northern Virginia, 10383 Democracy Lane in Fairfax, presents worship services on Sundays at 11 a.m. and choir practice, open to all, on Sundays from 9-10:30 a.m. www.mccnova.com or 703-691-0930.

Church of the Nativity offers a free general bereavement support group open to all adults on the first and third Thursday of each month 7:30-9 p.m. The church is located at 6400 Nativity Lane, Burke. Call 703-455-2400, ext. 17.

Arabic New Life Baptist Church is located at 6428 Ox Road in Fairfax Station. Worship services are on Sundays at 10:45 a.m. and prayer services are on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. Bible Study is on Fridays at 7 p.m. Pastor: Wissam Jamil. Call 703-273-5599.

The Fairfax Church of Christ, 3901 Rugby Road in Fairfax, has facilitators available to help those who are experiencing a separation or divorce. 703-631-2100 or www.fxcc.org.



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Publishes: July 26, 2017 • Ads close: July 19, 2017

Connection readers love their pets. This keepsake edition will feature photos, anecdotes, advice and more about beloved family pets. Reach pet owners where they live in a section sure to attract and hold their attention.

The Pet Connection will publish on July 26, 2017, and photos and stories of your pets with you and your family should be submitted by July 19. We welcome short stories about how you got your pet, a noteworthy talent or anecdote about your pet, tales of the bonds between your family and your pet, plus drawings, paintings or other artwork of your pet by children or adults.

Find more information about submissions online at www.connectionnewspapers.com/pets.

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Summer Book Clubs for Children

Ideal time to instill a love of reading, say experts.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Encouraging children to read during summer months can be challenging for some parents, but worth the effort, say local educators, because diving into books offers students an opportunity to boost their reading skills before the start of the next school year. Book clubs with their peers allows children to read in a relaxed, informal setting.

“Book groups during summer vacation are the perfect time for friends to gather and share the love of reading,” said Julie M. Esanu, lower school librarian, St. Stephen’s & St. Agnes School in Alexandria. “The summer is a perfect time for readers to explore and enjoy a variety of books across different genres and formats, including ebooks, audiobooks, and graphic novels.”

While parents must provide a basic structure for the book club, Esanu says that allowing children to be involved in the planning and book selection, will cultivate a positive attitude toward books and reading.

“Summer reading is all about exploration and inspiration, so let the readers take charge,” said Esanu. “Consider the members of the book group and their various interests when selecting titles and let the members have a say in what they’re reading.”

Allow for organic discussions inspired by the readers rather than formal discussions that require too much preparation, advises Esanu. “[Formality] feels too much like homework for students and we want them to dive into books during summer,” she said. “Kids have a lot to say about the books that they read and that can lead to fabulous conversations. It is important for children to select the books that they read, especially over the summer.”

In her role as the lower and middle school librarian at Bullis School in Potomac, Katherine Brewer helps students make book selections by asking them about the last book they read and enjoyed. “This helps me find out what types of books they are into and suggest other titles they might like,” she said. “I might ask what about the book they liked. Then I will give several suggestions.”

Preparing and organizing the book club session without over planning, avoids chaos and leads to success, advises Laura Maffei,

