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Fairfax CONNECTION



'We Want to Go Far, Serve More People'

NEWS, PAGE 10

Biden, McKay Win Fairfax Dems Poll

NEWS, PAGE 4

'Most-Used Road in City for Pedestrians'

NEWS, PAGE 9

Britepaths honored supporters, volunteers in its new home. Pictured, from left, back row: Dave Sands and Mark Lipari, and (front row) Pamela Davis, Catherine Read, Lisa Whetzel and D'Ivonne Holman.

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PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION OPINION, PAGE 6 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 12 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 14

MARCH 21-27, 2019

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AnnaBelle Leung of Lee High School, left, won first place in the Biomedical and Health Sciences category and was a grand prize nominee. Her project was “Comparing Hand Grip Strength Between Students with Low Incidence Disabilities and Neurotypical Students.”



Woodson High School students Yash Amin and Alex Pfoser of Fairfax with their project, “Decreasing the Cost of a Market Competitive 3D Printer.”

PHOTOS BY STEVE HIBBARD/THE CONNECTION

Talent on Display at Regional Science Fair

670 students from 27 high schools compete for nine Grand Prizes to go to International Fair in Phoenix, Ariz.

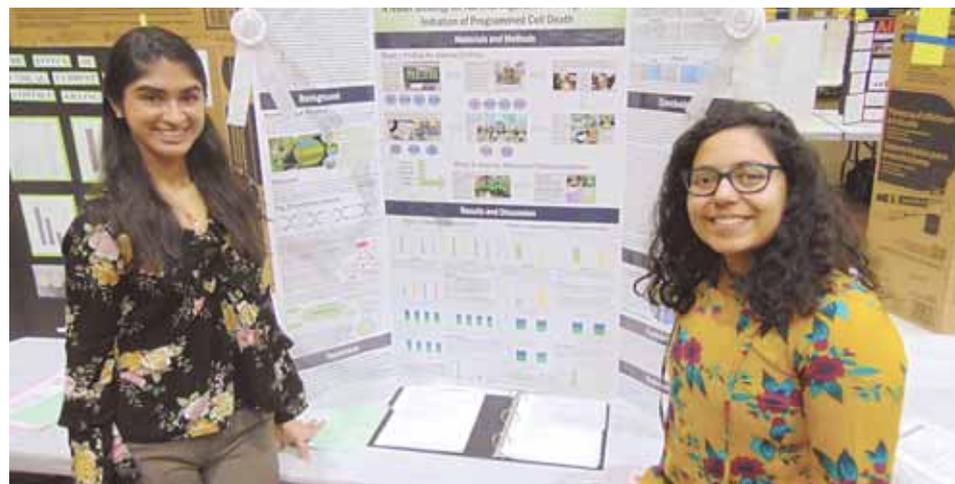
BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

The gym at Robinson Secondary School resembled a mini version of the United Nations. At the 64th Annual Fairfax County Regional Science and Engineering Fair held Sunday, March 17, some 670 students from 27 high schools competed for nine Grand Prize slots and the chance to go to the International Science and Engineering Fair sponsored by Intel in Phoenix, Ariz. later this year.

The categories ranged from chemistry to robotics, intelligent systems to mathematics, earth and environmental sciences, biomedical and health sciences, to STEM disciplines and engineering.

After a public viewing from 1-3 p.m., they held an awards program with members of the Fairfax County School Board and Region Superintendents where prizes were awarded to the Grand Prize winners and Corporate and Professional Organization award winners.

The students' 428 projects were judged three times Saturday by 200 category judges. About 250 students won awards from 50 corporate and professional organizations that were sponsored by government agencies, nonprofits and think tanks. Prizes ranged from \$1,000 cash awards to scholarships and internships, gift cards and even a Raspberry Pi Zero Starter Kit. One project on Cystic Fibrosis Wearable Technology from Madison High students Thaissa Peixoto and Alex Gurski won a patent preparation and filing from the law firm Hunton and Williams LLP in the District.



Hayfield Secondary School students Sarah Syed, Miamar Burgos-Rosario of Alexandria and (not present) Saijai Supanklang won first place in Microbiology and are grand prize nominees. Their project was “Cyanocide: A Novel Strategy for Harmful Algal Bloom Mitigation via Initiation of Programmed Cell Death.”

2019 Grand Prize Winners

Computational Biology & Bioinformatics – David Toomer, Hayfield Secondary School;
Embedded Systems — Rachel Naidich, Thomas Jefferson High School;
Embedded Systems — Rishabh Misra and Divjot Bedi, Thomas Jefferson High School;
Energy: Chemical — Kaien Yang, Thomas Jefferson High School;
Microbiology: Sarah Syed, Miamar Burgos-Rosario and Saijai Supanklang, Hayfield Secondary;
Physics and Astronomy — Luke Mrini, Lake Braddock Secondary;
Physics and Astronomy — Justin Wang, Chantilly High School;
Robotics and Intelligent Machines — Jerry Wei, Oakton High School;
Biomedical Engineering — Justin Hu, Madison High School.

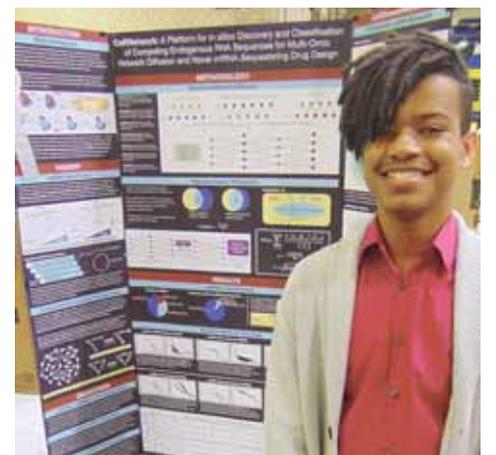
FOR THE GRAND PRIZES, nine projects were allotted slots in the International Science and Engineering Fair sponsored by Intel Corporation in Phoenix, Ariz. Because of the size and reputation of Fairfax County, those projects can go straight to the International Fair without having to go through state competition. This includes an all-expense paid trip for students to compete for up to \$4 million in prize money.

According to Dr. Jenay Sharp Leach, fair director and Pre-K-12 Science Coordinator: “In Fairfax County Public Schools, we pride ourselves on providing students with a rich, inquiry-based science experience in the classroom so all of our students have the opportunity to experience science as real scientists where they are asking questions,

they are collecting data and analyzing that data and forming their own conclusions. And Science Fair is a really beautiful manifestation of this inquiry process in that the students truly have access to open inquiry and can explore what they want to explore.”

She added: “So, the students who come to the fair represent the best of the best from all of our high schools as well as our private schools in Fairfax County. And they are the elite level of scientific investigation.”

DR. SHARP LEACH said one of their traditions is to choose a quote from a famous scientist or engineer to inspire the work of the fair. This year's quote comes from Stephen Hawking who said, “Scientists have become the bearers of the torch of discov-



David Toomer of Hayfield Secondary won first place in Computational Biology and Bioinformatics. His project was “CER Network: Network Classification of RNA Interactions for New Drug Design.”

ery in our quest for knowledge.”

She continued: “There are cancer cures in this room right now, there are climate change advocates who are going to stop climate change in this room right now and it's very inspirational.”

Added Tim Harazin, Elementary Science Specialist with Fairfax County Public Schools who helped coordinate the fair: “At our Regional Science Fair we are proud to have so many professional organizations and companies provide judges and awards. The benefit is, first, there is an award for the students, many times monetary, but other options, but I think the bigger issues is these organization judges are role models for the students. They show the students that a science fair is not just a one-shot deal, but it could lead to a career in science, engineering or related fields, and I think it's really great that the students get to see the people who are living those careers and get advice from those people. So, that's what I see is the really big advantage. That's why I'm not as concerned that every organization gives us money because I know they're giving us time and they're giving us role models.”



Congressman Gerry Connolly (D-11) welcomes his VIP guests to his 25th Annual St. Patrick's Day Celebration and Straw Poll event.



Too many candidates to fit in one frame. Candidates for every local office available in 2019 crowded the stage and the space in front during Congressman Connolly's 25th Annual St. Patrick's Day event.

PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

Biden, McKay Win Dems Straw Poll

More than 50 Democrats will vie for Fairfax County offices on June 11, Primary Election Day.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

Equal parts fundraiser and fundraiser, U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) hosted a packed house at his 25th Annual St. Patrick's Day Bash at the Northern Virginia Community College's Ernst Cultural Center in Annandale on Friday night, March 15.

