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Ballston 2020 A look at the redevelopment plans across the west end of Arlington's Metro corridor.

BY VERNON MILES
THE CONNECTION

Ballston is about a five-block radius around the Metro station. But on nearly every single block, new construction is underway on towering new skyscrapers and dense new developments. The Ballston of 2020 is already starting to take shape.

Much of the redevelopment is being planned or coordinated through the Ballston Business Improvement District (BID), a five-person team that works on branding, marketing and administration of local businesses. The BID is funded by a tax of \$0.045 per \$100 of assessed value for businesses within the district. In FY 2017, the BID collected \$1.6 million in tax revenue and \$550,000 in fund raising, according to a work plan submitted to Arlington County. Ballston BID CEO Tina Leone provided a tour of the new developments.



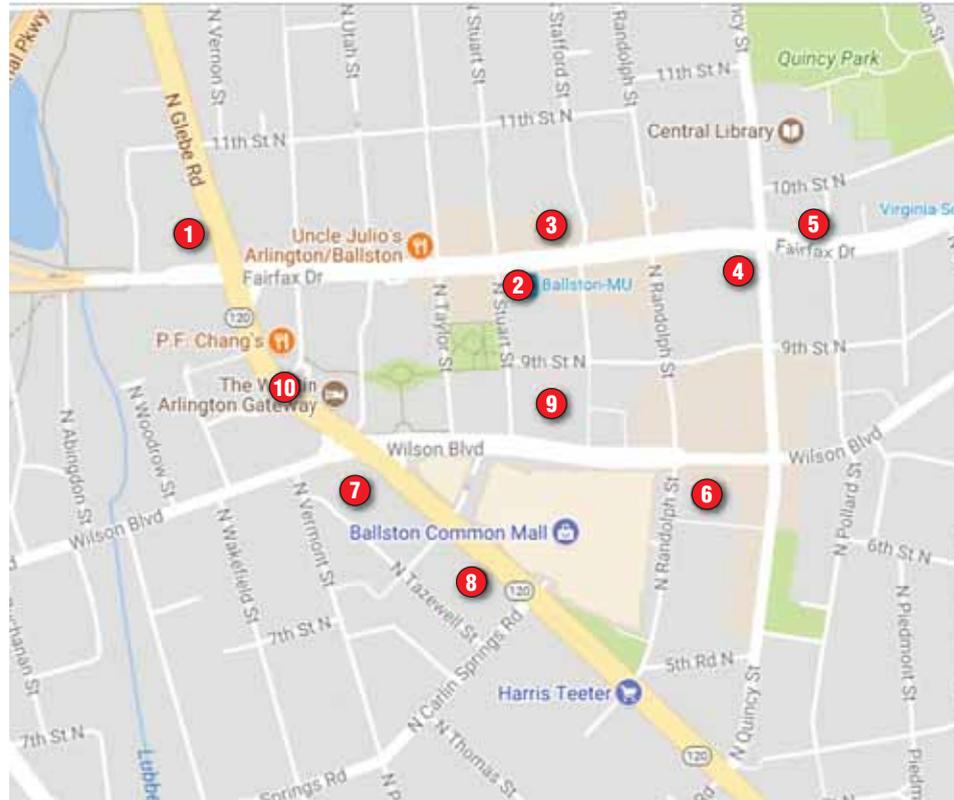
PHOTO BY VERNON MILES/THE CONNECTION
Carpool, an iconic Ballston restaurant, permanently closed and scheduled for redevelopment as an apartment tower.



PHOTO BY VERNON MILES/THE CONNECTION
Ballston Metro station.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED
Newsie development at Marymount University.



MAP KEY

- 1** 1000 N Glebe Rd, Arlington, VA 22201
Marymount University Development
- 2** 4230 Fairfax Dr, Arlington, VA 22203
Metro Plaza
- 3** 4201 Fairfax Dr, Arlington, VA 22203
Central United Methodist Church Redevelopment
- 4** 4000 Fairfax Dr, Arlington, VA 22203
Carpool Redevelopment
- 5** 3901 North Fairfax
Proposed: Office Redevelopment
- 6** 4040 Wilson Blvd
Proposed: Tallest Office in Ballston
- 7** 750 North Glebe
Residential Redevelopment
- 8** 672 Glebe Road
672 Flats
- 9** 4201 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA 22203
Ballston Exchange - National Science Foundation Redevelopment
- 10** 875 N. Glebe Road
Ballston Mall Redevelopment

The latest development completed in Ballston is the two luxury buildings finished over the summer, collectively called Newsie. The two buildings are located at the former Blue Goose site on Marymount University's Ballston campus in the northwest corner of the neighborhood. The southern building is a nine-story mixed office and retail building with 55,067 square feet of office space. The other is a 15-story market rate apartment building with 267 units.

The redevelopment starts as soon as the visitor steps off the Metro. A map of the surrounding area with featured locations was recently installed in the Metro plaza,

the harbinger of a series of changes planned for the site. The dark plastic awning over the Metro station exit will be renovated and lit. Ballston Metro serves as a hub for bus traffic in the area, and additional bus bays, new bus shelters, and signs with real-time bus information will be added to the site by 2019. New kiss-and-ride curb space and bike parking will also be added to the site.

Across Fairfax Drive from the Metro station is the Central United Methodist Church (CUMC), a church showing its age with cracked paint and some busted wood along the front facade. But the church is slated for redevelopment as a new mix of church

and residential building with 40 percent of the new units dedicated affordable housing.

Further east on Fairfax Drive sits Carpool, once an iconic local restaurant built out of an old car dealership, now closed and fenced up. The lot is relatively small, but will feature a tall, skinny apartment tower with 330 units and retail on the ground floor.

SEE OVERVIEW, PAGE 6



PHOTO BY VERNON MILES/THE CONNECTION
Ballston Common Mall undergoing demolition.



PHOTO BY VERNON MILES/THE CONNECTION
The current Central United Methodist Church, to be redeveloped into a new mix of church and affordable housing residential space.

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NEWS

Closing After 75 Years

Belmont TV owner looks back at a changing business.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE
THE CONNECTION

Belmont TV is closing. Ken Sickmen, current owner of Belmont TV, says he has been working there for 50 years since he was in high school. His father started the company on 14th and Belmont streets in Washington, D.C. in 1943 but the original store was burned down in the 1968 riots.

Sickmen reminisces when his father started the business 75 years ago there were no TVs, just radio. He said his dad couldn't fix anything but he went into business with two partners who were good at repairing, and he was a good promoter. His father's idea was Dial R-A-D-I-O on your rotary phone and they would come and service your radio while you wait.

Then in the '50s it was all about tube TV. "My dad offered 50 percent off the receiving tubes — all those little tubes inside your set." Sickmen pulls out an old advertising "how to" guide from under his desk blotter. People would come in and his father would give them a guide on how to change the tubes themselves. The other stores sold the tubes retail. "They thought my dad was crazy." But Belmont was the largest seller of tubes in the D.C. area.

In the late '70s everything changed for Belmont. Until 1973 parts and service was the biggest part of business. But then TV became solid state so no one needed tubes anymore. And in 8-9 years there were no people left anymore with TVs that needed tubes. "The industry completely changed so you had to change or disappear. So we morphed."

He says they transferred from service to sales. "By 2008-09, so many electronic companies were going out of business. It was a deeper problem for all of us than the recession." Sickmen explains that in 2000 you could sell a HDTV or flat panel for \$3,000-4000 and make 35 percent profit. By 2009 the flat margin was 12-13 percent, and the

profit kept dropping.

He says, "I ran the company after my father retired in 1983. Our strength was that we had no debt and owned our buildings. My father didn't want to take a penny out of the company."