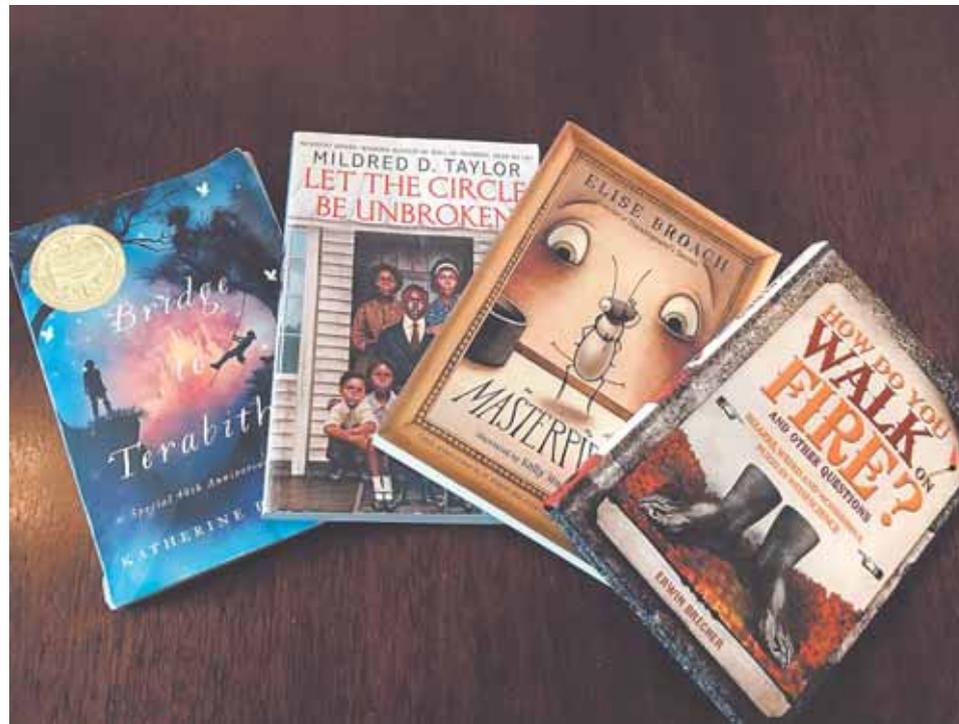


PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Studies show that reading self-selected books cultivates positive attitudes towards books and reading, says librarian Julie M. Esanu.

humanities teacher at BASIS Independent School McLean. “Set the stage by helping the children to understand the setting and any unfamiliar events or vocabulary they might encounter,” she said. “For example, before reading ‘Misty of Chincoteague’ learn about Virginia, specifically Assateague and Chincoteague Islands, watch a documentary on the round up, make a craft that teaches the parts of a horse and its riding equipment, look at examples of life in the 1950s to see how it differs from today.”

WHEN THE MEMBERS of the book group are not all at the same reading level, as can be the case with children, reading the same book can be pose a challenge, says Maffei. “... An option would be to read the same content, but each reader gets a book at their reading level,” she said. “I’ve done this with Shakespeare, Greek Mythology, and classics like ‘Peter Pan’ that come in a variety of book types from picture to early reader to original text.”

“If the children aren’t around the same age [and] reading level or have varying interests, I would select a topic and suggest books that they could read and share,” added Brewer. “Students can have the book read to them or listen to an audio version if they prefer.”

Brewer, who runs book clubs for students at Bullis, says that during her meetings, children share the book they read and encourage others to read it. She also discourages

penalizing children who haven’t finished the book. “We use the book talk format popularized by [the television series] ‘Reading Rainbow,’ share a bit about the book and why others would want to read it, but no spoilers,” she said. “They will be more interested if they have choice and input in the club’s topic, books and activities.”

Book club activities are an important tool in helping children develop a love of reading, says Tom Longano a third grade teacher at the Heights School, an all boys school in Potomac. “With most of our books I will invent a quick game that includes acting out the characters or key events from the story,” he said. “I have found this to be an excellent way for the boys, who often have a very concrete approach to the world yet boundless imaginations ... to enter into the stories and feel them as actually real. This generates a love for the books that goes beyond just reading them, because they have in a sense lived them as well, acted them out.”

Longano says that this excitement about books can also be achieved with dramatic readings and assigning children characters from the book and having them act them

out. “Anything to bring the text off the page and into their direct environment,” he said.

“The activity should be fun and hands on, with the children taking the lead on the project,” said Brewer.

Summer book club activity ideas include visiting local public libraries or bookstores and browsing the shelves for ideas, says Esanu. “Visit the Alexandria or Arlington Public Library or an independent bookstore, such as Hooray for Books! in Alexandria or One More Page Books in Arlington, and browse the shelves for ideas,” she said. “Each book club member could choose a book that catches their eye and then the group could vote on which book they want to read.”

