

CONNECTION

Burke♦Fairfax♦Springfield♦Fairfax Station

Picnic shelters with maximum capacity for 120 to 168 people available for full day rental or short term use on Great Lawn at the new Central Green at Laurel Hill Park in Lorton.

HOMELIFESTYLE

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PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

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NEWS

Central Green Opens at Lorton's Laurel Hill Park

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

A few trail hikers, dog walkers, disc golfers, and cyclists were happy to chance upon the opening of the new Central Green at Laurel Hill Park in Lorton on Sept. 23. Without fanfare or opening ceremony, the park entrance across the historic Barrel Bridge was unblocked providing access to parking for Giles Run Disc Golf and Laurel Hill Park users.

The three million dollar project, begun in 2019 after public funding by voter approved park bonds, includes three picnic shelters, an accessible asphalt loop trail, and parking; with storm water management, and tree and plant landscaping.

The Great Lawn, surrounding the pavilions, accommodates frisbee throwing, kite flying, races, other games and special events. Picnic shelters are available for full day reserved rental, or shorter term open use, with tables and grills; each with accommodation for 120 to 168 people.

The Great Meadow, enclosed

within and along the paved loop trail, will be managed as a wild meadow with native plants, providing an opportunity for trail users to see native grasses and wildflowers and the native insects and birds which they host.

THE LAUREL HILL PARK Volunteer Team (PVT) established a pollinators' garden in one island of the parking lot to showcase many of those same native plants found in the meadow, and the bees, butterflies, and birds that visit them. The garden's focus gives the public an example of native garden landscaping; a concept gaining momentum as a way to sustain wildlife. The philosophy: native gardens re-create an appreciation of the natural world and the interdependency of native wildlife. Many of the plants were sourced from Earth Sangha,

a non-profit native plants nursery in Springfield which has a cooperative relationship with the Park Authority. Visitors will see the interaction of plants and pollinators though it will take time for the garden to fully establish and blossom. Meanwhile volunteering opportunities will include watering

and weeding. First-time gardening volunteer Jenne May, HR Specialist, Kingstowne, enjoyed the open air exercise her volunteering provided, saying, "I learned so much and I don't have to go to the gym at all."

A second phase of the park project, tied to the November election park bond question, will include a fourth picnic pavilion and restroom facilities. Other Park Authority work in the vicinity includes restoration of a wild meadow area and a reforestation section reclaimed from invasive plants and trees. Establishment of an archeology teaching area is under consideration.

THE CENTRAL GREEN, part of the larger Laurel Hill Park, is located at 8780 Lorton Road in Lorton, adjacent to the historic Barrett House and Barrel Bridge. Laurel Hill Park includes the Giles Run Disc Golf course; Laurel Hill Equestrian Center, across Lorton Road; trails favored by mountain bikers and dog walkers; and trail links to the Gerry Connolly Cross County Trail.

Information on volunteering for the Laurel Hill Park volunteer team



PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Dirt on hands and knees testify to the hard work of volunteer gardeners Aron Yabes, Fairfax Station; Craig and Lisa Schapira, Burke; Janet Vincent, Springfield; and Kate and Phil Stoneman, Tysons Corner.

(PVT) can be found at www.volunteer.fairfaxcounty.gov; information on the team's activities is shown on Facebook, Laurel Hill Park Ents page. Pavilion reservations are made through FCPAPicnicApplications@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703 324-8732.



First time gardener Jenne May, Kingstowne, appreciated the open air exertion as a gym visit replacement.

lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known

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NEWS

Advancing Diversity and Inclusion Through Changes in TJ Admissions Newest proposed merit lottery admissions policy fuels concern.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Top-level discussions concerning proposals by Fairfax County Public Schools leaders and School Board members to increase the population of underrepresented students of color at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST) have flown fast and furious the last four weeks. In the most recent plan in the process dated Oct. 8, a revised Merit Lottery proposal is on the table. To be accepted into the Merit Lottery, students would need to meet minimum requirements and be randomly selected within their pathway according to Superintendent Scott Brabrand in his Oct. 8 presentation.

As background, since TJHSST is a regional Governor's school within Fairfax County Public Schools, an applicant's pathway to the school is not only as a Fairfax County Public Schools student but also as a student residing in Loudoun, Arlington, Falls Church, Prince William and if attending a private school. The School Board reached consensus at its Oct. 8 regular meeting that the TJHSST admission tests and application fee should be removed.

RESPONSES to the proposed revisions by community members were split. Some who spoke at the meeting cited concern over a two-tiered admission process, impact on the prestigious school and unintentional discrimination while others applauded the effort to increase admittance for underrepresented groups.

The process to change TJHSST Admissions Policy began Sept. 15 when Brabrand presented his recommendations to the School Board to improve diversity by establishing a Merit Lottery System. On Sept. 23, FCPS presented a Community Town Hall with Brabrand to hear feedback on proposed policy changes to TJHSST Admissions. An additional three events related to the matter occurred the first full week in October.

At the Oct. 6 School Board Work Session, the Superintendent's newly revised Admissions proposal showed a rolling admissions process to keep a class of 500 students. Based on a holistic review of their applications, the highest-evaluated students would be offered an opportunity to fill 100 of the available 500 seats.

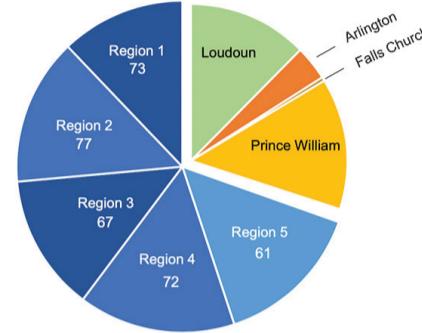
The remaining 400 seats would be filled by a merit lottery, with FCPS region slots proportional to student enrollment. To be accepted into the Revised Merit Lottery, students would need to meet minimum requirements that remained unchanged: student portrait sheet, problem solving essay and experience factors.

The highest-evaluated 100 students would be offered admissions. The remaining students would be selected randomly within their pathway.