The bottom line is "a simple statement and it sounds stupid but you can't stay in business if you can't make a profit. It got razor thin. But I'm closing because I'm retiring. I want to retire."

Sickmen says at the highest point they had eight stores, three large ones including one in Laurel which they closed two months ago, one in Wheaton, and one at Bailey's Crossroads, the final one to go. He said they started closing the smaller stores located in little shopping centers one by one in 1967 because it made more sense to have three large strategically located stores. He says, "We have leased our building at Bailey's Crossroads and started a week ago with the close-out sales. We're about 90 percent empty. I thought it would take a month."

Next Sickmen says he hopes to try doing "voice overs" for commercials. From 1976-1999 he wrote and produced many of his own TV commercials, sometimes on three stations. He sings the jingle, "Whatever you want, whatever you want, that's Belmont." Sickmen says, "it's catchy. You can't get it out of your head." Then in 1999 he switched to radio where he has stayed until now. "I have written over 100 commercials. I'm pretty good."

"This is a tough, tough industry. Everyone in the world sells TVs now. The saddest part is that I can't transition it to my kids. My daughters are sad because of their grandfather. The customers are sad." He adds, "The customers were very, very good. But it was time to retire. We did the right thing. I went out on my own terms."

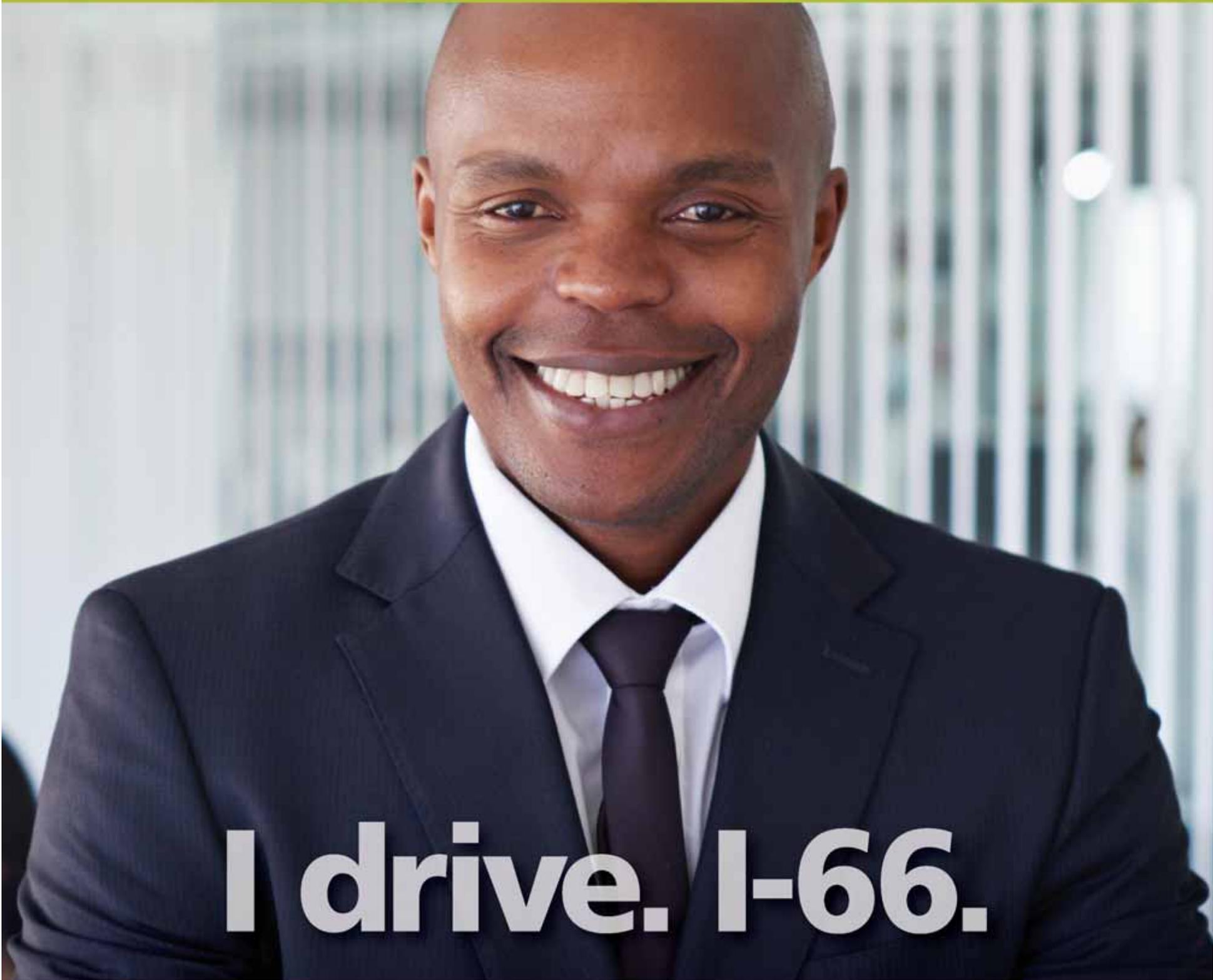


Ken Sickmen outside his last Belmont TV store.



PHOTO BY SHIRLEY RUHE/THE CONNECTION

Ken Sickmen, owner of family-run Belmont TV, stands in a nearly empty showroom after announcing a closeout sale a week ago. Sickmen is closing the business after 75 years.



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Overview of Redevelopment of Ballston

FROM PAGE 3

At the northeast corner of Ballston, a proposed black box theater space is in development limbo. Plans to put a theater space at 3901 North Fairfax were replaced with more office space, but Leone said office vacancy challenges across the region have put the project in jeopardy.

There are two site plans approved for 4040 Wilson Blvd. One would be almost entirely office and would make the building the tallest office building in Ballston. The other would include office, but would also include retail and residential space, becoming Arlington's first vertical fully mixed use development.

Most of the redevelopment is tall and relatively narrow, but while the development at Saul Centers is 12 stories at its peak, it's also broad. At over 500,000 square feet and 500 apartment units, the development at 750 North Glebe covers the entire block. Most of the retail space on the ground floor of the development is already signed to Target and Silver Diner.

On the next block of North Glebe, a six-story development called 672 Flats will add 175 new residential units and 4,400 square feet of retail space. Leone said the project is substantially smaller than its Saul Centers development neighbor, following the trend of residential and retail spaces getting smaller the further they get from the central Metro corridor.

The biggest vacancy hitting Ballston in the next year is the loss



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Central United Methodist Church redevelopment project.

of the National Science Foundation, formerly located in the Ballston Exchange, but moving to a new location in Alexandria. Office vacancy has been trending down in Ballston as vacant space has filled, but Leone says those statistics haven't accounted for NSF's departure which is already underway. Leone says the Ballston Exchange's developers have been looking for ways to renovate and modernize the space. In late 2018, the site is planned to be renovated as a new 776,000 square feet development with mixed-use retail, a fitness center, and a conference facility. Currently the site is set back from the street with a fountain, but Leone said the new development will bring the retail out to the street and replace the fountain-area with a courtyard.

Across from the Ballston Exchange, one of the most visible redevelopment projects has been the Ballston Common Mall. The front facade of the project is currently being torn down, exposing the long-enclosed interior to the street. The new plans for the mall will be a town center type design that includes stores that face both



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Carpool redevelopment.

the street and an interior, open-air courtyard. The project will include 393 apartment units and four levels of underground parking.