Reading a book and taking a field trip that is related to the book is another activity that Esanu recommends. “For example, Tonya Bolden’s award-winning book, ‘How to Build a Museum’ shares a behind-the-scenes look into Smithsonian’s National Museum for American History and Culture,” she said. “This is a great way to explore the museum before a visit.”

“Jack and the Geniuses: At the Bottom of the World” offers inspiration for another journey, says Esanu. “It’s the first book in a series packed with adventure, science and engineering and is written by Bill Nye [from the children’s television series, “Bill Nye, the Science Guy”] and Gregory Malone,” she said. “This would be the perfect book to read before heading the National Building Museum to explore the Hive Interactive Exhibit [which runs through Sept. 4].”

Guiding a discussion by asking questions that connect the book to current or personal events, playing games such as Charades, 20 Questions or Pictionary can help spark a lively discussion of the book, says Maffei.

“If the book has a movie version, watch the movie after reading the book,” she said. “Look for differences in plot, how the characters and setting look compared to how you thought

they’d look.”

Offer an opportunity for children have a snack to talk informally, advises Esanu. “Make sure that there’s food involved and find new places for the group to meet, maybe in a park or by the pool,” said Esanu. “Mix it up.”

“Themed snacks are fun,” added Maffei. “Maybe something that gets eaten or drank in the book or something from the same time period or place.”

“Summer reading is all about exploration and inspiration, so let the readers take charge.”

— Julie M. Esanu,
Lower School Librarian,
St. Stephen’s & St. Agnes School

SCHOOL NOTES

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416.

Burke resident **Hannah Zakaria** was named to the named to the spring 2017 dean’s list at Bob Jones University (Greenville, S.C.).

Juliana Ray, of Burke was named to the dean’s list at Olivet Nazarene University (Bourbonnais, Ill.) during the spring 2017 semester.

Burke Native **Taryn Falkenstein** Inducted into Lambda Pi Eta Honor Society

Taryn Falkenstein, a Television-Radio major at Ithaca College’s Roy H. Park School of Communications and a Burke native, was inducted into Lambda Pi Eta, the honor society of the National Association of Communication.

Nathaniel Craig Fischer, of

Burke, earned a B.S. in business administration from the College of Business at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Carlos Maldonado-Hurtado, of Burke was named to the Champlain College (Burlington, Vt.) president’s list for the spring 2017 semester.

Yetbarek Fekadu, of Burke, graduated from Becker College (Worcester, Mass.) with a B.S. in exercise science.

Megan Cantwell, of Burke, was named to the dean’s list at Susquehanna University (Selinsgrove, Pa.) for the spring 2017 semester.

SCHOOLS

FCPS Students Win National Merit College-Sponsored Scholarships

Eight Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) graduates from the class of 2017 have been named winners of college-sponsored scholarships by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). Recipients of college-sponsored scholarships from the NMSC, with their probable career fields in parentheses, are:

❖ Kanishk Singh of Langley High School (diplomatic service), National Merit Carleton College Scholarship.

❖ Carlyn Kranking of McLean High School (journalism), National Merit Northwestern University Scholarship.

❖ Abhishek Mishra of Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST) (computer science), National Merit University of Maryland Scholarship.

❖ Aditi Sundararaman of TJHSST (computer science), National Merit University of Maryland Scholarship.

❖ Christine Wang of TJHSST (aerospace engineering), National Merit Purdue University Scholarship.

❖ Diana Zavela of TJHSST (engineering), National Merit Case Western Reserve University Scholarship.

❖ Andrew Elaryan of Woodson High School (mechanical engineering), National Merit University of Oklahoma Scholarship.

❖ Brian Ward of Woodson High School (political science), National Merit Boston College Scholarship.

College-sponsored Merit Scholarships provide between \$500 and \$2,000 annually for up to four years of undergraduate study at the institution financing the scholarship. Nationwide, approximately 7,500 students have won Merit Scholarship awards in 2017. This is the final group of scholarship recipients for the class of 2017.

SCHOOL NOTES

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. Deadline is Friday. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

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Nathaniel Craig Fischer, of Burke, earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the College of Business at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Carlos Maldonado-Hurtado, of Burke was named to the Champlain College (Burlington, Vt.) president's list for the spring 2017 semester.