At the Oct. 7 Community Town Hall on the Admissions Policy, Brabrand said, "We know historically over decades we have



- FCPS: 350 seats (proportional based on student enrollment)
- Loudoun: 62 seats
- Arlington: 18 seats
- Falls Church: 2 seats
- Prince William: 68 seats
- Private school applicants will be assigned a pathway based on residency



The numbers represented are based on the allowed ratio student cap for the 2019-2020 freshman application

Pathway Composition to Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology.



Ricardy Anderson, Chair
Fairfax County School
Board, Mason District
Representative.



Speaker Hanning Chen
disapproves of the
proposed revised Merit Lot-
tery for Thomas Jefferson
High School for Science
and Technology.



Didi Elysyad, student at
Thomas Jefferson.

SCREENSHOTS

been challenged having the diversity of the TJ admitted class match the diversity of Fairfax County Public Schools." He added that during the School Board Work Session the night before, Oct. 6, the Board provided consensus to eliminate the battery of tests, Quant-Q, ACT Aspire Reading and Science, that were "squeezing out the diversity in our students as they seek to become part of the admitted class at TJ."

Commenting on the \$100 application fee used in other years, Brabrand said, "A fee frankly is a way to send a message (that) this is something for you to be a part of or not. Eliminating the fee is a step in the right direction." Other requirements including the problem-solving essay, student information sheet, algebra I in the eighth grade, and minimum GPAs in math and science would be retained. Brabrand said that the Board also asked him on Oct. 6, to look at additional capacity space at TJ, its "pathways" and to provide additional slots, not just for Fairfax County Public Schools but also for regional

partners whose children apply and are admitted to the school. According to a spokesperson for Fairfax County Public Schools, "The Board also agreed that the Superintendent's revised proposal should include a capacity increase at TJHSST to be more comparable with other schools in the division; examine an approach that considers the applicant pool by pyramid and middle school; present a holistic admissions process that considers lottery and non-lottery options; and initiate the revised admissions process timeline for the Class of 2025 to begin no later than the end of January 2021,"

During the Oct. 8 comment portion of the regular Fairfax County School Board meeting, feedback from 15 parents, students and constituents who signed up to speak revealed a sharp divide on the proposed Revised Admissions policy.

Sujatha Hamilton, the Fairfax County NAACP education chair, said some middle school communities did not send applicants to TJ resulting in unequal representation.

"Because we don't get emails and letters from their parents... does not mean that they don't pray for opportunities or resources for access. I am begging you to remember them. They are your constituents too even though they may not even know that the Board exists to serve their needs. Please do not send this out to an external body or delay."

Countering, Brandon Kim questioned the racial code-based system saying it would institutionalize the very racism that it claimed to fight. "You are putting the future of our kids in the hands of administrators who are tone deaf to the needs and concerns of (the) Asian American community (and) have an anti-Asian bias."

Hanning Chen addressed the diversity and culture gap in learning, opportunity and programs. "Does anyone know why there are so few Black and Latino students in TJ? Because of the failure of FCPS of educating those underserved students whose FCPS's outreach programs have dropped by 50 percent since 2011. Over the last ten years, those abandoned students, lacking FCPS resources, were not even mentioned once by FCPS leadership until now. Those poster kids are suddenly needed for a political show," he said.

Didi Elysyad, a student at TJHSST said, "TJ is segregation in its modern form."

IN HIS PRESENTATION to the Board, Brabrand said that statistically the revised Merit Lottery system should provide some increase in admittance for underrepresented groups while allowing top performers entry into the school. However, he acknowledged concern that the two-tiered admissions process may have unintended impacts on the Caring Culture at TJHSST and may continue to admit more students from a few top-performing FCPS middle schools.

Proposed next step responses included targeted outreach to eighth grade students, recruitment letters, virtual open houses and presentations to students, parents and the community to the 95 participating middle schools and 100+ private schools. Target recruitment also included the provision to provide underrepresented students STEM programming to generate excitement of learning math and science.

The Board approved a motion directing the Superintendent to develop a plan to establish policies and procedures for a regional governing board for TJHSST consisting of a proportional representation of school boards that send students to the school.

In the meantime, eighth graders and their families wait for a firm admissions timeline, and the School Board works to find consensus on proposed process revisions. "My office will continue to collaborate closely with the School Board to ensure that the proposed changes will help all students have access to TJ based on the merit of their application and not based on test scores and unequal access to preparation programs," said Brabrand.

OPINION

Make a Plan and Vote 2020

BY DAN STORCK
SUPERVISOR (D-MOUNT VERNON)

Voting is a fundamental American right and the basis of our democracy. "We the People" are our foundation and each of us and our votes are cornerstones. This year, like no other recent time in our history, we are reminded how our country has struggled to support that right for each and every American, and how important it is that each individual exercise this right to vote.

Early voters are turning out and mail-in ballots are being requested in record numbers. Our office, and others, are answering hundreds of emails, phone calls and visitors as residents want to be sure they have all the correct voting information.

I know you are hearing about long lines at the Fairfax Government Center and concerns about the safety of mailing your ballot and COVID-19. Once again, Fairfax is a great place to be. I can assure you there are many safe ways to vote this year, from early – no excuse – voting at 14 sat-



elite voting locations (5 more than 2016) opening Oct. 14, first time ever secure ballot drop boxes, mail-in ballots (mail as early as you can!) and, of course, voting on election day. Fairfax County is committed to ensure all voters have the opportunity to vote and all votes are counted.

Please exercise your hard-earned rights and vote this election season!

Regardless of party or beliefs, it is important that you express your views. Take some time today to review all your options and make a plan for the best way for you to vote this year.

Voting Need to Know:

- ❖ Vote at any of the 14 satellite voting locations open on October 14 – October 31. Hours are 1 p.m. – 7 p.m. Mon-Fri and 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Sat. Locations in our District include the Mount Vernon Governmental Center, 2511 Parkers Lane, and the Laurel Hill Golf Club, 8701 Laurel Crest Drive.