When she lived in Ballston 17 years ago, Leone said there weren't any strollers or dogs on the streets. Ballston was a place where young professionals worked, with the only retail or restaurants catering to the local nightlife. But now, Ballston's streets are packed with dogs and strollers. The average Ballstonian is a college graduate under 40 making around \$175,000 a year. Ballston's young professionals from two decades ago grew up, and many of them stayed in the area, and the new developments in Ballston are a reflection of that. One of the types of facilities in need in Ballston is child-care, and Leone says the BID has been courting those types of facilities for new developments. The only one currently planned is included in the CMUC development.

Leone said one of the biggest trends across the new developments in Ballston is that all of them have ground floor retail. Of the ground floor retail planned for Ballston, 30 percent is restaurants.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Former planned theater-turned-office space development at 3901 North Fairfax.

According to Leone, the current trend for retail is chasing experiences rather than conventional shopping, which has been decimated by the internet.

"People want experiences," said Leone. "Everything has to be Instagram worthy."



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Ballston Metro redesign, with new bus bays and a dedicated kiss-and-ride drop-off.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Ballston Common Mall redevelopment.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Two approved designs for 4040 Wilson Blvd.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Saul Centers Development



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

672 Flats



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Ballston Exchange

Retail Perspective on New Development

Three years ago, an open retail space in Ballston helped a dream for Javier Candon come true. His Spanish-style restaurant, SER, was born out of a competition held by the Ballston BID and a local developer for an open retail space, the winner getting a year in the location rent free. Candon submitted his pitch and worked his way through a series of competitions.

Now, three years later, Candon has recently opened another location in Washington, D.C., and is eagerly awaiting the new developments

across Ballston.

"We're doing very well, but the location is challenging," said Candon. "It's a couple blocks away from the main section [of Ballston], but we've worked to become a destination."

As new development comes into the area, Candon is mostly excited. SER is located next to the Newside development. Though the apartments are luxury units, Candon says the restaurant's rent has managed to stay under 10 percent of their total sales. The new development has also brought new regulars to

his restaurant.

One of the greatest strengths for Candon, however, is also one of his greatest concerns about the future of Ballston development. Being a few blocks removed from the Ballston Mall redevelopment has helped keep the rent on SER low, but Candon says he's concerned the new mall will be the focus of the public spotlight and visitors won't want to walk five blocks away to explore other restaurants and retail in the area.

— VERNON MILES



What's on the Local Ballot?

Election Day: Nov. 7

While the battle for the state will take place in the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General elections, a few smaller skirmishes are being fought at the local level. Delegates Mark Levine and Patrick Hope from the 45th and 47th districts are running unopposed for reelection, but in the 49th District three-term incumbent Del. Alfonso Lopez (D) faces off against Adam Roosevelt (R), a 25-year old army veteran. During the campaign, Lopez and Roosevelt have clashed on issues like abortion and Medicaid expansion in Virginia, which Lopez has pushed in the state legislature but Roosevelt said would cost Virginians more in tax dollars in the long run.

RELATED STORY, PAGE 13

In the County Board race, Democratic candidate Erik Gutshall faces a push from the left by two independent candidates, Charles McCullough and Audrey Clement. With experience in county governance and support from much of the local Democratic leadership, Gutshall was selected as Arlington's Democratic candidate in a crowded caucus earlier this year. McCullough and Clement have both criticized the Democrat-majority County Board's approach to development, citing new tax incentives offered to businesses like Nestle and a range of projects that have overrun their costs as examples of poor leadership.

At the School Board, Democrat-endorsed Monique O'Grady faces Independents Alison Dough and M.D.

Campaign Donations

HOUSE DISTRICT 49

Democrat Alfonso Lopez: \$116,000

- ❖ \$12,500 from Va League of Conservation Voters
- ❖ \$5,000 from SEIU Local 32BJ
- ❖ \$3,000 from stockbroker Edward Hart Rice of Vienna
- ❖ \$2,500 from investment banker Mirza Baig of Great Falls
- ❖ \$2,500 from Realtor Thomson Hirst of Alexandria

Republican Adam Roosevelt: \$10,000

- ❖ \$1,000 from author Edward Conrad of New York
- ❖ \$800 from Surveillance Equipment Group of Lorton
- ❖ \$500 from Ike Brannon, president of Capital Policy Analytics
- ❖ \$500 from Department of Commerce official Daniel Corrin of Washington, D.C.
- ❖ \$500 from Marcus Farris of Antioch, Tenn.

"Mike" Webb.

There are no ordinances or bonds on the 2017 Arlington ballots.

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 7. Polls are open from 6 a.m.-7 p.m.

See vote.arlingtonva.us

— VERNON MILES

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Monday, November 6, 8:30am-12:30pm
Reston Association Conference Center
12001 Sunrise Valley Dr., Reston, VA

The Capital Area Franchise Fair is the annual learning event hosted by FranNet of Virginia with the SBA, SCORE and the Community Business Partnership.

Experts, lenders and franchisors from various industries will discuss: the best franchise fit, trends, the franchise business model, local regulations, franchise funding.

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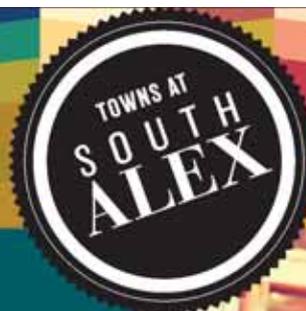
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ENTERTAINMENT



Ryan Sellers as Captain Hook and Alex Mills as Peter Pan in Synetic Theater's production of "Peter Pan."



Kathy Gordon as Wendy Darling and Alex Mills as Peter Pan in Synetic Theater's production of "Peter Pan."



Ryan Sellers as Captain Hook and Nathan Weinberger as Smee in Synetic Theater's production of "Peter Pan."

PHOTOS BY JOHNNY SHRYOCK

Synetic Theater Presents 'Peter Pan'

Production includes flying acrobatics in magical place filled with fairies, pirates, and mermaids.

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

Synetic Theater in Arlington is presenting "The Adventures of Peter Pan" now through Nov. 19. Take flight to Neverland with Peter Pan, his Lost Boys, and the Darling children. In this place filled with fairies, pirates, and mermaids, Peter Pan and crew will battle the sinister Captain Hook with acrobatics that will leave the audience on the edge of its seat.

Director Paata Tsikurishvili said there's a reason why the story is a world classic — loved by both children and adults. "It speaks to everyone, and has tremendous potential for movement and physicality," he said. "I also thought Alex Mills, one of our company veterans, would make a great Pan. With his skill sets, in both acting and movement, it's a character he was born to play."

He said he wanted to adapt the story to fit Synetic's unique acrobatic style, and to tell this story in a way that's never been done before. "We also wanted the opportunity to bring the whole family together, to introduce them to the magic of Synetic's singular storytelling style, as well as to the beauty of this story," he said.

He said his challenge as a director was to recreate the sense of "magical realism" that's conveyed throughout J.M. Barrie's book, while maintaining authenticity. "To find the nuance of these characters and break the stereotypes — bringing something new to the characters when they're so well known. And of course, as with any production of 'Pan,' realistic human flight was also a big challenge," he said.

Alex Mills plays the title role of Peter Pan, whom he says is the embodiment of youth. "On the surface he can be seen as this precocious, somewhat arrogant-type child in the kind of reckless abandon he has for adventure and danger," he said. "The interesting thing, though, going deeper is why he never wants to grow up; the fear of death, the fear of losing loved ones and having to face your own mortality."

He said the show went through many iterations before reaching what is now the final product. "The script changed a lot through the process along with the various movement sequences that accompany

them," he said. "Keeping that all tracked in my brain was definitely a challenge. The great thing, however, is how adept the entire ensemble is at being quick to adjust."