What started as an intimate gathering at Connolly's Fairfax home when he was first elected to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in 1995 has evolved to become the largest Democratic gathering in the Commonwealth.

"We've been coming to this event for years," said Marvin Solberg of Fairfax. "We love the energy, being around people who are interested in, and working to help, the community and for the country."

There was definitely a lot of energy in the room, as people mixed and mingled and enjoyed the corn beef and cabbage fare.

"I promise, we've gotten special dispensation to eat meat tonight," joked Connolly, referring to the Catholic tradition of abstinence from meat during the Fridays of the Lenten season. In case there were attendees of that religion who did not quite believe the Congressman's declaration and wanted to keep the faith in this regard, salmon was also on the menu, along with plenty of desserts and beverages to keep the high spirits flowing.

AMID THE CROWD of Connolly's constituents, friends and family, the greater majority of Democratic candidates running for local offices in 2019 were on hand, as well. From incumbents to opponents, the diverse mix of locals seeking seats for Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, State Senators and Delegates, Fairfax County Commonwealth Attorney, Fairfax County Public School Board and Sheriff worked the room, spreading their messages and just



The winner – at least according to the Straw Poll. Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay "won" his election to Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors with 57.5 percent of the 500 ballots cast at Connolly's St. Pat's Day Bash. "But it's a great start," he said.

"getting to know people and letting them get to know us," said one candidate.

After the welcoming speech, Connolly gave equal air time to the four candidates running for the Board of Supervisors chairmanship – a seat long held by Sharon Bulova who will retire after her 10th year in the position and more than 30 years in service to the county.

Vying to head the Board are Jeff McKay, currently the Lee District Supervisor and the candidate endorsed by both Connolly and Bulova, Ryan McElveen, the At-Large FCPS Board member, Alicia Plerhoples, a law professor at Georgetown and co-founder of progressive grassroots organization Virginia Democracy Forward, and Tim Chapman, a Fairfax businessman who has served on the Virginia Housing and Development Authority, initially as an appointee by former Governor Terry McAuliffe.

Part of the evening's action was a Straw Poll for both the position of Board of Su-

perators Chair, and for the attendees' choice for President of the United States in the 2020 election. More than 500 "ballots" were cast at the bash – "Now let's see this kind of turn out for the local June 11 primaries, the Nov. 5 elections, and definitely for next year's Presidential selection!" urged Connolly. As the ballots were being counted, Connolly and Bulova took to the stage and began reading the names of all of the candidates from Fairfax County and even Prince William.

"Come on up!" Connolly instructed, as Bulova kept reading the impressively long list of candidates. The assembled group challenged even the widest-angle lens when it was time to snap the photo.

TO CHEERS from his supporters, Jeff McKay was the clear winner among the party-goers for the Chairman's post with 57.5 percent of the votes. Plerhoples took second place with 29.4 percent. McElveen



A poignant moment as Fairfax County Board of Supervisors chair Sharon Bulova listens to the campaign speeches of the candidates who are seeking her seat. After more than 30 years of service to the county and 10 years as the Chairman, Bulova will be retiring at the end of the year.

and Chapman came in third and fourth respectively, but McElveen said he wasn't concerned. As an At-Large School Board member, McElveen says he is the only candidate for the position who has run for a county-wide office. "I have support from all parts of Fairfax County."

As for the "election" for United States President, former Vice President Joe Biden was shown the love, defeating his closest opponent, Sen. Kamala Harris (D-CA), by a margin of 38.3 percent to 17 percent. Newly declared candidate Beto O'Rourke of Texas came in third in the Straw Poll.

Sadly, "no luck of the Irish tonight for O'Rourke," laughed a Bernie Sanders supporter, whose preferred candidate finished sixth in the shortened-to-eight field.

Connolly is serving his sixth term representing Virginia's 11th District, "but there is still so much to do, and with more Democrats, and more new energy, I know we can accomplish so much more."

BULLETIN BOARD

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

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Children who will be 5 years old on or before Sept. 30, 2019, are eligible to attend kindergarten. Find the correct neighborhood school by entering your address at boundary.fcps.edu/boundary/. Complete a packet of registration forms found at www.fcps.edu/it/forms/enroll.pdf or in the school office. Gather supporting documents: proof of residence in the school boundary, a certified copy of the child's birth certificate, parent/guardian photo ID, and any custody orders. Certificate of physical exam and immunization will be required before the student may start school, but is not required for registration. Parents who choose to delay enrollment in kindergarten by one year are required to notify the school in writing of their intent. Learn more at www.fcps.edu/registration/general-registration-requirements. **Union Mill Elementary** is currently registering new students for the 2019-20 school year. Find registration forms in the Union Mill Elementary office or online at www.fcps.edu/sites/default/files/media/forms/enroll_0.pdf. Call 703-322-8500 or email lrmill@fcps.edu to make an appointment to bring completed registration forms and supporting documentation to school. Kindergarten Orientation will take place on Monday, April 1, 4-5 p.m.

THURSDAY/MARCH 21

Spring Equinox Celebration. 7-9 p.m. At Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Join us for a celebration of the first day of Spring, with an indoor medicine wheel and prayer tie crafting. Visit the website: uof-2019-spring-equinox.eventbrite.com

FRIDAY/MARCH 22

Technology Fridays in March. 10 a.m.-noon at

the Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring, Entrance 1, Room 100. Join the Parent Resource Center for this series of technology workshops presented by FCPS Assistive Technology Services. Register for one or all of the workshops. Explore a variety of technology tools to support student success and independence with reading and writing in the digital classroom and at home. Register at www.fcps.edu/index.php/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center. Call 703-204-3941 or email prc@fcps.edu for more.

❖ March 22 - Assistive Technology to Support Communication

Film: "From Paris to Pittsburgh." 6:30-8:30 p.m. At Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Rd., Oakton. View the film "From Paris to Pittsburgh." From coastal cities to America's heartland, "Paris to Pittsburgh" celebrates how Americans are demanding and developing real solutions in the face of climate change. And, as the weather grows deadlier and more destructive, they aren't waiting on Washington to act. Sponsored by Climate Action Group of (UUCF) and Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions (FACS). Contact: lgrowe@verizon.net.

SATURDAY/MARCH 23

Annual Meeting: Friends of the Fairfax Station. 11 a.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. Richard Slattery, Senior Director of Policy and Research of the National Railroad Passenger Corp. (AMTRAK) will discuss the current state and future prospects of passenger rail services in the U.S. Slattery's presentation will take place as the keynote speaker following the annual membership meeting of the Friends of the Fairfax Station. The meeting and the Forum are free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be available. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 13