- ❖ Request an absentee ballot by October 23 and vote by mail or take to a secure ballot drop box during satellite voting hours at all satellite voting locations.

- ❖ Vote on election day at your regular voting location. Note: the Lorton Library polling location has moved to Lorton Station Elementary School due to the Library closure.

- ❖ Bring a form of identification to vote, but it does not need to be a driver's license. Your voter registration card or even a current utility bill will work.

- ❖ If you requested a mail-in ballot, but choose to vote in-person, take your ballot with you to the voting location to surrender it for an in-person ballot.

- ❖ Curbside voting is available for those who are 65-years or older, or any person with a physical disability. Look for the posted phone number outside of all voting locations.

- ❖ This year's ballot is longer than usual, with two constitutional amendments and four bond referendums.

It is strongly recommended you review the ballot prior to going to your voting location. Sample ballots in multiple languages are available here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/upcoming>.

- ❖ More information about voting in Fairfax: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/>.

erate Republicans, 60 percent of the Democrats, and 50 percent of the independents.

All in all, Trump won by only 29 percent of the eligible voters.

Time for compulsory voting?

Worldwide, there are about 22 countries where voting is compulsory, and in 11 of them the law was enforced. The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights described voting as "duties to community." I believe that voting (i.e. choosing a country's leaders) is as important as collecting taxes (i.e. financing a country), if not more important.

A recent report by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) in Sweden said "parliamentary" elections turnout, as recent as 2018, was 57 percent in the US.

At the top was Australia, where voting was 92 percent; Belgium, 88 percent; and Denmark 85 percent.

But some Third World countries surpassed Western countries: Antiqua, 90 percent; Bolivia, 88 percent; Burundi, 87 percent; Cuba, 85 percent; and Bangladesh 80 percent.

Steven Mulroy, Law Professor at the University of Memphis, and author of the book, "Rethinking US. Election Law", wrote last January: "In the past five years, restrictions on voting and voter registration purges have limited the number of Americans eligible to cast ballots."

He added, "The U.S. is the only major democracy that still allows politicians to draw their own district lines, an often-criticized conflict of interest in which public officials essentially pick their voters, rather than the voters picking their

officials."

In Australia, all the citizens must register to vote. Not voting means a modest fine of about US\$14. All voters can cast their ballots by mail, or vote in person before Election Day, and the elections are always on a Saturday, when most people don't work.

On the Fourth of July, the first day I started my vigil, few cars honked in support, some drivers and passers-by gave me the thumb, few took pictures, and a young woman offered me a drink from the nearby MacDonald's.

Because of the heat at that time, I didn't stand many times, but, now, with the cool weather, I think I can do it daily, and also, during the evening rush hour, which, of course because of the Coronavirus, has been not much of a rush. Still, now I get more car honks.

I keep my silence, standing alone, avoiding eye contacts, and avoiding close contacts with other people, as they do the same with me, and everyone has a mask.

I am in a hurry.

I feel that the Coronavirus is approaching me: I am almost 80 years old, have diabetes, high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, had a recent heart stent surgery, Black, a little overweight, and live in Fairfax County, one of the highest virus-inflicted counties in Virginia.

But, thanks to the vigil; it has become an escape every time I feel bored because, out of fear, I almost confined myself to my house.

Mohammad Ali Salih is a full-time Washington, D.C. correspondent for Arabic publications in the Middle East since 1980

My Voting Vigil

BY MOHAMMAD ALI SALIH

S tarting the first of the month, my occasional lonely voting vigil, that started on the Fourth of July, became daily, until, hopefully, the election day. I stand alone, hoisting over my head a large banner (4x2 feet) that said, on both sides, just two words: "PLEASE, VOTE."

I stand at the intersection of Old Keene Mill and Lee Chapel Roads, in Burke, not far from our house for 40 years.

In 1980, when we bought the house, Burke was partly rural: there was a farmer who had cows and was selling fresh milk, and another who sold strawberries by leaving them on the side of the road, so people picked them, and left the money in a box.

Today, Burke is part of the nationwide electoral suburban middle ground between the more liberal cities and the more conservative rural regions.

A 2018 Pew Research Center's study showed that, in the year before, the national urban Democratic Party's affiliations and leanings were 62 percent, and those of the Republican Party were 54 percent.

In the suburbs, the Democratic Party's were 47 percent, and the Republican Party's 45 percent.

And while a Pew phone survey showed that Democrats and leaning Democrats outnumber Republicans and leaning Republicans by about 7 percentage points, the latter group out-numbered the earlier in both voter registration and like-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Mohammad Ali Salih at the intersection of Old Keene Mill and Lee Chapel Roads, in Burke.

ly voters.

When my two daughters were helping me to make the sign, one of them asked whether I was actually encouraging more Republicans, than Democrats, to vote.

I replied that what concerned me was the overall low level of voting in the US. And particularly when compared to some other democracies. The US Census Bureau said that, in the 2016 presidential election, 61 percent of the voting age population voted.

A Brookings Institute report said 50 percent of those between 18-29 voted in that election.

Since 55 percent of those young men and women voted for Hillary Clinton, as compared to 37 for Donald Trump, the report wondered what would have happened if more young people had voted.

Another report said that only 40 percent of the young voted, and added these general comparisons: 80 percent of the conservative Republicans, 70 percent of the mod-

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
south@connectionnewspapers.com

Kemal Kurspahic
Editor ♦ 703-778-9414
kemal@connectionnewspapers.com

Bonnie Hobbs
Community Reporter, 703-778-9415
bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com

Mercia Hobson
Community Reporter
mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com

Mike Salmon
Contributing Writer
msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com

Ken Moore
Contributing Writer
kmoore@connectionnewspapers.com

ADVERTISING:
For advertising information
sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk
Display Advertising/National Sales
703-778-9444
debunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin
Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment
Advertising
703-778-9431

Editor & Publisher
Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Executive Vice President
Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

Managing Editor
Kemal Kurspahic
Art/Design:
Laurence Foong, John Heinly,
Ali Khaligh
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION
Circulation Manager:
Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com

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NEWS

Fairfax's Middleridge Celebrates 50th Anniversary

The Middleridge subdivision off Ox Road in Fairfax celebrated its 50th anniversary on Sept. 27. The festivities included food trucks, a roaming ice cream truck, sidewalk art and speakers. Attendees were also invited to walk through the community.