Yetbarek Fekadu, of Burke, graduated from Becker College (Worcester, Mass.) with a Bachelor of Science in exercise science.

Megan Stevens, of Burke, is studying in Tokyo, Japan, with 19 other students from Susquehanna University (Selinsgrove, Pa.) as part of the university's Global Opportunities (GO) program. Stevens is an early childhood education major in the class of 2018. A 2014 graduate of Lake Braddock Secondary School, she is the daughter of Paul Stevens and Jeanine Bogan-Stevens.

Megan Cantwell, of Burke, was named to the dean's list at Susquehanna University (Selinsgrove, Pa.) for the spring 2017 semester.

Michael Nauls, of Burke, graduated from Marietta College (Marietta, Ohio) with a Bachelor of Science in petroleum engineering. Nauls is a graduate of Lake Braddock Secondary.

The following students were named as Student



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Rotary Club of Fairfax Awards College Scholarships

The Rotary Club of Fairfax awarded college scholarships to five Fairfax High School students at its annual Scholarship meeting Program. In this photo, from left: Fairfax High School Principal David Goldfarb, scholarship winners: Alexis Johnson, Kawtar Toubbali, Alex Su, Joseph Vu, Yasmin Mohamed and Rotarian Verne Tuininga.



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ENTERTAINMENT



Monique Hamm, communications director with Supervisor John Cook's office, pictured with the voting jars for Battle of the Bands.



Enjoying the Battle of the Bands under a tent at Lakeside Park/Royal Lake are Giuliana Vellucci, David Clark, Jules Coryell, Joan Richards, and Linda Vellucci of Fairfax.



The Glory Days Grill of Burke booth gave away free water.

PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

Battle of the Bands in Fairfax

Ten local bands compete for spot in the 2018 Braddock Nights Concert Series.

Ten local bands competed in a Battle of the Bands on two stages Sunday, July 16, at Lakeside Park/Royal Lake in Fairfax. Between 3 and 8 p.m., the audience members could vote for the best band winner who will earn a spot in the 2018 Braddock Nights Concert Series.

Sponsored by Braddock District Supervisor John Cook's office, the event coincided with the debut of Royal Lake, one of five lakes in the watershed, which had a ribbon-cutting ceremony the previous day for having completed a re-dredging process.

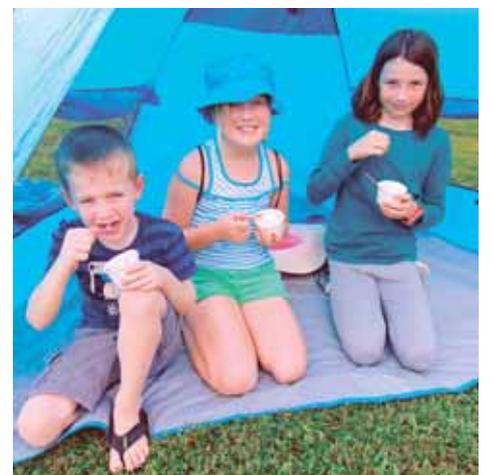
"Well, it's a perfect day out here and it's great to be able to give our local Fairfax County bands, some of which are profes-

sionals, and some are amateurs, the chance to play and for the community to come out and enjoy the day together for free," said Cook.

"This is a great way to bring the community together and support our local arts at the same time," added Monique Hamm, communications director with Cook's office.

The winner of the Battle of the Bands contest was the St. Stephen's UMC Youth Band. The other nine bands competing included: Cinema Hearts, Messenger, Cooler Full of Empties, City Saints, Mars Rodeo, Steve Young & the Sounds, Line Item Veto, No Right Mind, and Irresponsible.

— STEVE HIBBARD



Drew Guenther, 5, Claire Guenther, 9, and Hannah Nelson, 9, of Fairfax enjoy their ice cream.

The crowds enjoy the first Battle of the Bands at Lakeside Park/Royal Lake in Fairfax on Sunday, July 16.