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¹ To qualify for this offer, you must have a new or existing Platinum Savings account and enroll the account in this offer between 01/21/2019 and 03/22/2019. This offer is subject to change at any time, without notice. This offer is available only to Platinum Savings customers in the following states: CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, MD, NJ, NY, SC and VA. In order to earn the Special Interest Rate of 2.08% (Special Rate), you must deposit \$25,000 in new money (from sources outside of Wells Fargo Bank, N.A., or its affiliates) to the enrolled savings account and maintain a minimum daily account balance of \$25,000 throughout the term of this offer. The corresponding Annual Percentage Yield (APY) for this offer is 2.10%. The Special Rate will be applied to the enrolled savings account for a period of 12 months, starting on the date the account is enrolled in the offer. However, for any day during that 12 month period that the daily account balance is less than the \$25,000 minimum, the Special Rate will not apply and the interest rate will revert to the standard interest rate applicable to your Platinum Savings account. As of 12/10/2018, the standard interest rate and APY for a Platinum Savings account in CT, DC, DE, FL, GA, MD, NJ, NY, SC and VA with an account balance of \$0.01 to \$99,999.99 is 0.03% (0.03% APY) and with an account balance of \$100,000 and above is 0.05% (0.05% APY). Each tier shown reflects the current minimum daily collected balance required to obtain the applicable APY. Interest is compounded daily and paid monthly. The amount of interest earned is based on the daily collected balances in the account. Upon the expiration of the 12 month promotional period, standard interest rates apply. Minimum to open a Platinum Savings account is \$25. A monthly service fee of \$12 applies in any month the account falls below a \$3,500 minimum daily balance. Fees may reduce earnings. Interest rates are variable and subject to change without notice. Wells Fargo may limit the amount you deposit to a Platinum Savings account to an aggregate of \$1 million. Offer not available to Private Banking, Wealth, Business Banking or Wholesale customers. ² Annual Percentage Yield (APY) is effective for accounts opened between 01/21/2019 and 03/22/2019. The 11-month New Dollar CD special requires a minimum of \$25,000 brought to Wells Fargo from sources outside of Wells Fargo Bank, N.A., or its affiliates to earn the advertised APY. Public Funds and Wholesale accounts are not eligible for this offer. APY assumes interest remains on deposit until maturity. Interest is compounded daily. Payment of interest on CDs is based on term: For terms less than 12 months (365 days), interest may be paid monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or at maturity (the end of the term). For terms of 12 months or more, interest may be paid monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually. A fee for early withdrawal will be imposed and could reduce earnings on this account. Special Rates are applicable to the initial term of the CD only. At maturity, the Special Rate CD will automatically renew for a term of 6 months, at the interest rate and APY in effect for CDs on renewal date not subject to a Special Rate, unless the Bank has notified you otherwise. Due to the new money requirement, accounts may only be opened at your local branch. Wells Fargo reserves the right to modify or discontinue the offer at any time without notice. Offer cannot be combined with any other consumer deposit offer. Minimum new money deposit requirement of at least \$25,000 is for this offer only and cannot be transferred to another account to qualify for any other consumer deposit offer. If you wish to take advantage of another consumer deposit offer requiring a minimum new money deposit, you will be required to do so with another new money deposit as stated in the offer requirements and qualifications. Offer cannot be reproduced, purchased, sold, transferred, or traded. ³ The Portfolio by Wells Fargo program has a \$30 monthly service fee, which can be avoided when you have one of the following qualifying balances: \$25,000 or more in qualifying linked bank deposit accounts (checking, savings, CDs, FDIC-insured IRAs) or \$50,000 or more in any combination of qualifying linked banking, brokerage (available through Wells Fargo Advisors, LLC) and credit balances (including 10% of mortgage balances, certain mortgages not eligible). If the Portfolio by Wells Fargo relationship is terminated, the bonus interest rate on all eligible savings accounts, and discounts or fee waivers on other products and services, will discontinue and revert to the Bank's then-current applicable rate or fee. For bonus interest rates on time accounts, this change will occur upon renewal. If the Portfolio by Wells Fargo relationship is terminated, the remaining unlinked Wells Fargo Portfolio Checking or Wells Fargo Prime Checking account will be converted to another checking product or closed.

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Fairfax County's Bold Housing Agenda

BY MICHELLE KROCKER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLIANCE

Last month, a panel appointed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors representing a cross-section of community stakeholders and housing advocates finalized their recommendations for Phase II of the county's Community-wide Housing Strategic Plan. Not since 2005, when then Chairman Gerry Connolly convened the Affordable Housing Preservation Action Committee, has there been such a comprehensive analysis of the state of affordable housing in Fairfax County.

Over the last two years, advisory groups and ad-hoc committees have been engaged in a top-to-bottom review of administrative, land use and regulatory policies and programs that impact affordable housing preservation and production. The scope of the plan encompasses the entire continuum of housing needs from persons with disabilities, seniors on fixed incomes and formerly homeless households to affordable homeownership.

The Housing Strategic Plan process began in June 2017, when the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) conducted an online county-wide housing survey and four community outreach sessions. Phase I of the Plan, which was adopted by the board in June 2018, identified 25 strategies related to land-use and zoning policies, allocation of existing financial resources, and administrative processes that are outdated or in need of revision to expedite affordable housing approvals. A timeline for the work on these strategies shows a completion date of 2020.

In Phase II, the ad-hoc Affordable Housing Resources Panel focused on two board-defined objectives: identify an annual goal for the production of new affordable units; and recommend a source of funds for the financial resources needed to achieve that goal. When completed, the housing plan will be incorporated into one comprehensive county strategic plan that integrates multiple existing agency plans to chart a blueprint for the future of the county.

RECOMMENDATIONS include housing

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Is a Tax and Spend Mindset Driving People Out of the Area?

To the Editor:

Why is the Fairfax County government competing with private business? Fairfax County Supervisor John Foust failed to answer this question and twisted the issue into one of customer satisfaction at the Great Falls budget meeting held March 14. For example, Fairfax County owns and maintains 8 golf courses with 80 people (FTEs) supporting them eligible for full pension benefits and other rich County employee benefits. Other examples

include owning multiple water theme parks and wedding venue facilities. However, the County points out that the taxes collected are not sufficient to fund all the programs to the level they desire. Fairfax County is plagued by a 40 percent shortfall in pension expense funding for Fairfax County employees. Therefore, an ongoing increase in property taxes is inevitable with another 33 FTEs in the planning and development budget stating they have an "ambitious agenda" ahead.

This tax and spend mindset is driving people out of the area. Fairfax County is also proud to report they fund more park and rec activities than the rest of the entire County. Why, when we cannot afford to fix the roads are we hiring 109 new employees the County can't afford. Mr. Foust doesn't consider: 1) the continual burden of increasing property taxes, 2) unfunded pensions, 3) and the lost opportunity for private business to participate and pay those property taxes. Mr. Foust wants to

continue with the status quo and ride out the three-year State imposed moratorium so he can again push for the Meals Tax and other tax increases. Satisfaction surveys should ask: Are you willing to increase your Fairfax County property taxes to fund activities that could be transferred and delivered by a private business? I suggest we prioritize what taxpayers want after we fully fund the basics (what we need).

Ethel Pascal
Great Falls

strategies that have been promoted for some time by advocates. They include:

- ❖ A goal to produce a minimum of 5,000 new homes, affordable to households earning no more than 60 percent of the area median income over the next 15 years. (It should be noted that the analysis identified the need for 15,000 units over the next 15 years);

- ❖ Dedicate the equivalent of an additional penny of the real estate tax (approximately \$24 million) to support public investment in these units beginning in FY2021, as well as retain the current funding of a half penny to support preservation strategies;

- ❖ Consider a countywide policy on commercial contributions to affordable housing production. Currently, this policy exists only for the Tysons redevelopment area;

- ❖ A commitment of "no net loss" of existing market affordable units (those serving households up to 60 percent of area median income);

- ❖ Promote opportunities to co-locate affordable housing with county capital facilities.

We especially applaud the recognition of the need for more robust preservation strategies.

FORTHCOMING recommendations from the EMBARK Housing Advisory Group provide additional strategies for preservation incentives in both redevelopment and new construction proposals which could be a template for preservation efforts countywide. The arrival of Amazon HQ2 should heighten concern among county leadership for vulnerable communities in Fairfax County that are located in close proximity to Pentagon City. Areas like Seven Corners and Baileys Crossroad, as well as the Richmond Highway corridor have all been approved in recent years for transit enhancements, mixed-use development and increased density. Amazon's announcement could be the catalyst that triggers investment in these areas that are home to thousands of low-income, minority households who live in the older, market-affordable housing located in these corridors. Recent Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RHA) investments in Parkwood and Murraygate that preserved over 400 units in the Lee and Mason Districts are steps in the right direction, but much more is needed.

LOOKING AHEAD: Currently, the county has over 650 affordable units in the pipeline with a development in the Dranesville District

in Herndon, a senior housing project in the Lee District, and a development at the Huntington Metro Station in the Mt. Vernon District. Two sizeable parcels of county-owned land located in Lee District and Springfield District are being processed for transfer to the RHA as sites for housing development. And plans to refinance the Crescent and Wedgewood apartments will result in additional funds for housing development, or expansion of Bridging Affordability, the County's local rental subsidy program.

All this bodes well for housing affordability in Fairfax County. For too long, the county's budget has shortchanged investments in new construction and preservation. An inventory developed by Virginia Tech's Center for Housing Research shows that only 9,000 market-affordable units, affordable to a family of four earning approximately \$66,000 annually, remain in the county. However, more than 68,000 households in the county earn no more than \$50,000 annually. Rents are rising faster than incomes, and families are experiencing rent burdens, overcrowding or are being priced out of the county.

NEXT STEPS: In March, recommendations from the Phase II Panel will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration and approval. Afterwards, the final package of housing recommendations will be given to the County Executive to be incorporated into the board's budget guidance for FY2021. This will occur when the Board adopts the FY2020 budget on May 7. Nothing is certain until board adoption. But advocates throughout the county feel that in this very consequential election year, when so many candidates for the Board of Supervisors have identified housing affordability as a priority issue, this is the year for significant housing wins. To be successful, housing advocates must build a coalition of support that encompasses the business community and anchor institutions like healthcare facilities, education advocates, supporters of coordinated multi-modal transit and land use planning, organizations promoting compact, mixed-use development and entities working for social justice and racial equity. This plan is bold and forward-thinking, and in this election year a community-wide campaign will be critical for adoption.

For more, see www.fairfaxcounty.gov/housing/communitywideplan.





PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

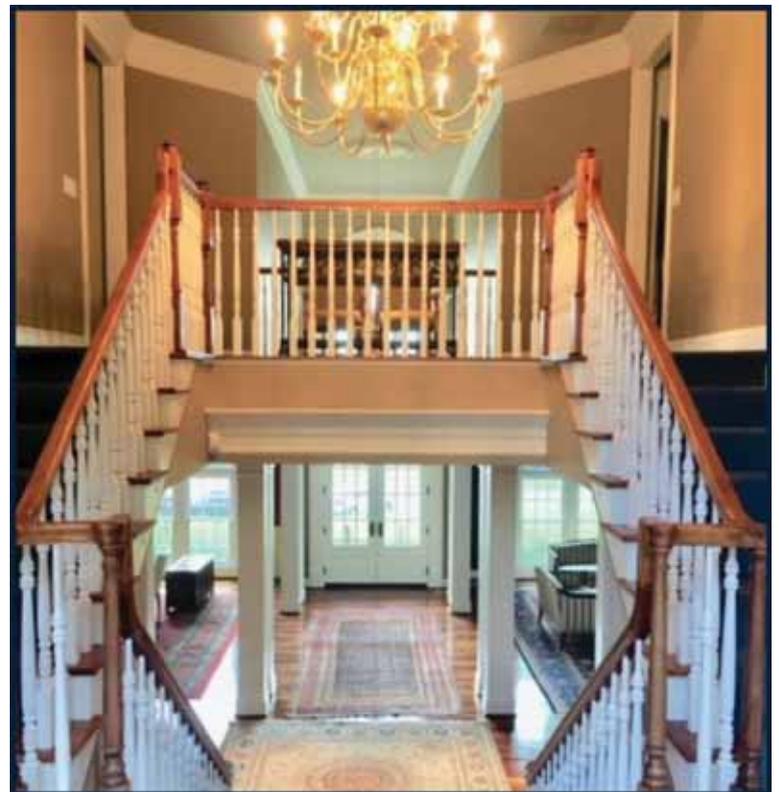
Virginia House Democratic Leader Eileen Filler-Corn and School Board Members Ryan McElveen and Dalia Palchik with members of Students Demand Action.

Students Demand Action Meet Elected Officials

On Thursday, March 14, the Northern Virginia Chapter of Students Demand Action held a meeting, but this was not a typical gathering for the organization. SDA was also marking the one year anniversary of the student walk-outs after the massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. To commemorate this occasion, the NoVA chapter of SDA was joined by several elected officials, including Virginia House Democratic Leader Eileen Filler-Corn, Del. Kathy Tran and Fairfax County School Board Members Dalia Palchik and Ryan McElveen.

“These students give me so much hope for our future,” said Filler-Corn, who has spent years both as

an elected official and private citizen advocating for gun safety legislation. “I know that with their leadership, we can make Virginia and the country as a whole, a safer place.” Last year, the House Democratic Caucus established the Safe Virginia Initiative (co-chaired by Delegates Filler-Corn and Murphy), a task force established by the Virginia House Democratic Caucus which addresses gun safety and focuses on gun violence prevention. SVI held a variety of events across the Commonwealth on these issues and later issued a report with their findings and suggested policy solutions, many of which became legislation that was introduced in 2019 session. Unfortunately, none of the bills made it out of subcommittee.



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Explaining Death to Children

Breaking down a difficult topic and helping children grieve.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

Rosalie Ward, recalls a hot and sticky summer evening in 1975. She was watching re-runs of the television show “Bewitched” with her twin sister in the living room while her mother cooked dinner in the kitchen. Ward remembers hearing the ring of the family’s rotary telephone. The next sound she heard was a shriek and then violent sobs from her mother.

“My mom had gotten a call that her brother, my uncle, had been killed in a car crash,” remembers Ward. “I was six at the time, but most of my memories of that evening are of my mother crying uncontrollably for the hour or so until my dad came home from work. The two of them disappeared behind closed doors. I just remember being terrified and feeling alone.”

Whether prolonged or sudden, unforeseen or expected, experiencing the death of a loved one is never easy. While grief can weigh heavy on adults, it can overwhelm and confuse young children. And although death is an inevitable part of life, finding the words to discuss or explain it to young children can challenge many parents.

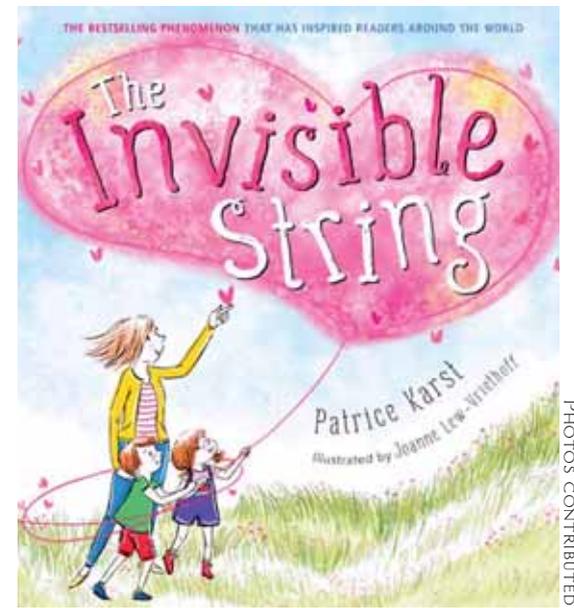
“Whether you’re talking about a family pet or a grandparent, it’s important that parents or caregivers understand that children grieve too and that death has to be discussed,” said Ward, who is a family therapist in Reston.

One of the most significant mistakes a parent or caregiver can make is not being honest with a child about death, said Carolyn Lorente, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Northern Virginia Community College. “My biggest worry is when people hide the fact that a loved one died by saying that they went on a trip, and then the child sees the adult crying or being sad,” she said. “That doesn’t give the child a chance to process it, but by including them in a developmentally appropriate way, we are teaching that we can feel big feelings, and with the support of friends and family, we can still thrive.”

Helping a child to understand they didn’t cause the death could be an important part of the conversation, suggests Carol Barnaby, LCSW-C, a therapist in Bethesda. “Children often see the world as revolving around them,” she said. “Reassure them that their loved one dying was not their fault and that the death didn’t happen because they had a mean thought, misbehaved, or didn’t visit enough.”

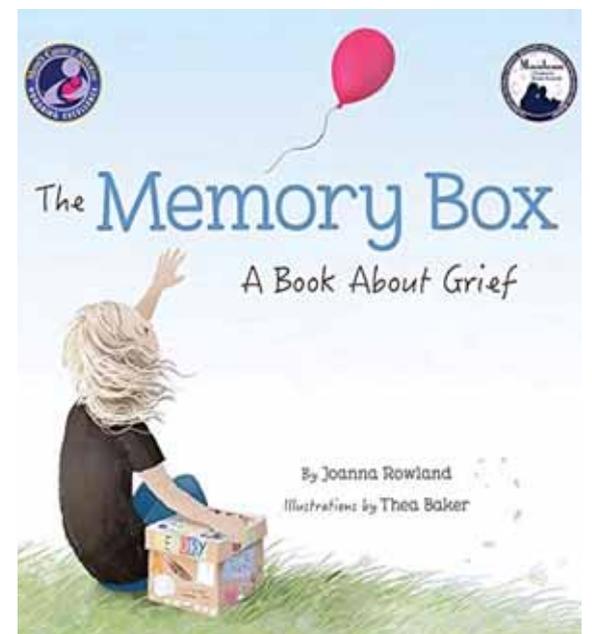
“Death often brings anxiety in children and they wonder if they will die too,” added Barnaby. “Explaining that although the loved one has just died, death is not contagious and that the child will likely live a very long life.”

Clear, concise word usage is also important because young children might not have the language skills to discuss their feelings and emotions, adds Lorente. “Let the child engage in talking about fond memories of the deceased using pictures, making favorite recipes, or visiting a favorite place,” she said.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

“The Invisible String” by Patrice Karst is a book that could help parents explain death to their children.



Bethesda-based therapist Carol Barnaby, LCSW-C suggests “The Memory Box” by Joanna Rowland as a tool to help children understand the concept of dying.

Use concrete and authentic terms when discussing it, continued Barnaby. “Avoid euphemisms like ‘Grandma is resting’ or ‘has gone away,’” she said.

“These sayings confuse children and may cause them anxiety over [the notion] that they could die if they fall asleep; or that other loved ones may not come back.” Use clear language like ‘Grandma has died.’”