In the summer of 1970, the first 39 lots of Section 1 were built by Foster Brothers. The model homes were on Willcoxon Tavern Court, and a marketing ad in The Evening Star described Middleridge as "secluded and sedate among the trees, totally removed from the city...just minutes from everything."

The ad promoted the new community's 100 homes priced from \$42,450. It touted their four models – a rambler, a split-level, a split-foyer and a two-storey Colonial with four bedrooms and 2-1/2 baths. However, unlike the real-estate ads of today, this one proudly boasted that the houses' features included "wall-to-wall carpeting, air conditioning, fireplaces and carports."

Middleridge Civic Associa-

tion (MCA) President John Bayer was master of ceremonies for a 30-minute presentation. Addressing the socially distanced crowd of 125 people were U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11), Del. (and Middleridge resident) David Bulova (D-37) and Supervisor James Walkinshaw (D-Braddock).

Also attending were representatives from the Springfield District Police Station, the MCA Board and its past presidents, plus many of the event's volunteers. The speeches and recognitions concluded with the unveiling of the new, 50th-anniversary sign to be placed at each of the neighborhood entrances.

-BONNIE HOBBS

Some of the crowd, with the Scoops ice cream truck in the background.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GRETCHEN BULOVA

(From left) are James Walkinshaw; 50th Anniversary Chair Gretchen Bulova, David Bulova, civic assn. Treasurer Chris Medford, John Bayer, civic assn. secretary Karrie Kay, and Gerry Connolly.



The Middleridge 50th-anniversary sign was unveiled for the event. Based on 1970s ads for the subdivision, they'll be at each entrance.

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Lorton Landfill Mountain Could Become 'Fairfax Peak'

Officials delay decision on possible indoor ski slope, looking for more public comments before moving forward.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Southern Fairfax County is moving closer to being an alpine ski destination, as the "Fairfax Peak," indoor ski slope moves closer to fruition. Officials want more time for public comment, so on Oct. 6, the Board of Supervisors deferred the decision on the proposed Interim Agreement "to allow the developer, Alpine X, to advance its due diligence for the Fairfax Peak to allow an additional 30 days of public comment."

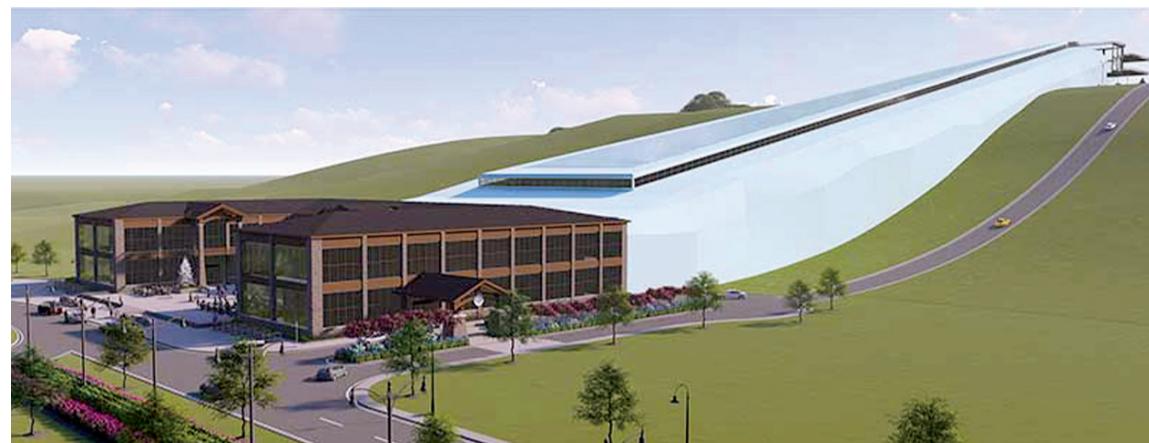
This agreement is an interim step in a years-long process that will entail future public engagement opportunities at several levels. Public comment is now open until Nov. 17.

Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) is including this extension in his newsletter that goes out to 7,000 households so they will have a chance to weigh in on the plans. At Alpine X, John Emery is doing much of the same. "We plan to conduct outreach in the coming weeks via email to gather constructive input for this initial phase, and invite leaders and residents in the meantime to share their free-form thoughts via our contact page here: <https://alpine-x.com/contact/>. We will be engaged in media discussions once we have solidified project updates to communicate moving forward," Emery said.

Ski Local

The whole thing is being planned to be built on the mountain of trash at the Lorton Landfill, right off I-95 in the southern part of Fairfax County. The ski facility plans may include multiple slopes for skiing and snowboarding with a variety of ramps, jumps, rails, boxes and other features, capable for use in national snowboarding and freestyle skiing competitions.