CALENDAR

Send entertainment notes to the Connection at connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/ or call 703-778-9416. The deadline is the Friday prior to the next paper's publication at noon. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

ONGOING

Senior Line Dancing 1-2 p.m. Little River Glen Senior Center 4001 Barker Court, Fairfax. Line Dancing is a gentle, social form of aerobic activity. Studies have shown it aids in warding off Alzheimer's disease. No previous experience needed. Cost: \$5 per 8 week session. barbriba@hotmail.com 703-524-3739

Carolina Shag. Wednesdays. 6:30-10 p.m. Arlington/Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Free lessons at 7:30 p.m. No partners needed. Dinner menu. \$8. Under 21 free. nvshag.org.

Exercise Program Mondays and Fridays at 9:30 a.m. year-round at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Road, Fairfax. The exercises are for strength, balance and maintaining limberness. Contact SCFB office at 703-426-2824 for more information.

Cafe Ivrit (Hebrew Cafe). Wednesdays. 8:15-9:15 a.m. Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia, 8900 Little River Turnpike, Fairfax. Shalom (hello) Did you

always want to converse in Hebrew? Join Na'ama each week for conversational Hebrew. You will learn and practice Hebrew in a fun and interactive way while learning more about Israel. Free, however we ask that you try to attend regularly. RSVP Naama.Gold@jccnv.org.

Smoke Free Bingo. 7 p.m. Every Friday. Fairfax Volunteer Fire Department, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax. Free coffee, entertaining callers, \$1,000 jackpot (with breaks for smoking friends). www.fairfaxva.com. 703-273-3638.

English Conversation Groups weekly at George Mason, Burke Centre, and Lorton Libraries Practice and improve your English. Day and start times vary. Visit: va.evanced.info/fairfaxcounty/lib/eventcalendar.asp

Stories From Strawberry Park 10-11 a.m. Tuesdays in Mosaic, Strawberry Park, 2910 District Ave., Fairfax. Enjoy a live interactive performance each week. For ages 10 and under. Held outside in Strawberry Park. In inclement weather and October through April, storytime will be held in Angelika Film Center. Visit www.fxva.com/listing/mosaic-district/2326/.

Funday Monday 10:30 a.m., every Monday at Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. There will be music, movement, storytelling, performances, crafts, and more. It is open to children of all ages, however

especially for those who haven't yet started school. Programs are free and open to the public, donations are gratefully appreciated. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov/culturalarts

CAMPS & CLASSES

Art Camp. Various times July 24-28, and July 31-Aug. 4 at the Woods Community Center, 10100 Wards Grove Circle, Burke or the second location is Burke Presbyterian Church, 5690 Oak Leather Drive, Burke. Lessons by Carol Zeitlin. Call 703-250-6930 or visit www.czartlessons.com for more.

DEADLINE AUG. 26

Senior Olympics. Registration has begun for Northern Virginia Senior Olympics which runs Sept. 9-20. Participants must be at least 50-years-old by Dec. 31, 2017. Register at www.nvso.us until Sept. 2 or via U.S. mail before Aug. 26 with forms available at area recreation centers. To volunteer contact RSVP Northern Virginia at 703-403-5360 or email rsvp@volunteerfairfax.org.

THURSDAY/JULY 20

Lunch N' Life. noon-2 p.m. at Burke Presbyterian Church, 5690 Oak Leather Drive, Burke. The guest presenter will be Elizabeth Gray, Esq., speaking on legal issues for

older adults. \$10. Sponsored by Shepherd's Center. Call 703-273-5730 or see www.scfva.org.

Summer Under the Stars Concert.

8 p.m. Veterans Amphitheater (adjacent to City Hall), 10455 Armstrong St., Fairfax. Alte Kameraden band. Visit www.fairfaxband.org or call 703-385-7855 for more.

FRIDAY/JULY 21

Topgolf and a DJ. 7-10 p.m. at Topgolf, 6625 S. Van Dorn St. Golf, music from Sway DJ, food and drink. Visit topgolf.com/us/alexandria/ or call 703-924-2600.