Young children often believe death is reversible, advises Jerome Short, Ph.D., professor of psychology at George Mason University. “You could describe how a body stops working and the person who died isn’t coming back.”

Be open to having an honest conversation about it, continued Short.

“Encourage children to ask questions and tell them you will help them handle any bad feelings or problems that happen,” he said.

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‘Most-Used Road in City for Pedestrians’

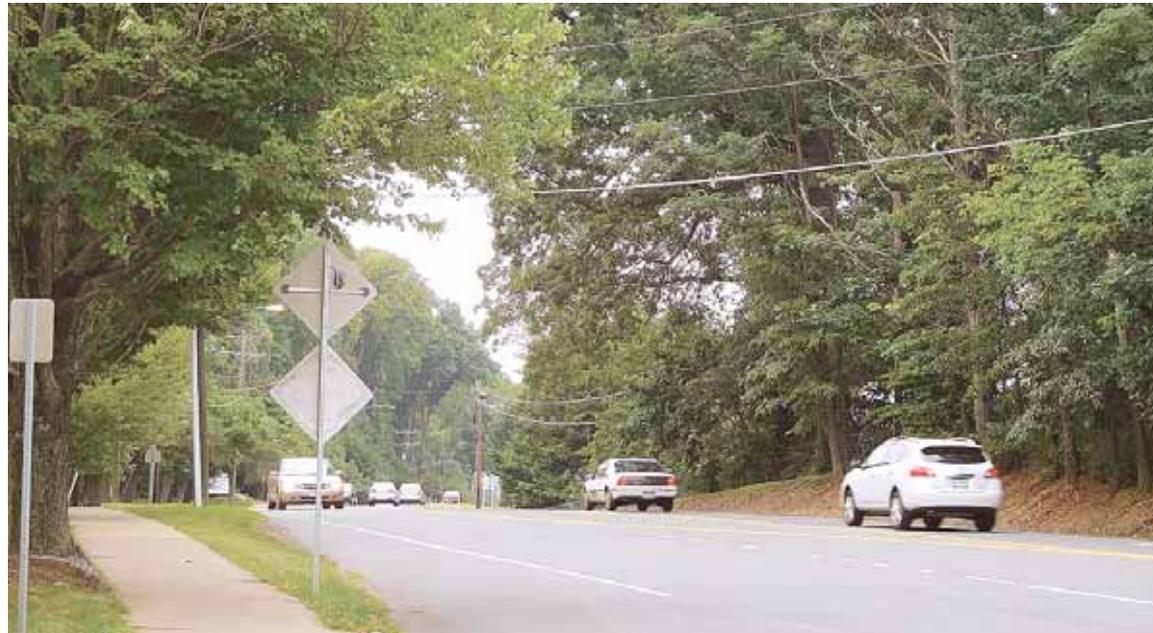
Council Greenlights Old Lee Highway Phase II.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

As things stand now, every few blocks of Old Lee Highway have a different look and feel. So, without widening the road or disturbing too many trees, the City of Fairfax wants to make it more cohesive with a plan that works well for diverse users, including vehicles, buses, bicyclists and pedestrians.

And at a recent Fairfax City Council meeting, the members awarded a contract not to exceed \$815,731 to Rinker Design Associates (RDA) for phase II engineering services for this project.

Of the total \$20 million estimated cost, Fairfax has already received \$14 million in funding – \$7 million in revenue sharing



During spring, green trees form a scenic background for vehicles driving on Old Lee Highway.

money, \$2 million from the City and \$5 million from the NVTA – and is applying for the last \$6 million needed from revenue sharing.

Councilman Michael DeMarco asked about the likelihood of the City getting this last bit of revenue-sharing funds. And Transportation

Director Wendy Block Sanford replied that “Top priority are projects that have already received revenue-sharing money,” so she didn’t anticipate Fairfax having any problems in this respect.

Old Lee runs 1.5 miles from North Street to Fairfax Circle and

is one of the City’s main streets. Some 13,000 vehicles a day travel on it, including those going to Daniels Run Elementary, St. Leo the Great Catholic School and Fairfax High.

THIS TWO-LANE ROAD also SEE OLD LEE HIGHWAY, PAGE 11

leads to multitudes of homes, businesses and stores, plus the police station, Sherwood Community Center and Van Dyck Park. Some sections have on-street parking, and there are 21 bus stops.

The Old Lee Highway Multimodal Improvements project will improve this road from Layton Hall Drive to Ridge Avenue by providing continuous bike and pedestrian facilities along that corridor. It will do so via a combination of sidewalks, shared-use paths and separated bicycle lanes, where possible. The crosswalks will be high-visibility and the sidewalks will be ADA-compliant.

The project divides Old Lee into three segments: Layton Hall to Daniels Run Elementary, Daniels Run to Cornell Road, and Cornell Road to Ridge Avenue. RDA already completed phase I work, including developing conceptual plans for each road segment.

In phase II, it will prepare preliminary, 30-percent and 50-percent design plans, determine more precise right-of-way impacts and further involve the public and

BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

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'We Want to Go Far, Serve More People'

Britepaths honors supporters, volunteers in its new home.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Britepaths provides food, financial education and workforce skills to Fairfax County residents struggling to make ends meet. And on Feb. 28, this nonprofit honored its supporters and volunteers with a special event showing its appreciation for all they do.

It also enabled attendees who hadn't been there previously to see Britepaths' new home. On Oct. 1, the organization moved from its old location near the county courthouse to 3959 Pender Drive, Suite 200, in Fairfax. Office hours and food pantry are Monday-Friday, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., or by appointment – 703-273-8829.

When Executive Director Lisa Whetzel first joined this nonprofit 14 years ago in 2005, it was called Our Daily Bread and had just three staff members, including her. Britepaths now has a staff of 21 and had clearly outgrown its previous office.

"Our old space was 1,200 square feet, with one office for one person, another room for three people, an open area with cubicles and a multipurpose room," said Whetzel. "The new location is 3,900 square feet. It has six offices, and two of them are spacious enough for two or three people."

It also contains a multipurpose room for social events, community gatherings, board meetings and client classes. There's a room for small, staff meetings and client counseling, which the old building didn't have. In addition, there's a large, office space with cubicles, plus a countertop area with multiple workstations for volunteers and interns to use.

"All the furniture is donated," said Whetzel. "And all the people who used to work from home now have a place to be, if they want to. Or, if it's better for their schedules, they can come here and get some work done between their meetings. And our food pantry is four times the size of our old one."

ADDRESSING THE EVENT ATTENDEES, Whetzel quoted an old, African proverb saying, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." She then illustrated it by relating that, in 2018, Britepaths' 934 volunteers put in 10,410 hours of work valued at a total of \$329,126.

"Together, we put food on people's tables, keep a roof over their heads and keep their electricity on so they can stay warm and their children will have lights on so they can do their homework," she said. "We also empower people with the skills to better manage their money and to get higher-paying jobs. And we empower them to believe in their future."

"We believe in the work we do here at Britepaths because we see the impact it has," continued Whetzel. "Eighty percent of the people in our one-on-one programs achieve their goals. We believe that everyone wants to live a useful and fulfilling life



(Back row, from left) are Dave Sands and Mark Lipari, and (front row, from left) are Pamela Davis, Catherine Read, Lisa Whetzel and D'Ivonne Holman.

From left, Britepaths Director Catherine Read and Executive Director Lisa Whetzel in front of photos of past and current staff members.



where they can work and raise their kids in a safe environment. Our programs – with the help of our donors and volunteers – set them up for long-lasting self-sufficiency."

Thanking all of Britepaths' staff and board members, volunteers, financial supporters and those who give in-kind services, such as computer help, she encouraged them to keep contributing in whatever way they can. "We want to go far; we want to serve more people," said Whetzel. "The need is grow-

ing in Northern Virginia. Help us go far together."

Agreeing, Britepaths Board of Directors President Dave Sands said, "We have the energy to keep moving forward and see what we can do for our community. Look around this building and see the smiling faces in the portraits on the walls. They're our clients." Also thanking the donors, staff and volunteers, he told them, "None of this would be possible without you."

"Together, we put food on people's tables, keep a roof over their heads and keep their electricity on so they can stay warm and their children will have lights on so they can do their homework."

—Britepaths Executive Director
Lisa Whetzel

Next to speak was Britepaths instructor Mark Lipari. "There, but for the Grace of God, go I," he said. "There's not much difference between our clients and us. And after a hard day's work, seeing them smile puts a smile on my own face."

Originally with Volunteer Fairfax, Pamela Davis has volunteered with Britepaths since 2017 and is a financial mentor. What pleases her the most, she said, is that "I'm actually helping people; they're getting something out of what I'm telling them. And whenever my clients have a big win, I feel like I won, too."