At the top of the 20-degree slope



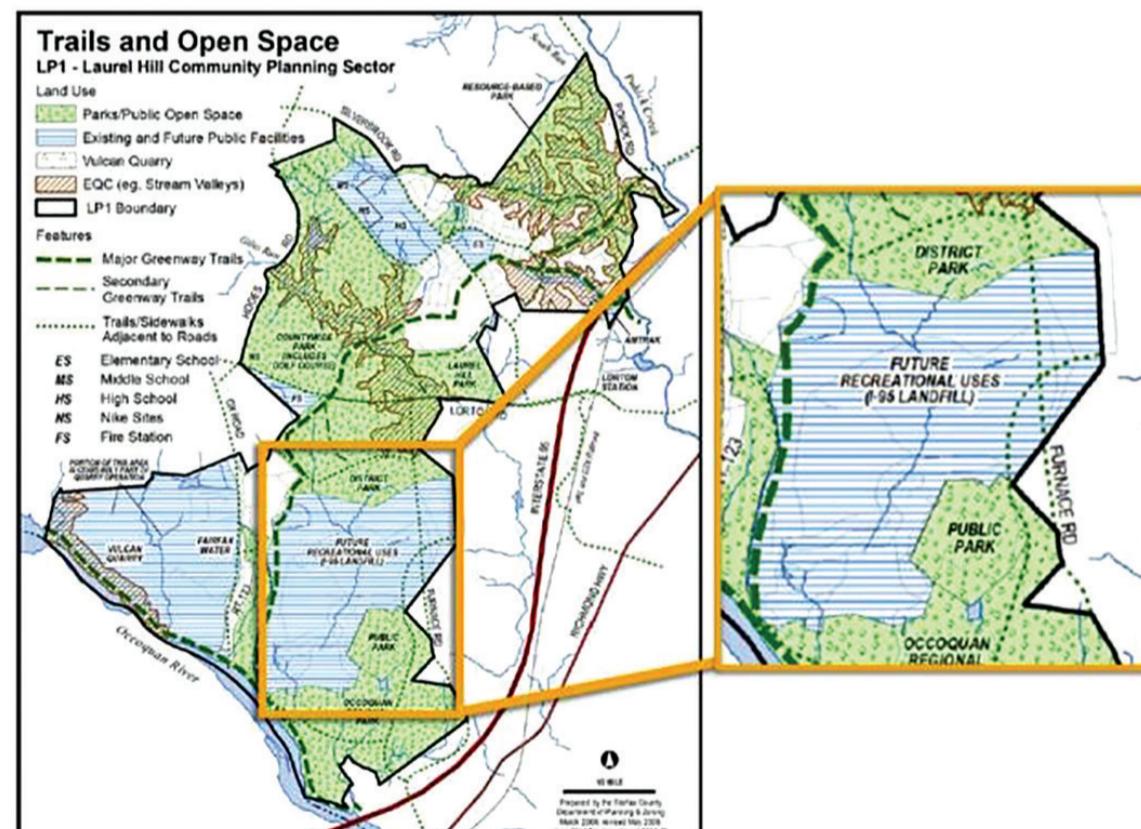
Artist rendering of the indoor ski slope.

mately accepted.

SnowWorld USA is affiliated with SnowWorld International, a company that looks at its facility overseas in the Middle East called "Ski Dubai," as a facility similar to the one they are proposing in Lorton. A number of letters of support have been included with this filing, it said on the report. In addition to those letters, support has been expressed by the following entities: NOVA Parks, Visit Fairfax, Fairfax County Economic Development Authority, South County Federation, and the Workhouse Arts Center.



In a similar facility in Landgraaf, Netherlands, it's a winter wonderland.



As noted in the above map, the I-95 landfill is intended for future recreational uses. The Alpine-X recreational facility fits into this re-use category.

This map shows the location in relation to Laurel Hill and I-95.

there would be restaurants, a ski shop and sky bar. A 100-plus room luxury hotel would be at the base of the indoor snow facility. The "peak" would be connected to Occoquan Regional Park by a gravity-powered, mountain coaster that would slide from the summit to the park. A gondola would ferry riders from Occoquan Regional Park and

the facility's base to the summit, where Fairfax Peak sky terrace could be built, one plan states.

The proposal also envisions other amenities that could be added in the future, including a water park, a "gravity ropes course" and passive recreation areas. SnowWorld has signed a confidential agreement with the Northern Vir-

ginia Regional Park Authority to possibly operate or own some of these facilities.

Fairfax Peak would be built as a public-private partnership, so the county would lease its land to Alpine-X, and the company would build, own and operate its facility. This lease would be negotiated separately if the proposal isulti-

Regional Tourism

The Lorton area has seen nothing like it and this would add to a blossoming mix of tourist attractions planned for southern Fairfax County, starting with the opening of the National Museum of the United States Army, planned for next month on Veterans Day. The facility would complement the existing equestrian center, Laurel Hill Golf Course, Workhouse Arts Center and the mountain bike course at Occoquan.

Besides strengthening Laurel Hill as a recreational destination, Fairfax Peak would allow local schools to add ski teams. Alpine-X proposes making its facility available to law enforcement and military for cold-weather and snow training, the report said.

Fairfax Peak plans to incorporate green and energy efficient technologies in its buildings. For example, the company says it would collaborate with Covanta's private waste-to-energy plant to capture and reuse steam; reuse gray water and use solar energy. The facility also would open its doors to local colleges and universities that wish to test new environmental technologies.

If Alpine-X's proposal is accepted, the company projects that it could complete the project's first phase in 36 to 48 months. Alpine-X LLC is a Virginia-based holding company whose mission is to develop family-centric active lifestyle communities and experience-based sports entertainment venues throughout the United States, their website states.

This isn't the first time a county landfill has turned into something useful. At Hilltop, along Telegraph Road in Fairfax County, a landfill there was turned into a golf course for many years, before finally becoming The Crest of Alexandria, a development of homes and condominiums.

Comments can be submitted by Nov. 17 to clerktothebos@fairfax-county.gov

NEWS

'Families Are in Jeopardy Of Losing their Homes'

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Hugs, handshakes, traveling, and gathering with friends at large events are just some of the things the current pandemic has stopped. However, those who've lost their income because of COVID have a greater worry – how to pay the rent and keep a roof over their families' heads.

So this month, Fairfax-based nonprofit Britepaths is hosting "There's No Place Like Home: An Eviction Prevention Campaign." Via this effort, it hopes to raise at least \$150,000 so it can continue to be a lifeline to those needing help the most.

"Many of these families are in jeopardy of losing their homes at a time when home means everything," explained Britepaths Executive Director Lisa Whetzel. "In times like these, everyone deserves a place to feel safe."

She understands that it's been a difficult year, but hopes that, if people in the community are able to give, they'll donate as soon as possible at <https://britepaths.org/civicrm/contribute/transact?reset=1&id=52>.

"While there have been episodic halts on evictions in the past few months, the harsh reality is that these are forbearances, not forgiveness," said Whetzel. "Rent has continued to accrue, even if income has stopped.