SATURDAY/JULY 22

Civil War Amputees. 2 p.m. at the Civil War Interpretive Center at Historic Blenheim, 3610 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. "Artificial Limbs in the Civil War" with Guy R. Hasegawa, Pharm D. Learn about the wartime provisions made for amputees and the stark differences between the resources and capabilities of the North and the South. Free. Call 703-591-0560.

Aspiring Filmmakers Screening.

4:15-7 p.m. at the Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Road, Lorton. Each screening will be followed by an award ceremony. Call 703-584-2900 for more.

Mount Vernon Nights Concert

Series. 6 p.m. at Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Free old-time musical performance by the Sheets Family. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/performance or call 703-780-7518.

Topgolf and a DJ. 7-10 p.m. at Topgolf, 6625 S. Van Dorn St. Golf, music from Radyus DJ, food and drink. Visit topgolf.com/us/alexandria/ or call 703-924-2600.

Stargazing and Snacking on S'mores.

8:30-9:30 p.m. at Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Learn about the creatures that fly through the night skies. Ages 4 to adult. Call 703-323-6600 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/burkelakepark/.

SUNDAY/JULY 23

Z Scale Model Train Show. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Z scale is the smallest mass-marketed model train available anywhere. Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-15, \$2; ages 16 and older, \$4. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, or call 703-425-9225 for more.

Cancer Fundraiser. 4:30-7:30 p.m. at the Dolce Vita Restaurant, 10824 Fairfax Blvd. Supporting Team Kristen Strong in the 192 mile Pan-

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

7

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Improvements

NEWS



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Chick-fil-A to Host Grand Opening in Burke

Camping out at new Chick-fil-A stores has become the norm, since free sandwiches are part of the deal, and the new Burke location promises to be no different. On Wednesday, July 26, campers will gather at 5815 Burke Centre Parkway, for the grand opening the next morning on June 27. The grand opening events also will include the opportunity for campers to package 10,000 meals which will be given to a local charity while the community is invited to donate children's books to a local organization. Read the complete rules at thechickenwire.chick-fil-a.com/News/Future-Openings.

WEEK IN FAIRFAX

Rock the Block after Dark

Thousands of people attend the City's Rock the Block concerts on the fourth Fridays of the month during the summer. But to promote the local restaurants, Fairfax is offering Rock the Block after Dark to hopefully retain the concertgoers after the music ends. Beginning with the July 28 event, participating City restaurants and pubs will offer 15-

percent-discount coupons good for that night, from 7:30-11 p.m. Printed coupons must be presented to take advantage of the discount. Go to facebook.com/FairfaxCityEDA for event dates and a list of participating restaurants.

Play Auditions on July 30

The Shoestring Theatre Co. will hold auditions for its upcoming play, "The Best Doctor in Town," on Sunday, July 30, at 1 p.m., at the North Street Pop-up Theatre, 10427 North St. in Fairfax.

BULLETIN BOARD

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Haven of Northern Virginia provides support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. To become a Haven volunteer, please call 703-941-7000 to request an orientation. Volunteers must complete a 30-hour training and commit to one year of service answering Haven phones (2.5 hours weekly). Next training is scheduled for fall 2017.

Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke serves those 50 and older who no longer drive. **Volunteer drivers** are needed for trips (Monday-Friday) to medical appointments and companion shopping within the Fairfax/Burke area. **Office workers** are needed to answer phones in the SCFB office (Monday-Friday) to match drivers and those who need rides. Call 703-323-4788.

THROUGH AUG. 25

Summer Lunches. The Fairfax County Public Schools Office of Food and Nutrition Services will be hosting the FEEDS (Food for Every Child to Eat During Summer) BBQ program, a USDA-funded program is free to all children 18 years and under and \$2 for adults. There is no registration involved, and open to everyone. Meal

service will be provided at the following sites Monday-Friday, 11:30-1 p.m. No service on July 3 and 4. In the Springfield area, FEEDS is offered at the following schools:

- ❖ Springfield Gardens Apartments, 6116 Cumberland Ave.
- ❖ Springfield Square Apartments, 7000 Rhoden Court, starts at noon
- ❖ Chelsea Square Apartments, 5734 Backlick Road, starts at noon

THURSDAY/JULY 20

Lunch N' Life. noon-2 p.m. at Burke Presbyterian Church, 5690 Oak Leather Drive, Burke. The guest presenter will be Elizabeth Gray, Esq. to speaking on legal issues for older adults. \$10. Sponsored by Shepherd's Center. Call 703-273-5730 or see www.scfbva.org for more.