Also speaking was Britepaths Director of Development D'Ivonne Holman. "We're celebrating 35 years, this year, and we could not have done this without your support, work, time, classes, mentoring and donations. And you'll hear from some of the clients you've impacted at our Artful Living event in May."

IT'S SET for May 2, from 7-10 p.m., at Country Club of Fairfax. The festivities will include an art sale and juried art show, live music, food and drink and a live auction. For more information, go to <https://britepaths.org/>.

"We really feel like, in our new space, we're at a juncture where we can take this organization to the next level, able to serve even more people," said Whetzel. "We have financial stability, an amazing staff and dedicated volunteers, so we're thinking about how else we can help. We'll hold a visioning retreat this year to contemplate our next steps toward an even brighter path."

Also there was Natalia Ermicio, a college student and part-time administrative assistant with Britepaths. "It's such a positive environment," she said. "We give free services, from the bottom of our hearts, because we know they'll help change people's lives."

"I know the clients' names and stories," she continued. "When they go from not being able to cover their expenses to telling me, 'I saved \$40 this month,' that's a huge step for them. And it's our pleasure to help them."

NEWS Old Lee Highway

FROM PAGE 9
other stakeholders. It's currently anticipated that one, traffic-signal modification will be needed at the Old Lee Highway/Layton Hall Drive intersection, plus a new traffic signal at the intersection of Old Lee Highway and the Sherwood Center.

At an earlier work session, Mark Gunn with RDA called it an "extremely exciting project, unusual because of all the different uses there. Today, there are discontinuous sidewalks and large areas of unused asphalt, and we want to create an environment that encourages everyone – from experienced bicyclists to moms with children – to reach their destinations safely."

Similarly, Ken Wright with Toole Design – also working on this project – said the protected bike lanes would be "completely separated from traffic and from pedestrians, to reduce opportunities for conflict. There are lots of driveways and intersections along this corridor, and we want bicyclists and pedestrians able to be seen by motorists."

Mayor David Meyer said Old Lee is the "most-used road in the City for pedestrians – and not just for people going to destinations, but just out walking." Calling it "beautiful," Councilwoman Jennifer Passey said it's her favorite road in the City and a "great introduction" to Fairfax. She also anticipated the sidewalks and bike lanes to help with vehicle congestion during school drop-off times.

THE COUNCIL MEMBERS also discussed the possible undergrounding of utilities, but they were told it would add greatly to the project cost, as well as to the time it would take to complete. The way it is now, Sanford expects construction to begin around spring 2021. Later on, the evening City Council approved the phase II contract to RDA, Councilman Jon Stehle also noted what a "special road" it is, saying, "We need to make both a safety and a visual statement there." And Councilwoman Janice Miller said she was "pleased to see we're talking about pedestrian facilities on both sides of the road." Councilwoman Sang Yi asked how long phase II would take, and both Sanford and Gunn said a year, followed by another year for right-of-way acquisition. Stehle then made a motion to approve the contract, seconded by Miller, with the Council approving it unanimously.

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FRIDAY/MARCH 22

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FRIDAY-SATURDAY/MARCH 22-23

Bye Bye Birdie. Friday, 8 p.m.; Saturday, 2 p.m. at Church of the Good Shepherd (in the Grand Hall), 9350 Braddock Road, Burke. A musical comedy for the whole family. \$15 adult, \$10 student (18 or younger). Purchase tickets at www.goodshepherdplayers.com or call 703-323-5400.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/MARCH 22-24

Marvel Universe Live. At EagleBank Arena, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Marvel Universe LIVE is performing at EagleBank Arena. \$20. Show times Saturday, March 23 at 11 a.m., 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.; Sunday, March 24 at 1 p.m., 5 p.m.; Saturday, March 30 at 11 a.m., 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and Sunday, March 31 at 1 and 5 p.m. Visit marveluniverselive.com/tickets.

SATURDAY/MARCH 23

MCAA-Faculty Chamber Ensembles Recital. Noon at George Mason Community Arts Academy, 4260 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax. At Monson Grand Tier III. Free. The Mason Community Arts Academy brings enriching arts instruction to the community through inspiring and innovative lessons, classes and summer programs in music, theater, visual arts, and film and video, which are open to all ages and levels. It also offers programs focused on teacher education and enrichment. Additionally, extensive outreach programs in music and theater have been established to reach under-resourced populations both in our area and abroad.

Off the Wall. 2-5 p.m. at the Art and Design Building, George Mason University Fairfax Campus, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Family-friendly digital and fine arts festival featuring a mac-and-cheese bar and local brewery tastings. Every Spring Mason opens its state-of-the-art Art and Design Building to alumni, parents, and the public for a family-friendly celebration to benefit the visual arts at Mason. \$30 regular; \$20 Mason alumni, faculty, and staff; free for children 13 and under. Email kfranko@gmu.edu.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/MARCH 23-24

Virginia Opera: Madama Butterfly. Saturday, 8 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m. at GMU's Center for the Arts' Concert Hall, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Virginia Opera closes its season with Puccini's magnificent tragic masterpiece, *Madama Butterfly*. Revealing the depth of human emotion through lyrical duets and heartbreaking arias including the famous "Un bel di," this poignant and timeless tale of unrequited love and betrayal is riveting, gripping audiences right up to the intense, emotional finale. Sung in Italian with English supertitles. \$54-\$110. Visit cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/virginia-opera-madama-butterfly.

SUNDAY/MARCH 24

Winterfest - Ham Radio Fair. 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale Campus, Richard J. Ernst Cultural Center, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. The Vienna Wireless



PHOTO COURTESY OF MATSIKO WORLD ORPHAN CHOIR

Matsiko World Orphan Choir

Join Franconia UMC for a concert by the Matsiko World Orphan Choir. Matsiko has performed at sports events, the Rose Bowl, Disneyland, and Mount Rushmore. All are welcome to this free concert. Sunday, March 31, 5-6:30 p.m. at Franconia United Methodist Church, 6037 Franconia Road, Alexandria. Visit franconiaumc.org or call 703-971-5151.

Society, an amateur radio club, will hold Winterfest, the National Capital Area Ham Radio Fair, featuring: Ham Radio and Electronics vendors and flea market; amateur radio licensing exams; large indoor and outdoor exhibit areas, with free parking. \$10. Email winterfest2019@viennawireless.net or visit www.viennawireless.net.

Faculty Artist Series: Jim Van Slyke

3 p.m. at the Harris Theatre on GMU's Fairfax Campus. Professor Jim Van Slyke is a nationally recognized vocal coach and performing artist with successful studios in the Washington D.C. area and New York City. He has taught applied voice-musical theater at Ithaca College, The Catholic University of America, and Shenandoah University. Free and open to the public. Visit cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/faculty-artist-series-jim-van-slyke-musical-theater

Faculty Artist Series: Anna & Friends

7 p.m. at the Harris Theatre on GMU's Fairfax Campus. Anna Balakerskaia has shared her mastery of the piano around the world from the great concert halls of her native Russia to the great halls of Europe and the Americas. Her versatility has made her much in demand as soloist, collaborator and chamber musician. Free and open to the public. Visit cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/faculty-artist-series-anna-amp-friends.

TUESDAY/MARCH 26

"Say Her Name." 7:30-10 p.m. At Johnson Center Cinema, George Mason University, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Free. Visiting Filmmakers Series: "Say Her Name: The Life and Death of Sandra Bland." Screening/Q&A. Investigation into what happened to Bland, who died in police custody after a traffic stop.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 27

Jazz Combos/Latin American Ensemble Concert

8 p.m. in the deLaski Performing Arts Building on GMU's Fairfax Campus. Performance by the Mason Jazz Combos, under the direction of jazz pianist, Wade Beach. A highpoint of students' time

at George Mason University is Jazz 4 Justice, an annual concert that combines the Mason Jazz department with local law communities to raise money for the jazz program and public access to justice. Free. Visit cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/jazz-combos-latin-american-ensemble-concert.