"We're encouraging clients to work with their landlords, but thousands of our neighbors have already been threatened with eviction during this ongoing pandemic," she said. "Many wake up every morning not knowing if their families will have a safe place to live next month."

Checks are also welcome: Mail to Britepaths, 3959 Pender Drive, Suite 200, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please note "Home" on the memo line. For more information, contact Shannon Bryant at 703-273-8829.

"The political winds are shifting daily," said Whetzel. "For the sake of our neighbors, we simply cannot wait for government support or intervention to arrive in time. Our county, state and local officials are doing what they can to identify and fill in the gaps, but families are in need now. For them, we are the frontline help – the community is their intervention. Thank you, in advance, for being here for our families in their time of great need."

Another way to help Britepaths is by joining Unity of Fairfax's Halloween Virtual 5K/1K Run-Walk-Roll set for Saturday, Oct. 31 at 10 a.m. For details and registration, go to <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/unity-halloween-virtual-5k1k-runwalkroll-tickets-121431983331>. A portion of the proceeds will benefit Britepaths' "There's No Place Like Home Eviction Prevention Campaign."

BULLETIN BOARD

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

FRIDAY/OCT. 16

Bolster the Blue will be hosting a rally on Friday, Oct. 16 at the Fair Oaks District Station to Celebrate Our Fairfax County Police Department with Flash Mob Fridays. Participants are encouraged to bring flags and signs, and wear anything to support the police officers. Email info@bolstertheblue.com.

FRIDAY/OCT. 16

The Electoral College Explained. 2-3 p.m. Zoom event sponsored by the City of Fairfax Regional Library, 10360 North Street, Fairfax. Join via Zoom and learn about the Electoral College - What it is, how it works and if it's relevant today. Pre-registration is required. A Zoom link will be provided one day prior to the event. This program is free of charge. For more information, visit <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/7158761>

WATERSHED CLEANUPS

Do your part to help the environment. Volunteer for a "Watershed Cleanup Days" event at a park or recreation center near you this fall. These community service events are great for individuals, families, service groups and students. Work outdoors helping to clear Earth's arteries by removing tires, bottles, cans and other debris dumped in local waterways. All

ages are welcome to take part. Cleanups are currently scheduled:

Saturday, Oct. 17, 2020: Ellanor C. Lawrence Park;
Saturday, Oct. 24, 2020: Lake Fairfax Park;
Saturday, Nov. 7, 2020: Cub Run RECenter, Hidden Pond Nature Center, Providence RECenter and Riverbend Park.

Visit the website <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/volunteer>

OCT. 19 TO NOV. 19

Elementary Gym Class. 4-5 p.m. At Nike field, South County Middle School, 8700 Laurel Crest Drive, Lorton. One hour, 2 days per week, outdoor elementary gym class for kids in grades K-6 taught by a former Division 1 athlete and current South County High School teacher. Cost: \$15 per class or 10 classes for \$120. Contact: <https://bit.ly/SCAAFallGym>

SATURDAY/OCT. 24

Bolster the Blue Presents Police, Pastors, and Prayers. From 2 to 4 p.m. At 10550 Page Ave., Fairfax, in front of the Fairfax County Courthouse. Bring your family and enjoy an afternoon of prayer, messages of unity and celebration. Enjoy music, cotton candy, hot dogs, kids' games, and fun activities.

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 28

Pathway Homes 40th Anniversary Breakfast. 8:30-9:30 a.m. Virtual event. Celebrate hope, self-determination, and recovery with Pathway Homes and its 40th year anniversary at the Steps to Pathways Breakfast.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10

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NEWS

'High-Quality Care and Education for Children'

Main Street Child Development Center helps both students and parents.

By BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Main Street Child Development Center provides affordable childcare for low-income families in Fairfax City and Fairfax County. Since 1973, it's given more than 3,000 children the school-readiness skills essential for success, while enabling their parents to maintain full-time employment.

It's held in the City's Green Acres Community Center, a former elementary school. In FY 2020, Main Street served more than 150 children and 200 parents/caregivers. Currently, 80 percent of the children are from low-income families, 70 percent of these families speak English as a second language, and 48 percent of the children are from single-parent homes.

"We guarantee an active, nurturing learning environment that prepares students for a lifelong adventure of learning," said Development Manager Christi Esterly Schwarten. "Our highly trained, committed educators equip them with the tools and experiences they need to succeed in kindergarten and beyond."

Main Street offers preschool for children ages 2-5, plus a school-age program, and boasts a 1:6 teacher-to-child ratio. Normally, there are about 90 preschoolers; but with the current pandemic, just 45 are in that program. And Main Street helps their parents, too.

"We know that, without parental support and guidance, children won't do as well in school," explained Executive Director Carol Lieske. "So to engage and support the parents, we provide them with gift cards for food and gas and tell them where to find community resources."

In addition, a mental-health spe-



These boys are having fun playing with bubbles at Main Street Child Development Center.

cialist visits the school two days a week. "He helps the children through whatever their classroom challenges are and helps their teachers gain the skills to work with them," said Lieske. "He'll also reach out to the family to talk to them about the problems."

MAIN STREET also has a special-needs teacher who works with children with developmental and learning disabilities. "If a child is hungry, afraid or worried about something, it's difficult for them to learn," said Lieske. "So we have to deal with that first. We want them to become confident and enthusiastic learners, so – besides their education – we also address their social, emotional and physical needs."

The school-age program typically has about 20 children, in grades K through five, before and after school, and all summer. But with increased demand due to the pandemic, five more children and an extra classroom were added. "Usually, this program is only for Daniels Run [Elementary] students because that's our neighborhood," said Lieske. "But because of COVID, we've expanded it to

include other schools."

The current school year began Sept. 8, and Main Street instituted many new protocols and procedures to keep the students as safe as possible. Parents and students are screened at drop-off, older children wear masks, and all are in smaller groups.

Preschoolers play with toys within hula hoops on the floor, and each class stays in its own room. "Masks are encouraged for these students, but not required," said Lieske. "And the children are socially distanced at tables while doing activities. Normally, there are six to eight at a table, but now there are three to four."