ONGOING

Positive Parenting Strategies Course. At PHILLIPS, 7010 Braddock Road, Annandale. A series of classes and in home consultations taught by PHILLIPS' counselors. Open to all local families. Call Stacy Strykowski at 703-658-9054.

Thermal Camera Loan Program. Learn where the energy is leaking out

of the home with a special attachment for the iPhone or Android. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/energy or call 703-324-5955 for more.

Master Gardener Training. The Fairfax County Master Gardener Association offers plant clinics, home turf training or speakers for homeowner's meetings. Fees vary. Visit fairfaxgardening.org or call MG Help Desk at 703-324-8556 for more.

Fairfax Rotary Club Meeting 12:15-1:30 p.m. Mondays. American Legion, 3939 Oak St., Fairfax. Meetings with luncheon and program. fairfaxrotary.org.

NARFE Monthly Meeting Every Second Tuesday 11:30 a.m. American Legion Post 177 located at 3939 Oak Street, Fairfax. NARFE Fairfax 737 monthly luncheon meeting. Enjoy lunch accompanied by a special program. Lunch at noon. Cost: \$11 Speaker/Program-12:45PM. rrharney2@cox.net 703-501-0020

Civil War Research scholarship to a public or private high school senior who resides in Fairfax, Fairfax City, Prince William County, Manassas City, or Manassas Park from the Bull Run Civil War Roundtable in Centreville, Va. Visit bullruncivilwar.org for more.

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 8

Mass Challenge, proceeds of the night will go to Team Kristen Strong, as they raise money for The Jimmy Fund and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Call 703-385-1530 or email Info@DolceVitaFairfax.com.

JULY 24-28

Fine Arts and Crafts Camp. 12:30-3:15 p.m. at Burke Presbyterian Church, 5690 Oak Leather Drive. Instructor Carol Zeitlin. Drawing and/or watercolor, mixed medias. Ages 8 and up. Visit www.czartlessons.com or call 703-250-6930 for more.

WEDNESDAY/JULY 26

Pop Up Adventure Playground. 10 a.m.-noon at Kutner Park, 3901 Jermantown Road, Fairfax. LEGO, Games, crafts, coding and more. This program is free, no registration required, and all ages welcome. Child care is not provided. Parents or guardians are required to attend with children not old enough to walk to and play in the park on their own. Call 703-385-7858 or email karen.lussier@fairfaxva.gov for more.

THURSDAY/JULY 27

Summer Under the Stars Concert. 8 p.m. Veterans Amphitheater (adjacent to City Hall), 10455 Armstrong St., Fairfax. City of Fairfax Band. Visit www.fairfaxband.org or call 703-385-7855 for more.

FRIDAY/JULY 28

Rock the Block. 6:30-9:30 p.m. at Old Town Square, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. "The Reagan Years," '80's band is featured. Food available. Bring lawn chairs or blankets to sit on, children can wear swim suits and bring towels to enjoy the spray pad! No pets allowed except service animals. For more details visit www.fairfaxva.gov/rocktheblock

Topgolf and a DJ. 7-10 p.m. at Topgolf, 6625 S. Van Dorn St. Golf, music from Silver DJ, food and drink. Visit topgolf.com/us/alexandria/ or call 703-924-2600.

SATURDAY/JULY 29

Taste of Springfield. noon-6 p.m. outdoors event at the Springfield Town Center, 6500 Springfield Mall Drive. Locally focused, family friendly 'feast-ival' with tastings, entertainments and activities for all ages. Weather dependent. Visit www.tasteofspringfield.com for more.