All in all, he hopes the audience will leave the show with a sense of wonder and magic. "To embrace, however young or old, the inner child we have in all of us. Like I say in the show, 'to dream, to pretend, to lay in the grass and walk barefoot,'" he said.

Ryan Sellers is playing the role of Captain Hook, an egotistical, insecure, self-righteous, selfish, uncaring, vengeful, scared, ruthless, cunning, lying pirate. "It's awesome," he added.

He said the challenges were ones that occur when he's working with a fluid-minded, perfectionist like [director] Paata. "He wants to change the story often to maximize the drama, action, and let the story flow in a way that keeps it one step ahead of the audience," he said. "As an actor that means not getting married to any particular choice, dialogue, or set choreography, because you can leave rehearsal Friday night and come in Saturday afternoon to see that your work from yesterday has inspired him to something new and entirely different today. So we have to let go of our egos and serve the story as he sees it."

He said he hopes audiences can forget about how complicated and difficult the world around us has become and see the

magic and joy they are experiencing on stage. "It's truly a joy to tell this story and we hope that joy is contagious. It's for kids to laugh, learn, and grow, and for adults to laugh, remember, and relive," he said.

Kathy Gordon is playing the role of Wendy Darling, a young girl who can't wait to grow up. "She loves her brothers and is always fiercely protective of them. Wendy is loyal and very brave and falls for Peter almost instantly," she said.

She said the biggest challenges have been the flying sequences without a doubt. "Our grid does not allow for a traditional flying set up and, of course, you have to fly in Peter Pan so it has been a wonderful challenge working within our restraints to create magic," she said.

She hopes that everyone leaves after the show with a sense of wonder having just experienced an evening of adventure. "No matter your age you will fall in love with this magical production," she said.

Synetic Theater in Arlington is presenting "The Adventures of Peter Pan" through Nov. 19. Show times are Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday matinees at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$20 to \$60. The venue is located at 1800 South Bell Street, Arlington. Call the Box Office at 866-811-4111 or visit the website at www.synetictheater.org.

CALENDAR

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

ONGOING

"Peter Pan" on Stage. Through Nov. 19, various times at Synetic Theater, Crystal City, 1800 S. Bell St. Take flight to Neverland with Peter Pan, his Lost Boys and the Darling children. Ages 7+. \$35 and up. Student tickets start at \$15. Senior citizens and military receive \$5 off. Call 866-811-4111 or www.synetictheater.org.

Arlington Farmer's Market. Every Saturday, 8 a.m.-noon at the corner of N. 14th Street and N. Courthouse Road. A weekly celebration of local food including fresh produce, meats, dairy, cheese, baked goods, free range eggs, specialty items, cut flowers, plants and herbs. Email csingiser@cfwdc.org or call 917-733-6402.

FRESHFARM Market. 3-7 p.m. on Tuesdays at 1900 Crystal Drive. Shop from local farmers and producers with seasonal fruits and vegetables, fresh-cut flowers, container plants and herbs, farm-raised eggs, all-natural meats, artisan baked goods,

and specialty foods. Visit www.crystalcity.org.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 1

Northern Virginia Bird Club Walk. 8:30-11 a.m. at Long Branch Nature Center, 625 S. Carlin Springs Road. Search of resident and migratory birds, bring binoculars. Free. Call 703-228-6535 or visit longbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us.

NOV. 2-3

P.E.A.C.E. Investigative Interviewing Training. 9 a.m.-5

p.m. in Marymount's Ballston Center Conference Room, 1000 North Glebe Road. The P.E.A.C.E. approach has been adopted by numerous police forces, including those in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and many other countries. It is designed to maintain respect for the interviewee, whether the person is a witness, suspect or victim. Email jdoll@marymount.edu.

THURSDAY/NOV. 2

Local Pop-Up Shops. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Plaza Library Shop, 2100 Clarendon Blvd., 1st Floor Lobby.

Livin' the Pie Life will be at a pop-up retail market dedicated to wearable and edible products from innovators and artisans in Arlington. Visit www.arlingtoneconomicdevelopment.com.

FRIDAY/NOV 3

Happy Hour Concert. 6 p.m. at the Bennett Park Art Atrium, 1601 Clarendon Blvd. A smaller "salon orchestra" performing classical favorites including Eine Kleine Nacht music, a Strauss Waltz, an opera intermezzo, and a Piazzolla Tango. \$15 admission includes beer, wine, and snacks. Visit

ENTERTAINMENT



Yoga Fundraiser

Hurricane relief benefit at Sun & Moon Yoga, 3811 Lee Highway. On Friday, Nov 3, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Guided meditations, silent reflection, dialogue principles, and mindfulness practices to support candid conversations about the divisions in the country and to learn from different views and ideas in a respectful space. Visit sunandmoonstudio.com.

CALENDAR

www.arlingtonphilharmonic.org.

Yoga Dialogue. 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Sun & Moon Yoga, 3811 Lee Highway. Cultivating Common Ground In a Divided Country: A Community Dialogue. Guided meditations, silent reflection, dialogue principles, and mindfulness practices to support us as a group in candid conversations about the divisions in our country and to learn from our different views and ideas in a respectful space. By donation only – all proceeds will go to hurricane relief through Heart to Heart International. Visit www.sunandmoonstudio.com.

Meet the Artists. 7 p.m. at Marymount University's Ballston Center Gallery, 1000 North Glebe Road. Talk with artists Jeremy Flick and Jon Malis about their exhibit "Metaphrase." Visit www.marymount.edu/.

November Moon Night Hike. 7-8 p.m. at Fort C.F. Smith, 2411 24th St N. Experience the trails under the moon, learn a new constellation, and meet nocturnal critters. Call 703-228-3403.

After Hours Dance Party. 7-9 p.m. Columbia Pike Branch Library, 816 South Walter Reed

Drive. Caz Gardiner, a Washington, D.C.-based singer/songwriter performs rock and reggae. Call 703-228-5710.

Auto-Audio. 7:30 p.m. at the Theatre on the Run, 3700 S. Four Mile Run Drive. New works by Forty+/ Excerpts from Aflight. Post-performance at Capitol City Brewing Company. Minimum donation \$10. Visit janefranklin.com or call 703.933.1111.

SATURDAY/NOV. 4

Birding Arlington. 8-9:30 a.m. at Gravelly Point, George Washington Memorial Pkwy. Use spotting scopes, and stroll around the park looking for waterfowl, songbirds and maybe a Peregrine Falcon. Ages 8 and up. Call 703-228-3403.

Dominion Hills Craftshow. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Dominion Hills Community Center, 6000 Wilson Blvd. The 14th annual Dominion Hills Fall Craft Show will present 12 local and regional artisans products. Email jules@julesjewelsjewelry.com or call 703-533-0957.