Furthermore, she said, "We also had to reassure the teachers that they were safe coming back to school. Addressing their concerns has been a big reason for our success. Before school started, we constantly communicated with our parents and teachers and sent videos of the classrooms to explain what they'd look like."

Some limited openings may be available in both programs; for information, call 703-273-1192. "We have a wonderful group of people working here," said Lieske. "And



Teacher Veronica Ruanova, helps a Main Street child with her craft project.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALEXANDRA SUSANO

wide.

"We value a diverse community where differences are respected, individuality is accepted, sharing is practiced and a caring spirit is embodied," explained Esterly Schwarten. "When Main Street closed for over two months during the pandemic, we distributed thousands of dollars in gift cards for food, prescriptions and household essentials. We checked in with each family multiple times and connected them with resources they needed for additional assistance."

Main Street is at 4401 Sideburn Road, and current hours are 7 a.m.-5 p.m. Normally, older students would eat breakfast there, then attend school elsewhere and return afterward. Now, after breakfast, they log on to their online school classrooms. They also receive lunch and two snacks. Special-needs children do the same thing. Online instruction ends at 3 p.m., and then the students get homework help and play outside.

IN 2014, FCPS gave Main Street its Exemplary Inclusive Practices Award for "continually demonstrating exemplary practices for students with disabilities."

And since 1995, it's been accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children – the gold standard for childcare centers, and an honor earned by less than 7 percent of centers nation-

wide.

In fact, Main Street distributes more than \$35,000 in emergency, tuition assistance each year to families in crisis or having special circumstances. This aid ensures that at-risk children receive continuous care and education, even when their families are experiencing difficulties.

All in all, said Lieske, "We have outstanding, well-qualified teachers, and we provide high-quality care and education for our children, plus support services for their families. Children come here and get the enriched attention, nurturing and small-group interaction they need."

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Home Library Design

Designers offer ideas for spaces with style and comfort.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Once thought of as space for academics to smoke cigars and sip whiskey, the era of covid-19 has transformed home libraries into now cozy places of refuge. Those who've grown tired of Netflix and election coverage might find solace in curling up with a book. From a reading nook with a small chaise to a grand room with a fireplace and soaring ceilings, five local designers offer inspiration for creating a home library.

Tracy Morris, Tracy Morris Design

Whether ornate or minimalist, design ideas for accommodating one's personal taste abound, says Tracy Morris, Tracy Morris Design in McLean. "When it comes to home libraries, the customization options are endless," she said. "Some of my favorite things

to include in libraries are art light sconces that illuminate the books, a built-in bar, closed storage, a built-in reading nook or even a secret bookcase door."

A literary retreat need not lack elegance, says Morris. "When it comes to creating a space that feels relaxing, while still put together, it's always best to keep it simple."

— Tracy Morris, Tracy Morris Design in McLean, Virginia.

er, it's always best to keep it simple," she said. "Use soft pillows and throws, textured fabrics on upholstery, and be sure to include a soft rug."

Even for those with a vast collection of tomes, Morris believes in leaving a few open spaces on the shelves to display accessories, like picture frames or bookends. "Completely filled shelves can be overwhelming," she said. "Balancing it with other accessories will make it look stylish, yet relaxed. I like to break up the shelves by including some books turned horizontally with a decorative object resting on top."

One of Morris' most memorable home libraries was at once stately and serene. "We opted for a completely wood-filled space with rich leathers," she said. "Since the space was filled with darker wood tones, we used large windows for added brightness. We also had the mullions of the windows faux painted to match the wood for a seamless look."

Doubling as a home office, the space includes a fireplace focal point. "We used swivel chairs that can pivot towards the fireplace in the room or towards the desk, plus putting an ottoman in between provides a soft place to kick up your feet," she said.

Rebecca Penno, Penno Interiors in McLean,

Determining homeowners reading style and the way the room's overall purpose, is the way that Rebecca Penno, Penno Interiors in McLean, Va. approaches each home library design. "Some home libraries



A fireplace, leather chairs and large windows combine to make this wood-filled home library by Tracy Morris both stately and comfortable.



Large windows add additional lighting to this wood paneled library and home office by Rebecca Penno.

function as a work space, others as more of a den," she said. "This is always a struggle with homeowners when styling their built-ins. Many homeowners have a true book collection that they do not want to let go of. Other homeowners have books with no attachment. If possible, we always eliminate all paperback books."

An expansive library with multiple functions, says Penno included a desk, fireplace and television. She designed the room to serve as library, home office and a space to relax. "In order for the homeowner to be able to use all three of these focal points, we used comfortable lounge chairs on a swivel base to provide flexibility," she said. "The starting point was the oak paneling. It provided a masculine backdrop with the deep wood tones and strong grain. From there, we layered patterns of all brown tones paired with brass accents."

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-Werner Heisenberg

NEWS

Safety Kits Help Fairfax City Businesses

To protect the business community and prevent the spread of COVID-19, Fairfax City's Economic Development Office and Economic Development Authority (EDA), will provide City businesses with Fairfax City ReConnected Safety Kits.

Part of the Fairfax City ReConnected program, these free kits will include essential supplies needed to serve customers and visitors while ensuring employees' safety. Each kit contains: 50 cloth face coverings; four, 32-ounce bottles of hand sanitizer; two, touch-free thermometers; Fairfax City ReConnected Pledge information; and business-sector guidelines.

Approximately 100 kits are now available; they're funded via the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. They'll be distributed first-come, first-served. To obtain one, businesses must

register at fairfaxcityconnected.com/kits.

"Our businesses represent an integral part of Fairfax City's community," said EDA Chairman Jeff Hermann. "We must do everything within our power to not only support them, but ensure they have access to protective supplies."

"The primary goal of these kits is to help businesses continue to stay open safely, while adopting new and necessary measures to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19," explained Economic Development Assistant Director Danette Nguyen. "They, along with our Fairfax City ReConnected programs, provide businesses with the essential tools, information and resources to continue operating, while protecting public health."