THURSDAY-SATURDAY/MARCH 28-30

Our Country's Good. Thursday-Friday, 8 p.m.; Saturday 2 and 8 p.m. in the deLaski Performing Arts Building, A105, TheaterSpace, on GMU's Fairfax Campus. In June 1789 in an Australian penal colony, a marine lieutenant puts on a play to celebrate the king's birthday, using the camp's English convicts as his cast of characters. Few of them can read, let alone act, and the play is being produced amidst food shortages and barbaric punishments - juxtaposed against the civilizing influence of theatrical endeavor. Contains language that some may find offensive. \$30 adults, \$15 students, staff, seniors and groups. Visit cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/our-country-39-s-good.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/MARCH 29-30

Mason Dance Company Gala. 8 p.m. in the Concert Hall on GMU's Fairfax Campus. The Gala Concert is Mason Dance Company's crowning season event featuring a program of works by contemporary professional choreographers. This year the guest choreographers include the Spanish modern ballet dancer and choreographer, and currently artistic director of the Berlin State Ballet, Nacho Duato; Greek choreographer Andonis Foniadakis, who has collaborated with many ballet companies worldwide as both dancer and choreographer; and Lucinda Childs, an American postmodern dancer/choreographer and actress. \$28 adults, \$15 students and seniors, \$10 groups. Visit cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/mason-dance-company-gala-at-the-center-for-the-arts.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/MARCH 29-31

August: Osage County. Friday-Saturday, 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m.

at James Lee Community Center, 2855 Annandale Road, Falls Church. When the large Weston family unexpectedly reunites after Dad disappears, their Oklahoma family homestead explodes in a maelstrom of repressed truths and unsettling mysteries. This play contains strong language and adult content. \$17-\$20. Email tickets@providenceplayers.org, call 703-425-6782 or visit www.providenceplayers.org.

Bye Bye Birdie

Friday-Saturday, 8 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m. at Church of the Good Shepherd (in the Grand Hall), 9350 Braddock Road, Burke. A musical comedy for the whole family. \$15 adult, \$10 student (18 or younger). Purchase tickets at www.goodshepherdplayers.com or call 703-323-5400.

SATURDAY/MARCH 30

NoVaTEEN Book Festival. 9:30 a.m. at Marshall High School, 7731 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. The NoVaTEEN Book Festival is back with a day full of panels, games, and signings with over 30 bestselling and emerging Young Adult authors. Learn more on the official festival website. The event is free and open to the public; tickets and schedule at novateenbookfestival.com.

Spring Fling Features Alice McDermott

At the Springfield Golf and Country Club. Alice McDermott, winner of the National Book Award for *Charming Billy*, will be the featured speaker at the AAUW's annual Spring Fling. This fundraiser, which includes a luncheon and silent auction, supports AAUW programs such as fellowships, leadership development, lifelong education for women, the Legal Advocacy Fund and other similar projects. \$40; reservation deadline is March 22. Email Absaberman@aol.com with questions or SpringFlingAAUW@gmail.com to make a reservation.

Chili Cookoff. 1 p.m. at Hopsfrog Grille, 6030 Burke Commons Road, Burke. Hopsfrog Grille's annual Chili Cookoff benefiting the Fort Belvoir Fisher House (www.fisherhouse.org) features chili tasting and raffle. Contestant pre-registration by March 17; \$10 per chili entry. Chili tasters: \$10 and a vote for best chili. Call

703-239-9324.

Faulty Artist Series: Julianna Nickel & James Nickel. 4 p.m. in the Harris Theatre on GMU's Fairfax Campus. Julianna Nickel is Adjunct Professor of Flute at George Mason University and a recipient of Mason's 2017 Distinguished Teacher of the Year. James Nickel has served as Third horn with the National Symphony Orchestra since 2008. Free and open to the public. Visit cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/faculty-artist-series-julianna-nickel-flute-amp-james-nickel-horn.

The Mason Dance Fête. 5:30 p.m. in the deLaski Performing Arts Building on GMU's Fairfax Campus. Held prior to the March 30 Dance Gala Concert, The Mason Dance Fête is an intimate benefit reception featuring a Q&A with Lucinda Childs and student showcases exploring the featured dances. All net proceeds from The Mason Dance Fête go towards School of Dance scholarship funds. Proceeds from The Mason Dance Fête go towards School of Dance scholarship funds. \$95 for reception and performance. Visit dance.gmu.edu/mason-dance-fete.

Live Music: Lesson Zero. 8 p.m.-midnight at The Mixing Bowl (formerly J W and Friends), 6531 Backlick Road, Springfield. Free. Visit www.jwandfriends.com.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/MARCH 30-31

Children's Book Sale. Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday, 1-3 p.m. at City of Fairfax Regional Library, 10360 North St., Fairfax. Thousands of gently read books and non-book media organized by categories including picture books, early readers, nonfiction, chapter books, young adult, etc. \$0.50-\$2. Some specials \$3-\$4. Check or cash only. Plenty of free parking in library garage. Free admission. Email FriendsOfFairfaxCityLibrary@cox.net.

Marvel Universe Live. At EagleBank Arena, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Marvel Universe LIVE is performing at EagleBank Arena. \$20. Show times are Saturday, March 30 at 11 a.m., 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and Sunday, March 31 at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. Visit www.marveluniverselive.com/tickets.

SUNDAY/MARCH 31

Book Launch: City of Peace. 11:15 a.m. at the Fairfax Presbyterian Church, 10723 Main St., Fairfax. A launch party for City of Peace by Henry G. Brinton will take place as part of a "Morning of Music and Mystery" and will begin in the church's Fellowship Hall with a short talk and several readings. The event will end with a book-signing. Copies of City of Peace will be available for purchase. Visit henrygbrinton.com.

Faculty Artist Series: Dr. Dorotea Racz, Cello

3 p.m. in the Harris Theatre on GMU's Fairfax Campus. Croatian cellist Dorotea Racz has concertized throughout Europe, United States, Central, and South America as a soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician. Free and open to the public. Visit cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/faculty-artist-series-dr-dorotea-racz-cello.

Aquila Theatre: A Midsummer Night's Dream

7 p.m. at GMU's Center for the Arts, Concert Hall, Fairfax Campus. Aquila Theatre returns with a magical and witty production of A Midsummer Night's Dream. Shakespeare's timeless tale of love with its many complications never fails to entertain and remind us of his literary genius. A pre-performance discussion with a member of the company begins 45 minutes prior to the performance. \$44, \$37, \$26. Visit cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/aquila-theatre-a-midsummer-night-39-s-dream for tickets.

BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 5

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 27

Wellness Workshop – Virtual Dementia Tour. 3:30-5 p.m. at Insight Memory Care Center, 3953 Pender Drive, #100, Fairfax. A trained facilitator will guide participants outfitted with patented devices that alter their senses while they try to complete common everyday tasks and exercises. The Tour enables caregivers to experience for themselves the physical and mental challenges those with dementia face, and use the experience to provide better person-centered care.

This session is geared for family caregivers, and respite will be available. Register online at www.insightmcc.org, or contact Lindsey Vajpeyi at 703-204-4664 or lindsey.vajpeyi@insightmcc.org.

Fairfax County and Franconia-Springfield Parkways Public Meeting. 7 p.m. at Willow Springs Elementary School, 5400 Willow Springs School Road, Fairfax. The Fairfax County Department of Transportation (FCDOT) is inviting the public to attend a second round of public meetings on the Fairfax County and Franconia-Springfield Parkways Alternatives Analysis and Long Term Planning Study, and provide feedback to help further refine potential improvements to the corridor. The meetings will begin with a formal presentation at 7 p.m., followed by a question and answer period. For residents who cannot attend the public meetings, FCDOT will upload the meeting presentation to the study webpage by April 4 and invite feedback via an online survey.

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SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them. -Werner Heisenberg

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NEWS

Public Health Officials Launch TB Awareness Campaign

Tuberculosis still a health issue in Fairfax County.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

Tuberculosis is not a disease the general population of Northern Virginia worries about. Public health officials in the counties of Fairfax, Arlington, Prince William and Loudoun, and in Alexandria have teamed up for a region-wide tuberculosis awareness campaign to dispel myths and address the stigmas that are often barriers to testing and treatment for this curable disease.

“While significant progress has been made toward controlling and curing TB, it remains one of the most common infectious diseases worldwide and is still a public health problem in Northern Virginia,” Fairfax County Health Director Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu said. “We want our communities to know that it’s a disease that can be prevented and cured.”

Dr. Barbara Andrino, Fairfax County Public Health Physician – Tuberculosis, says that the numbers have declined over the last several years, but there is still an average of about 70 cases confirmed annually and officials suspect that several hundred thousand of our citizens may be living with “latent TB,” that can become active if left untreated.

“Latent TB will show no signs or symptoms,” warned Andrino. Any number of reasons can cause the disease to activate and begin to grow again. Chemotherapy, diabetes, and immuno-suppressing diseases are just a few of the culprits that can kick the dormant TB cells into high gear.

THE SYMPTOMS of active TB can include a cough that lasts for three or more weeks, unexplained weight loss, night sweats, fatigue, fever, and coughing up blood.