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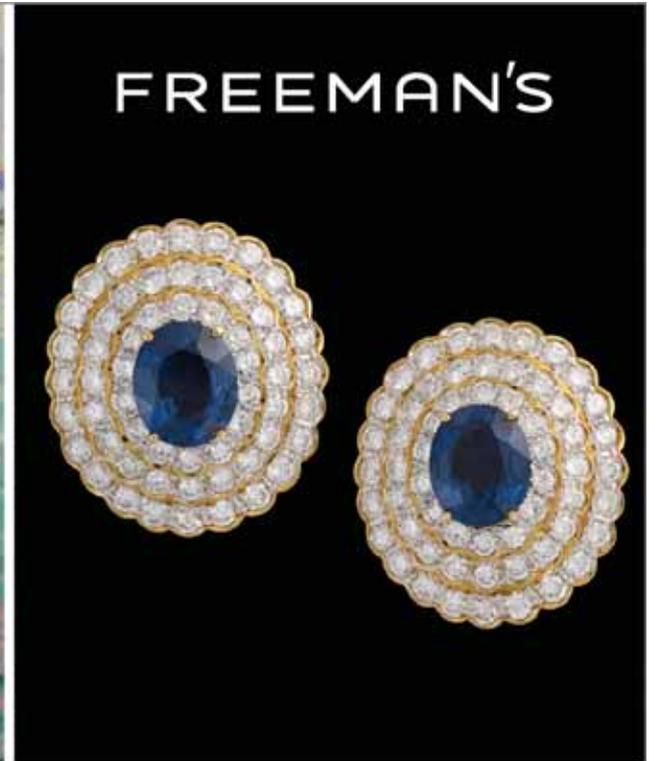
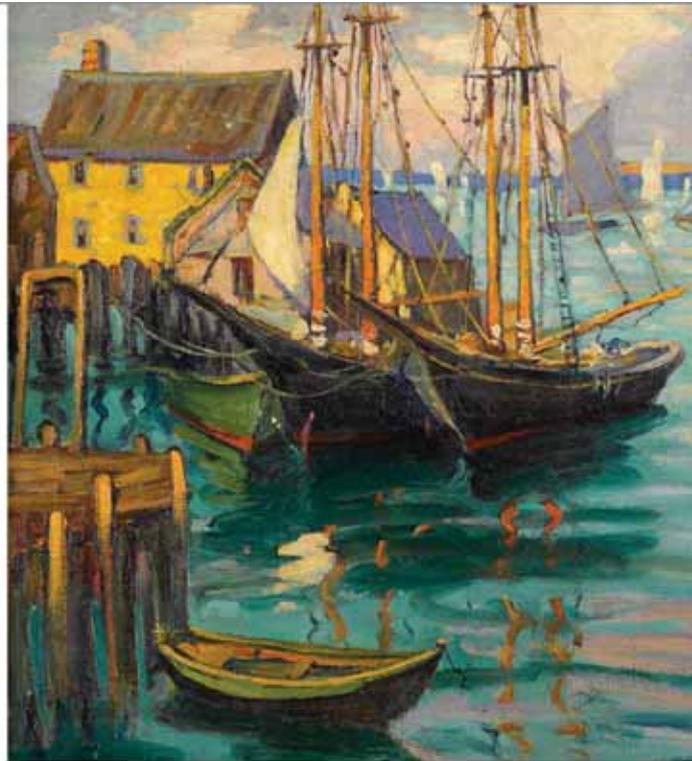
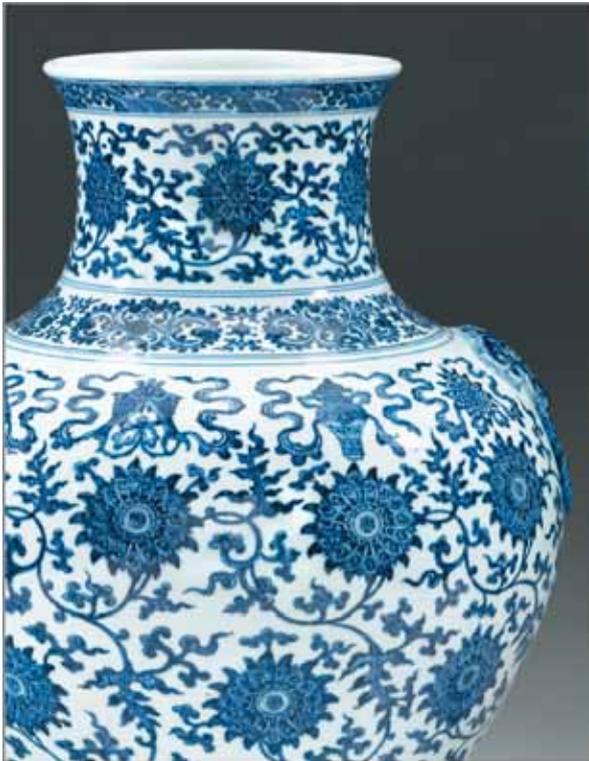
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Lt. Governor

JOHN ADAMS
Attorney General



VOTE TUESDAY, November 7th

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Colin Clarke, VP, of Freeman's, America's oldest auction house, will be in **Northern Virginia and Potomac, MD on November 9th and 10th** to evaluate property for inclusion in our Spring 2018 auction season.

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ENTERTAINMENT



Salon Orchestra

The Arlington Philharmonic will be giving a "salon orchestra" on Friday, Nov. 3 at 6 p.m. at the Bennett Park Art Atrium, 1601 Clarendon Blvd. Featuring classical favorites including Eine Kleine Nacht music, a Strauss Waltz, an opera intermezzo, and a Piazzolla Tango. \$15 admission includes beer, wine, and snacks. Visit www.arlingtonphilharmonic.org for mor

CALENDAR

Annual Fall Bazaar. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. at Community Resource Information, 700 S. Buchanan St. Local vendors, food and drink available. Sponsored by Woman's Club of Arlington. Email arlingtonwomansclub@gmail.com.

Mosaic International Showcase. noon-5 p.m. at Fashion Centre at Pentagon City Metro Level, 1100 S. Hayes St. Music, art, food samplings, live performances and more from countries from around the world. This year's featured countries include Brazil, China, Ethiopia, Mexico, the Philippines, and Vietnam. Visit www.simon.com/mall/fashion-centre-at-pentagon-city.

Whitetail Deer Campfire. 6-7 p.m. at Gulf Branch Nature Center, 3608 N. Military Road. Stories, special animal guests, games, songs and S'mores. \$5. Call 703-228-3403 or email gulfbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us.

NOV. 7-JAN. 14

"Crazy for You." Various times at the Signature Theatre, 4200 Campbell Ave. A musical comedy with Gershwin tunes including "I've Got Rhythm," "Someone to Watch Over Me" and "Nice Work If You Can Get It" fuse with tap dancing. Visit www.sigtheatre.org.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 8

Film Screening. 7 p.m. at Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, 4444 Arlington Blvd. "The Messenger," a film about the plight of disappearing songbirds, focuses on how climate change, habitat loss and human action are diminishing songbirds in our environment. The film will be followed by discussion. Visit www.uucava.org/.

THURSDAY/NOV. 9

Local Pop-Up Shops. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Plaza Library Shop, 2100 Clarendon Blvd., 1st Floor Lobby. Georges' Botanique Aromatique will be at a pop-up retail market dedicated to, wearable and edible products from innovators and artisans in Arlington. Visit www.arlingtoneconomicdevelopment.com.
Deep Dive Exploring. 8-9 p.m. at Gulf Branch Nature Center, 3608 N. Military Road. White-tailed Deer are the topic. \$5. Call 703-228-3403 or visit gulfbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us.

FRIDAY/NOV. 10

The Fall Hunt. 4-5 p.m. at Gulf Branch Nature Center, 3608 N. Military Road. Hunting for dinner is the topic, following tracks and signs of deer and eat some venison stew. \$5. Call 703-228-3403 or visit gulfbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us.

NOV. 14-15

Dominion Guild Holiday Boutique. 6:30-9:30 p.m. Tuesday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wednesday at the Knights of Columbus, 5115 Little Falls Road. Twenty-five vendors will be at the event, \$25/\$15. Visit www.thedominioguildva.org.

DEADLINE NOV. 15

Nominate A Tree. Various times with Arlington Urban Forestry. Nominate a tree that is notable due to its size, age, history, uniqueness or neighborhood significance. Call 703-228-7747.