Scarf Painting Workshop. noon-3 p.m. at the Fairfax Art League Village Gallery, 3950 University Drive. The Fairfax Art League invites the public to a hand painted scarf workshop. \$10. Call 703-569-8760 for more.

Mount Vernon Nights Concert Series. 6 p.m. at Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. Free musical performance by Jarekus Singleton. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/performances or call 703-780-7518.

SUNDAY/JULY 30

G-Scale Model Train Show. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Washington, Virginia & Maryland Garden Railway Society (WVMGRS) will have a G-Scale train display running. 4 and under free; ages 5-15, \$2; ages 16 and older, \$4. Visit www.fairfaxstation.org or call 703-425-9225 for more.

Yoga on the Square. 10 a.m. at Old Town Square, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Bring a yoga mat and a water bottle. Call 703-385-7858 for more.

MONDAY/JULY 31

Funday Monday for Children. 10:30 a.m. in Old Town Square, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Storytelling and songs. Weather permitting. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov or call 703-385-7855 for more.

TUESDAY/AUG. 1

What's in the Virginia Room. 7-9 p.m. at the Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road. Burke Historical Society research seminar about the Virginia Room's collection presented by Elaine Mcrey. Visit www.burkehistoricalsociety.org for more.

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And So It Begins



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

For the first time in almost exactly 25 years: bathroom demolition, times two. With financial assistance from my father-in-law, along with use of our home equity line, we have committed to and contracted for, a complete renovation of our two full bathrooms ('full' meaning: tub/shower, commode, sink, vanity, mirror, shelves, lights/fixtures, counter top, floor and shower tile, and paint). Ergo, over the next eight to 12 weeks, our house will officially become a construction site.

Never having experienced this level of upheaval and chaos in any of our previous homes before, we are looking forward since we have no reference looking backward.

We know one thing for sure: our five indoor cats will be miserable and scared and likely hiding for days on end. Considering that the workers will be in our home from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., I don't know when the cats are going to feel like eating since their routine will have been completely thrown off having so many new people in the house for so many hours per day. (I don't even want to think about the litter box implications.)

Nevertheless, time marches forward, and given that our home is historic/over 250 years old, its bathrooms, though not exactly pre-Colonial, definitely are showing their age. Their design, form, function, efficiency and attractiveness barely blip the radar. Both bathrooms are old, and that's the only compliment I can give them.

I imagine the next two to three months will likely be a journey of discovery; Columbus-like in that we will be discovering a new world with modern bathroom amenities and conveniences, color coordination and functionality, many of which we've not been the beneficiaries of in over 25 years.

Our kitchen remains as it has been all those years ago: large but clearly deficient in many ways compared to modern kitchens. As a matter of fact, as the designer, project manager and I walked into the kitchen looking for the access panel to the adjacent bathroom, I said, "As you can see, our kitchen needs work, too. Any chance you all offer a 'BOGO? Buy one, get one free?" Of course, they both laughed and shook their head. They didn't have to say "No." It was more a rhetorical question anyway.

Considering the time we've all had together, we have no doubt the contractor and his workers know what they're doing. We're not sure however, as homeowners that we know what we're doing. From our first meeting, a few months back, the process has seemed clear enough as do the drawings/design ideas we've now seen/decided upon do. Still, when it goes from their paper to our property, how will it all transfer? They seem confident and complimentary which certainly has been reassuring but we're novices in this transformation.

For us each step forward is yet another step into the great unknown. And since we can only take it one step at a time, we have no choice but to live and learn and hopefully not regret and decisions we've already made (although changes can still be made).

So far - and it's not very far - so good. However, it's the process of starting and ultimately finishing that worries me. Not that I run on a schedule (heck, I can barely walk), but my wife, Dina, sort of does; and it seems as if she and the workers might be occupying the same space at the same time.

I suppose the timing and all eventually works itself out but it's the interim with which I'm concerned. I realize there are no guarantees in any of this.

I guess I just have to deal with it as I do with my having cancer: take the bad with the good, keep a sense of humor and try to remain positive. Doing so has kept me alive for eight years and four months. I'd like to think I can manage for another eight to 12 weeks.

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



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