“That’s another reason why people among the most at risk should consider testing prior to the onset of symptoms, and should certainly inform their physicians of their risk factors if they start to exhibit these symptoms,” Andrino urges.

So just who is at risk, and how do they get tested? While TB is not the easiest of diseases to contract, county health officials say that if you have one or more of the following risk factors, you have a greater chance of contracting the TB infection:

- ❖ Lived or spent time with someone with active TB

TB

- ❖ Lived or worked in a congregate setting like a shelter, long-term care or assisted living facility, or jail

- ❖ Worked in a healthcare setting

- ❖ Are homeless, or have experienced homelessness within the last two years

- ❖ Lived or spent significant time in a country where TB is common.

To expand on that last risk factor, Andrino reminds that “Fairfax and Northern Virginia is made up of a wonderfully diverse population, people who have come from all around the world and continue to travel back and forth.”

With 140 countries where TB is a serious health issue and almost 70 percent of Virginia’s foreign-born population living in the Northern Virginia area, it’s no wonder that Fairfax County tops the list in Virginia with the highest numbers of the infections.

There are two types of tests that will determine if there is TB bacteria present in your body: a skin test and a blood test.

A medical provider or a call to the Fairfax County Health Department at 703-246-2433 will provide information about getting tested and which type of test is the preferred method for an individual. Tests are low-cost, and in some facilities and instances, administered for free.

THE FACT that there is still a stigma associated with the infection, and that people who are actually actively ill may not suspect TB, hampers detection, treatment and fighting the spread of the disease.

Andrino and her colleagues in the Fairfax Health Department and surrounding jurisdictions will be redoubling their efforts to break that cycle of stigma and misinformation with a combination of grassroots outreach, print, transit and digital advertising, scheduled to run through April 14, 2019.

“Remember, Tuberculosis is a bacterial disease. It is not something to be ashamed of. It can be cured when diagnosed and when the patient takes the full course of the treatment as prescribed, 910” says Andrino.

More information is available on the county’s website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov, search “Health Department.”

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them. -Werner Heisenberg

BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 13

Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/study/fairfax-county-parkway.

Fairfax County Park Authority Board Meeting. 7:30 p.m. in the Herrity Building, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 941, Fairfax. The Park Authority Board is a 12-member board appointed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to set policy and establish strategic policy and direction for the Park Authority. Open to the public. For information regarding meeting agendas, Park Board members, opportunities for public comment, or to view meeting materials, board minutes and archival materials, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/boardagn2.htm or call 703-324-8662.

THURSDAY/MARCH 28

Building Resiliency in the Faith Community. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; registration and breakfast start at 8:30 a.m. at Little River United Church of Christ, 8410 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Network with local faith leaders and public safety officials; learn what resources and assistance are available and how to access them; understand the current status of hate crimes in Fairfax County, their causes and the effect they have on the faith community at-large; hear new ideas for creating both a welcoming and secure environment at a place of worship – both during and outside of religious times; and learn to prepare for and respond to potential emergencies. Lunch will be provided. Free; space is limited; register at www.eventbrite.com/e/building-resiliency-in-the-faith-community-conference-tickets-56336207112.

FRIDAY/MARCH 29

State of Children's Health Legislative Update Breakfast. 8:30-10 a.m. at Northern Virginia Community College - Medical Education Campus, Springfield. Join the MCCP Foundation to hear the latest on the state of healthcare for children locally, across Virginia, and at the Federal level. Meet with legislators, health professionals, business leaders, and community advocates to discuss current news and updates from experts in the field. \$25-\$35. Visit mccpfoundation.org/event/legislative-update-breakfast-march-29-2019/ to register.

Teen Depression: What Parents Need to Know. 10 a.m.-noon at the Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring, Entrance 1, Room 100. This workshop presented by Dr. Kathryn DeLonga, PsyD, a Licensed Clinical Psychologist and Director of the Mood Brain and Development Unit Psychological Treatment Program at the National Institute for Mental Health, will highlight the prevalence of major depressive disorder and how to identify depression in teenagers. A brain-based understanding of depression will be presented along with elements of recovery and strategies for treatment.

Call 703-204-3941 or visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center for more or to register.

Language Immersion Lottery Registration. Immersion lottery registration will close on March 29 for kindergarten. A SIS parent account is required to register. More information about Immersion programs and information meetings can be found at www.fcps.edu.

SATURDAY/MARCH 30

Northern Virginia Housing Expo. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Washington-Lee High School, 1301 N. Stafford St. Dozens of exhibits and workshops will provide all the information needed to rent an apartment or purchase a first home at the 2019 Northern Virginia Housing Expo, a regional housing fair. Free. Visit www.novahousingexpo.org for more.

MONDAY/APRIL 1

Scholarship Application Deadline. The Bull Run Civil War Roundtable in Centreville, Va., a 501 (3)c organization, offers a \$2,000 scholarship to a public or private high school senior who resides in Fairfax, City of Fairfax, Manassas, Manassas Park, or Prince William County. Applicants should plan to attend college in the fall of 2019.

Information and application instructions can be found at bullrunwrt.org.

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Eight Daze and Seven Sleepless Nights



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

On Monday, I take one of our "Buff Boys" (beige-colored cats), "Chino," to the vet for his bi-weekly glucose-monitoring day. This is his new routine as "Chino" was recently diagnosed with diabetes. In addition, since his diagnosis, I've been injecting him with insulin twice a day, subcutaneously ("sub-q") going on six weeks now. Though he's eating well, he's lost weight; apparently, it's related.

Without getting too sad, too soon, he looks frail and the stares and meows he gives me seem to be pleas for help which, other than providing food, water and touch, I am clueless as to what else I can do. I'm not anticipating the worst yet, but when I pick him up at the vet later in the day, I'm not expecting the best either.

On Wednesday, I go for my first CT scan in eight weeks. More significantly, it will be my first "CT" since I began immunotherapy. I don't quite know what to expect; although I know what I hope.

The fact is I've neglected to ask my oncologist what his expectations were: specifically relating to a time frame about the immunotherapy's effectiveness; and as we've moved on, we have a few other questions: Will the infusion have any effect after just eight weeks, generally? Is there a protocol/length of treatment which a patient is supposed to have before success or failure is determined? Are there any indications other than scan results which might contribute to an assessment of the drug's impact on my tumors? Is it possible that the tumors in my lungs might have a different reaction (shrink, stable, grow) than my "Adam's apple" tumor? If so, then what? Are there any side effects from my bi-weekly infusions which could cause my treatment to stop?

Beyond these types of questions, my oncologist prefers not to discuss scenarios. The short summary is: we're looking for some kind of clarity and/or guarantee. Unfortunately, for cancer patients, clarity and guarantees ended on the date of your diagnosis.

On Friday, I have my next scheduled infusion (with pre-infusion lab work on Wednesday). Door to door, depending on how busy the Infusion Center is, and depending how long it takes the pharmacy to mix/prepare my drug, it will be approximately three hours until I'm back home. The experience is not tedious nor is it torture.

Compared to the eight-hour days I had to endure in the early, heavy-duty days of chemotherapy, this time commitment is a breeze. And when one considers the relatively minor side effects – so far, the routine is quite bearable. (I just need the immunotherapy to be effective.)

On the following Monday, we see my oncologist. Typically, we don't see him until later in the week on Friday. In the 10-day interim, my oncologist will email results of the scan – with his assessment – and attach the radiologist's report so that when we see him, we're aware and prepared.

However, in this week's particular instance he had availability on Monday, five days post-scan, and not on Friday. As such, we are seeing him so soon after the scan occurs that he might not have any results to email us before our appointment.

This means that we'll be going into the appointment cold, so to speak. Which means we'll be extremely anxious as we sit in the examining room waiting for his knock asking if it's OKAY for him to come in. And then staring at his face as he enters looking for any kind of hopeful sign that the treatment has worked.

And that's what this week-plus-one-day will be: a struggle; about me, for my wife, about our life together and about one of our cats.

Each of the four days/four events itself would be stressful and thought-provoking enough. Having them occur one right after the other, simultaneously almost, is like adding insult to injury. It's bad enough to begin with and it's potentially even worse how it might end with – really bad news.

Through it all, somehow we must remain positive. There's no future in being negative.

To invoke the late Yogi Berra, who said in 1973 while managing the last-place New York Mets: "It ain't over 'till it's over." (And of course they went on to win the National League pennant.)

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



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www.HeritageHuntHomes.com



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Free Community Shred Event – Saturday, March 23 – 9 AM to 12 PM