THURSDAY/NOV. 16

Local Pop-Up Shops. 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Plaza Library Shop, 2100 Clarendon Blvd., 1st Floor Lobby. Commonwealth Joe coffee will be at a pop-up retail market dedicated to, wearable and edible products from innovators and artisans in Arlington. Visit arlingtoneconomicdevelopment.com.

FRIDAY/NOV. 17,

Fall Fungi 101 Hike. 1-3 p.m. at Gulf Branch Nature Center, 3608 Military Road. Get to know these ancient organisms and the basics of mushroom identification. \$10. Call 703-228-3403 or email gulfbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us.
Candle Making. 4-5:30 p.m. at Gulf Branch Nature Center, 3608 Military Road. Learn some new and old ways to make these luminaries. \$5. CALL 703-228-3403 or email gulfbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us.

SATURDAY, NOV. 18

Fall Colors Walk. 10-11 a.m. Meet at Long Branch Nature Center, 625 S. Carlin Springs Road. Explore the colors of fall during an easy walk on the trails around the nature center. Ages 6 and up. Call 703-228-6535 or email longbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us.

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BULLETIN BOARD

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

SUNDAY/NOV. 12

“Life’s Final Choices.” 2 p.m. at Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, 4444 Arlington Blvd. Maureen Albrethsen, a licensed funeral director, will discuss medical treatments when death is near; disposition of one’s body (burial, cremation, or donation to science), and planning for a “life celebration.” The meeting is presented by the Memorial Society of Northern Virginia, a nonprofit group of volunteers. Free, open to all. Call 703-271-9240 or email info@memorialsocietyva.org.

Clarendon Pastoral Installation.

4:30-5:30 p.m. at the Church at Clarendon, 1210 N. Highland St. Event welcomes Rev. Danielle Bridgeforth as the senior pastor of the church. Email deborah@1bc.org.

THROUGH NOV. 16

Annual Thanksgiving Food Drive.

Various times at St. Mary’s Arlington, 2609 N. Glebe Road. Be a part of the parish outreach to collect 200 filled grocery bags for Arlington neighbors in need this Thanksgiving. Visit smarysarlington.org/ for more.

FRIDAY/NOV. 17

Design Competition Deadline.

The Office of the Arlington County Treasurer invites high school students who reside or attend school

in Arlington to participate in the 14th Annual Decal Design Competition at taxes.arlingtonva.us/decal-design/.

THURSDAY/NOV. 30

40 Leaders Under 40.

11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at Army Navy Country Club, 1700 Army Navy Drive. Leadership Center for Excellence is honoring 40 emerging leaders under the age of 40 who demonstrate impact personally and/or professionally. Admission is \$65 for the general public. To register and learn more about the event, visit leadercenter.org.

FRIDAY/DEC. 1

Submission Deadline. Arlington County’s biennial design awards program, DESIGNArlington, is now accepting submissions for great design in new construction, renovations, additions or adaptive re-use projects. Established in 2009, DESIGNArlington seeks to highlight excellence and diversity in the County’s built environment. Residents, property owners, developers, architects and other members of the design community may submit an entry. Visit projects.arlingtonva.us/planning/urban-design/designarlington/.

SUNDAY/DEC. 10

Red Cross Blood Drive. 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. at Temple Rodef Shalom, 2100 Westmoreland St., Falls Church. Refreshments served. Email

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 14

“FLOURISHING AFTER 55”

“Flourishing After 55” from Arlington Office of Senior Adult Programs for Nov. 6-11.

Senior centers: Lee, 5722 Lee Hwy.; Langston-Brown Senior Center, 2121 N. Culpeper St.; Walter Reed, 2909 S. 16th St.; Arlington Mill, 909 S. Dinwiddie St.; and Aurora Hills, 735 S. 18th St.

Senior trips: Belle Grove Classic Manor House tour, Middleton, Monday, Nov. 6, \$18; Annapolis for a Day, Wednesday, Nov. 8, \$8; “A Country Gospel Christmas,” Mercersburg, Pa., Thursday, Nov. 9, \$60 (including lunch); Northern Virginia Christmas Market, Chantilly, Saturday, Nov. 11, \$9 plus \$8 Market ticket. Call Arlington County 55+ Travel, 703-228-4748. Registration required.

Senior centers will be closed Friday, Nov. 10 in observance of Veterans Day.

NEW PROGRAMS

How to create storage space. Monday, Nov. 6, 1 p.m., Walter Reed. Register, 703-228-0955.

Just Playin’ Country. 11:15 a.m., folk music sing-a-long, 1:30 p.m., Monday, Nov. 6, Lee. Details, 703-228-0555.

Tom Cunningham Orchestra, open rehearsal, Monday, Nov. 6, 10 a.m., Walter Reed. Details, 703-228-0955.

Legislative Forum to discuss aging issues for General Assembly, Tuesday, Nov. 7, 9:30 a.m., Fairlington Community Center. Register, 703-228-1700.

55+ Arts & Crafts exhibit, Tuesday, Nov. 7, 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., Langston-Brown. Details, 703-228-6300.

Maximize photo and editing features on smartphone or tablet, Wednesday, Nov. 8, 7 p.m., Arlington Mill. Register early, 703-228-7369.

Fall Festival with music, carnival games, photo booth, food, Wednesday, Nov. 8, 10 a.m.-noon, Arlington Mill. Free. Details, 703-228-7369.

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Creating Balance Advanced planning is one key to holiday harmony.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

The stretch of time between Halloween and the New Year can be a source of merriment and joy, but it can also be a cause of stress, say mental health professionals. According to a study by the American Psychological Association more than 60 percent of Americans found the holiday season a frequent source of stress and fatigue. While joy is still the primary emotion, finding a way to create balance and manage the additional demands brought on by the holiday season can make holidays merry.

“Part of managing stress is identifying the causes of stress and being aware of what is going on with you and what is going to trigger you,” said Maria Mangione, Psy.D., clinical psychologist at Washington Center for Weight Loss Management. “Look back at past holiday seasons and ask, ‘What got you sad? What made you nervous? What made you angry? While we’re outside of the holiday season, if you can look back at past seasons and think about the times that you were stressed, you can come up with a toolbox of things that could be helpful to you.’”

From shopping and budgeting to overeating and dealing with emotional issues,

Mangione says crafting a plan in advance of the holiday season is a key to maintaining balance. “When someone is dealing with people or situations, it’s hard to figure out how to deal with it in the moment,” she said. “If people prepare and have a plan in place, they can go on autopilot.”

“The holidays are a time in which we are potentially confronted with a lot added responsibilities outside of our day-to-day,” added Monica Brand, Ed.D., assistant professor, Department of Counseling,

“The holiday cycle starts with Halloween and . . . can snowball as people get more and more stressed.”

— Rachel Trope, clinical exercise physiologist at Washington Center for Weight Management

Marymount University. “As a result, we can be thrown off and stressed simply because we are not on our usual routine.”

UNRESOLVED FAMILY ISSUES often resurface during the holidays and lead to tension. “Overall, our change in routine, increased interaction with family and the expectations we place on ourselves can all have some impact on our stress levels dur-

ing the holidays,” said Brand. As a result, people tend to brace themselves for whatever may come their way. A more basic method of avoiding stress is both mentally and physically preparing before company, travel, or hosting duties. Many people do this by creating to do lists, getting organized, and planning before the beginning of their holiday.”

Be mindful of limitations and boundaries and limit the expectations we place on ourselves and others, advises Brand. “If you are one who is so caught up in festivities or is easily overwhelmed, setting reminders on your phone, smartwatch, or having someone hold you accountable in taking breaks from the festivities may recharge your batteries,” she said.

Financial imbalance is a common plight during the holiday season, especially when a desire to give generously outweighs one’s budget. “I cannot stress enough how important it is to set a spending limit for each person you will be shopping for ahead of time, before you go shopping,” said Brian Neely, professor of Accounting & Finance at Northern Virginia Community College. “It is very easy to get caught up in the festive moment and spend far more than you really need to before you

even realize what you have done. This will always result in buyer’s remorse and can strip away the true joy that should go hand-in-hand with the customary giving of gifts.”

Neely says that during the holidays most Americans have been programmed to spend the vast majority of their discretionary income all at once. “The worst aspect of this annual spending spree is that it generally goes on a credit card or two or three and it stays on there for a very long time,” he said. “Once a purchase goes on a credit card, you are still paying for those purchased items for many months afterwards with accrued interest. So now, those presents under the tree on Christmas morning are still increasing in total actual cost until you pay that debt off from your credit cards.”

Avoiding store-issued credit cards is a key aspect of maintaining a sane budget, advises Emily Knarr, visiting faculty member in Marymount’s Department of Accounting, Economics & Finance at Marymount University. “They offer so many promotions during the holidays that it is tempting to take advantage of them, especially if your other cards are maxed out and you still need to buy presents,” she said. “However, even if the terms of the cards and promotions are good, it still affects your credit rating

SEE BALANCE, PAGE 15

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On the Top of the Ballot A look at what's on the ballot this Election Day.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

Voters across Virginia will be headed to the polls Tuesday Nov. 7. Here's a look at what's on the ballot:

Race for Governor

Democrat **Ralph Northam** is a pediatric neurologist who was elected lieutenant governor in 2013, when he beat Republican E.W. Jackson. Before being elected to the statewide office, he represented the Eastern Shore in the Virginia state Senate. He's also a veteran, serving as an Army doctor during Desert Storm.

On the campaign trail, Northam talks about a "G3 Program" for Virginia — a plan that would help people get a job, get skilled and give back. If elected, he says he would work to expand industry certification programs, community colleges and apprenticeship programs, an effort that would focus on high-school students who do not attend a four-year college or university. He says he would support a law to make salary information more transparent so women can fight discriminatory practices. And, he says, he would push to expand Medicaid.

Fundraising Total: \$22.8 million
❖ \$3 million from DGA Action

- ❖ \$705,000 from Virginia League of Conservation Voters
- ❖ \$566,000 from Michael Bills of Charlottesville, founder of Bluestem Asset Management
- ❖ \$450,000 from Everytown for Gun Safety
- ❖ \$400,000 from the Democratic Party of Virginia

Republican **Ed Gillespie** is a former chairman of the Republican National Committee who owns the firm Quinn Gillespie & Associates, a bipartisan lobbying firm he started with Jack Quinn.

On the campaign trail, Gillespie talks about cutting the individual tax rate by 10 percent — the first income tax rate since 1972. He wants to prohibit candidates from using money raised for one office to run for a different office, and he says he would extend the length of time administration officials must wait before they can lobby their prior office. If elected, he says he would identify \$200 million in savings during the course of his administration by establishing a new Office of Innovation and Efficiency.

Fundraising Total: \$14.8 million
❖ \$4 million from A Stronger Virginia
❖ \$1.1 million from Let's Grow Virginia
❖ \$1 million from the Republican Governors Association
❖ \$200,000 from Dwight Schar of McLean, NVR Homes
❖ \$133,000 from Jay Faison of Charlotte, N.C., of ClearPath Foundation

Libertarian **Cliff Hyra** is a patent attorney who was unopposed as the Libertarian candidate for governor when party leaders met for their convention in May.

On the campaign trail, Hyra talks about ending the business, professional and occupational licenses tax known as the BPOL. He also wants to end state occupational licensing requirements for cosmetologists, interior decorators and nail technicians. He also wants to privatize the state-owned liquor monopoly and avoid increases to the minimum wage. If elected, he says he would work to exempt the first \$60,000 of household income from the state income tax.

Fundraising Total: \$63,000
❖ \$15,000 from Michael Chastain of Austin, Texas
❖ \$1,000 from John Berresford of Arlington, Federal Communications Commission
❖ \$1,000 from Don Bruckner of Albuquerque, N.M., Guebert Bruckner PC
❖ \$1,000 from Darryl Kerkeslager of Richmond, Virginia Department of Corrections
❖ \$1,000 from Carrie-Anne Mosley of Chantilly, Salesforce.com

Race for Lieutenant Governor

Democrat **Justin Fairfax** is a former federal prosecutor who also owns a dental

practice with his wife. Earlier this year, he beat out two other Democrats who were also running in the Democratic primary: longtime Democratic operative Susan Platt and former federal prosecutor Gene Rossi.

On the campaign trail, Fairfax says he wants to increase the minimum wage and expand workforce training. He wants to implement a state-based loan restructuring program, and increase access to pre-kindergarten education. If elected, he says, he would support expanding Medicaid and eliminate gaps in mental health coverage.

Fundraising Total: \$2.9 million
❖ \$50,000 from Rose McElrath-Slade of McLean, Strategic Resources Inc.
❖ \$35,000 from the National Education Association
❖ \$35,000 from stockbroker Edward Hart Rice of Vienna
❖ \$30,000 from Ivan Jecklin of Henrico, Weinstein Management Company
❖ \$25,000 from Michael Bills of Charlottesville, founder of Bluestem Asset Management

Republican **Jill Vogel** is a state senator representing Upperville who was first elected in 2007 after the retirement of longtime Republican state Sen. Russ Potts (R-27). Earlier this year, she beat out two other Republicans who were also running in the Republican primary for lieutenant governor: Sen. Bryce Reeves (R-17) and Del. Glenn

SEE BALLOT, PAGE 14

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THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

NEWS

What's on the Ballot?

FROM PAGE 13
Davis (R-84).

On the campaign trail, Vogel says she wants to reduce regulations and the tax burden. During the last General Assembly session, she introduced a bill that would have banned all gifts to lawmakers and prohibited candidates from using campaign funds on personal expenditures. She also introduced an effort she calls the "repeal amendment" that would allow states to repeal federal laws and regulations.

Fundraising Total: \$2.5 million

- ◆ \$825,000 from the Republican State Leadership Committee
- ◆ \$496,000 from William Holtzman of Holtzman Oil Corp
- ◆ \$96,000 from Jill Vogel for Senate
- ◆ \$35,000 from cigarette manufacture Altria
- ◆ \$29,000 from Michael Smith of Middleburg, Valley Proteins Inc.

Race for Attorney General

Democrat **Mark Herring** is a former state senator from Loudoun who was elected attorney general in 2013, when he won a 165-vote margin of victory against Republican Mark Obenshain that led to a statewide recount. He has a master of arts in foreign affairs from the University of Virginia as well as a bachelor's degree in foreign affairs and economics, also from UVA. He also received a law degree from the University of Richmond.

On the campaign trail, Herring says responding to the opioid crisis is one of his top priorities. As attorney general, he says he has prosecuted more than 75 cases against heroin dealers and traffickers involving more than 375 pounds of heroin and fentanyl. Herring says he is also leading a project to eliminate Virginia's backlog of more than 2,000 rape

kits. Herring is also chairman of a task force to combat campus sexual violence, and he says he helped put hundreds of child predators behind bars through aggressive prosecutions and digital forensics work.

Fundraising Total: \$6.2 million

- ◆ \$1.5 million from the Democratic Attorneys General Association
- ◆ \$813,000 from One Commonwealth PAC
- ◆ \$300,000 from Everytown for Gun Safety
- ◆ \$150,000 from Michael Bills of Charlottesville, founder of Bluestem Asset Management
- ◆ \$116,000 from the Democratic Party of Virginia

Republican **John Adams** is a former Navy officer who served as an associate White House counsel under former President George W. Bush.

He has a law degree from the University of Virginia, and an undergraduate degree from the Virginia Military Institute. He currently works as an attorney in private practice.

On the campaign trail, Adams says he would work as an advocate against spoofing — fighting phone scammers who impersonate the government, legitimate businesses or local telephone numbers. If elected, he says, he will leverage state resources to do "much, much more" than is currently being done to combat the opioid crisis. He says he would also support "tough but effective" law combatting drug dealing.

Fundraising Total: \$3.4 million

- ◆ \$2.9 million from Republican Attorneys General Association
- ◆ \$225,000 from Republican Party of Virginia
- ◆ \$100,000 from Bruce Gottwald of Richmond of Newmarket Corp
- ◆ \$35,000 from Floyd Gottwald of Henrico of Newmarket Corp
- ◆ \$27,500 of William Goodwin Jr. of Richmond of CCA Industry

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 11

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GET MORE WITH SNAP

Arlington and Alexandria Farmers' Markets accept SNAP/EBT (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) cards for purchases. SNAP/EBT customers can purchase farm fresh produce at local area farmers' markets and get matching bonus tokens to add to their purchases. Virginia Cooperative will be on-site at several local farmers' markets of Alexandria and Arlington to provide more information on SNAP and offer food tastings, prizes and more at the Arlington Farmers' Market, N. 14th and Courthouse Rpad (second Saturday of the month) and

Columbia Pike Farmers' Market, 2820 Columbia Pike (third Sunday of the month).

ONGOING

Aging Matters. 2-3 p.m. Tuesdays on WERA 96.7 LP FM on Arlington's community radio station. Each week host Cheryl Beversdorf interviews individuals with expertise about a broad array of aging related topics affecting the lives of older adults and their loved ones. Visit www.facebook.com/agingmatterswera to listen to programs.

Volunteer Bike Repair Night. First Tuesday of the month, 6-9 p.m. at Phoenix Bikes, Barcroft Park, 4200 S. Four Mile Run Drive. Volunteers gather to refurbish bikes, sort parts or help with essential tasks. No experience necessary.

WELLBEING Balance

FROM PAGE 12

when you take on more debt. It can also be difficult to close the cards once started."

Neely has developed a foolproof way of managing holiday finances. "I always write out a list showing each item I have purchased for each person and track the amounts I have spent on each person separately each night after I have finished shopping for the day," said Neely. "Seeing it all written down on paper can really help you curb your enthusiasm when it comes to frantic holiday spending."

MAINTAINING AN EXERCISE REGIMEN is an important part of maintaining balance during the holidays says Rachel Trope, clinical exercise physiologist at Washington Center for Weight Management. "Physical activity is going to increase mood and decrease anxiety," she said.

Advanced planning is a key to making sure it doesn't fall by the wayside, advises Trope. "For example, if you're traveling, take your exercise clothes and shoes," she said. "If you schedule exercise, you're less likely to push it off and it's more likely to be successful. Get a friend that you can meet and exercise with."

Roll exercise into family traditions. "If you can't get to a gym, try walking and try integrating your holiday traditions into something active," said Trope. "Try to establish new traditions that are active that you can enjoy with your family and not take away from family time or create the stress of having to choose."

Put pen to paper when you develop a plan. "When you come up with a plan, write it down and put it someplace where you can see it and remind yourself of it," said Trope. "Write down what kind of reward you're going to give yourself."

Stress can lead to overeating during the holidays, and although holiday meals are often associated with decadence, not all those dishes are fat and sugar-laden, advises Sara Ducey, professor of Nutrition and Food at Montgomery College in Rockville. "Our holiday dinners feature many nutritious food choices [such as] poultry and fish, sweet potatoes and squash, peas and other green vegetables and salads and fruits," she said. "But there are also starchy, fatty and sugary foods [such as] mashed potatoes, rice dishes, cakes and pies and ice cream, whipped cream and marshmallows."

Ducey recommends variety. "The more types of food you have, the more you and your guests will eat," she said. "This is called the buffet effect. So offer many [colorful] vegetable dishes to make your buffet look beautiful and inviting ... [But] if you see the food, you will eat it. Keep the food away from the table, so guests have to get up to refill their plates."

It is easy to get caught in the chaos of the holidays, but it's important to remember the traditions, values and beliefs that are unique to each family, suggests Brand. "[The holidays] should be a reminder to us that not everyone has the resources, access, or privileged to spend time with the people they love on the holidays," she said.

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L'Arc de Triomphe



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Though I studied French for five years, grades seven through 11 and became quite proficient, this column has nothing to do with French or this most famous of monuments. This column finishes the three-column arc concerning the before, during and after of my bulb installation. Having safely landed on my feet, figuratively and literally, it's time to complete the arc, especially considering my triumph.

The bulbs are all in. No breakage to me or the fixtures, the sconces or to the house. Just a relatively simple and straightforward (for me anyway) installation: on the refrigerator door (the night light), in the living room (in the sconces) and back in the kitchen (the flush-mounted light fixtures in the ceiling). I don't want to over exaggerate my success, but when you have had as many failures – in this context, as I have, one tends to find great joy in having avoided great complications.

I wouldn't say or even admit to beating my chest with great pride because I do understand the level of difficulty here but, previously I have given myself a nickname when a similar task at hand has met with similar success: Taras Bulba, who had nothing to do with bulbs other than part of his name included b-u-l-b. For some reason, I also had the knowledge that Yul Brynner played the title role in a 1962 film of the same name, but had no other information of substance other than I remember him being bald – which I'm not.

As to what I remember about what I was thinking when we purchased a 250-year-old farmhouse on two acres in Montgomery County back in 1992: the price was reasonable/we could afford it, it was two acres of land in an extremely desirable county/location, it was close to I-95; and it was about time in our lives that we bought our first home. As to what I was supposed to do next; soon after we moved in, we had a two-day party (to accommodate people's availability); for those two days I held a clipboard and took notes as many of our friends made casual observations/suggestions about what work needed to be done, inside the house and out.

We needed tile in both bathrooms – since there was none. We needed plumbing fixtures in one shower/tub – since there were none. We needed a "one-fixture rough-in" for a washing machine – since there was none. We needed central air conditioning and ducts – since there was none. We needed phone jacks/telephone wiring since there was only one phone outlet for the entire house. We needed a new oil boiler since the unit in the basement was from "the year one" (to use one of my late mother's expressions). We needed chimney repairs and liners. We needed an upgraded electrical panel.

As for the property/grounds; do you think a lifelong renter with zero interest, aptitude or experience had any of the tools necessary to maintain two acres? That's a rhetorical question if there ever was one. In over my head doesn't begin to scratch the surface of the depths of my immersion.

But my wife, Dina, loved the house. It reminded her of Chester County in Pennsylvania where she grew up. And the price offered good value. Within one minute of our initial visit to the house, after walking through the living room across the old-fashioned wide pine floor boards pass the cooking fireplace and stepping up into a formal dining room with another fireplace, I knew Dina was sold. Fifteen minutes later we exited the house; didn't flush a toilet, didn't turn on a faucet, didn't flick a light switch, did nothing except walk around. We made an offer the next day, and the rest is basically this column.

As much as I thought I knew, little did I know what I was actually getting myself into. It's been 25 years and I'm still way better in French than I am in homeowner. I don't call myself Taras Bulba for nothing. I call myself Taras Bulba for something: bulb replacement. It's not much I realize, but it's the best this man can do.

C'est la vie.

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

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