-BONNIE HOBBS

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 7

fast, a virtual event with an inspirational live program and more. The event will bring together stakeholders virtually to support Pathway Homes. Pathway Homes provides affordable housing and services to over 1,000 adults with serious mental illness and other co-occurring disabilities in Northern Virginia. Cost: \$100 includes a breakfast box delivered to your door. To register or explore sponsorships, visit <https://rsvp.epiphanyproductions.com/pathway-homes-40th-anniversary-breakfast/>

SATURDAY/OCT. 31

Burke Historical Society Meeting. 4 p.m. Via Zoom. BHS Treasurer Cindy Bennett will present "Ghosts, Goons, and a Bunny Man," a lighthearted look at the spooky legends and stories of the area, as well as their factual origins. This program is hosted by Pohick Regional Library and is appropriate for ages 13 and older. Regis-

tration is required at the following link: <https://library-calendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/6601699>. Once you register, you'll receive an email invitation containing the information needed to join the Zoom meeting.

COX FOUNDATION AWARDS \$25,000

Cox Communications is helping feed families in Fairfax through Fairfax County Meals on Wheels with a \$25,000 donation from The James M. Cox Foundation. This is in addition to the \$10,000 awarded on behalf of Cox Charities to Fairfax County Meals on Wheels in March. The grant will support local families in need during the COVID-19 pandemic. The James M. Cox Foundation is the charitable arm of Cox Enterprises, the parent company of Cox Communications and Cox Automotive. In response to the growing strain on feeding the community, the foundation announced \$25,000 grants to support people in need where we live and work.

Announcements

Announcements

Legals

The advertisement shows a side-by-side comparison of a house's gutters. On the left, labeled 'BEFORE Leaffilter', leaves and debris are visible clogging the gutters. On the right, labeled 'AFTER Leaffilter', the gutters are clean and clear. The top of the ad features the 'LeafFilter GUTTER PROTECTION' logo with a leaf icon. To the right, a checkmark icon with the text 'INSTALLS ON NEW & EXISTING GUTTERS'. Below the images, there are three promotional offers: '15% OFF YOUR ENTIRE PURCHASE*', '10% OFF SENIOR & MILITARY DISCOUNTS', and '5% OFF TO THE FIRST 50 CALLERS!!'. At the bottom, it says 'Promo Number: 285', 'CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE ESTIMATE', and the phone number '1-877-614-6667'. The text 'Mon-Thurs: 8am-11pm, Fri-Sat: 8am-5pm, Sun: 2pm-8pm EST' is also present.

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In accordance with New York law, the National Rifle Association of America announces that its Annual Meeting of Members will be held October 24, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. in Tucson, Arizona in the Kiva Ballroom at the Loews Ventana Canyon Hotel.

Be a part of our **Wellbeing** pages, the first week of every month.

Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

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CALENDAR

NOW THRU OCT. 18

Virtual Nature Center Walk or Run. Friends of Res-ton (FOR) announces its 17th annual run and walk fundraiser for the Walker Nature Center will begin Friday, October 9 and end on Sunday, October 18. This year's event is now the Virtual Nature Center Walk-or-Run, organized to allow for more participation of all ages and abilities. Runners and walkers can choose their selected route of 5K, or 10K, or just 1 mile, to complete the Virtual Nature Center Walk-or-Run at any time within the span of 10 days. Proceeds from registration fees, \$25 (13 years and older), and \$15 (12 years and younger), will support facility enhancements, programs and projects at the Walker Nature Center. Virtual Nature Center Walk-or-Run, direct link:

<https://www.active.com/running/distance-running-virtual-events/virtual-nature-center-walk-or-run-2020?intc>

NOW THRU NOV. 1

Twilight Wagon Rides. 5:15 p.m. At Frying Pan Farm Park, 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon. Enjoy a journey through the forest and fields, taking in the changing fall colors. After your wagon ride, roast marshmallows and enjoy time by the light of a crackling campfire. These private family outings are being offered on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays through Nov 1, 2020. Tours begin at 5:15 p.m., and the cost is \$45 per family. Call 703-437-9101, or visit Frying Pan Farm Park.

NOW THRU NOV. 5

Haunted Wine Tours. 6:30 p.m.; 7:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. At The Winery at Bull Run, 15950 Lee Highway, Centreville. The Haunted Wine Tours are back for the fifth year in a row, in a new condensed version, so you can enjoy real ghost stories and award-winning wine all while staying safe. Due to the restrictive environment surrounding COVID, there are far less tickets available this year. Therefore priority access to tickets go to wine club members.

NOW THRU DEC. 7

MCC Fantastic Fall Scavenger Hunt. Join your friends, family and community for McLean Community Center's Fantastic Fall Scavenger Hunt. This exciting fall virtual event allows for you and your team to compete against others and win prizes. This is the perfect event to stay local and have fun with your friends and family. The Fantastic Fall Scavenger Hunt is a game played on a smart phone in which teams complete 75 missions (or challenges) both indoors and outdoors. Missions include answering questions, taking specific photos or videos, finding a specific item, geocaching or completing specific tasks as given in a list provided by the Game Master. The scavenger hunt will take place in and around McLean and from your own home. Participants work in small teams of 4-10 players. Team captains must be 16 years old or older. Visit the website www.McLeancenter.org.

NIGHTMARE ALLEY

The Workhouse Arts Center announces that "Nightmare Alley" Haunted Drive-Thru is coming to Lorton for this year's Halloween season. "Nightmare Alley" is the first immersive drive-thru Halloween experience in the region. Zombies, swamp creatures, creepy clowns, and scary dolls are among 13 different scary scenes taking up residence on the Workhouse campus. These new campus inhabitants will scare and entertain visitors experiencing the attraction from the safety of their cars. There will be 13 nights of fright, starting on now through Saturday, Oct. 31. Fridays and Saturdays will run from 7-11 p.m. each weekend in October, and Sundays in the middle of the month (October 18, and the 25) will run from 7-10 p.m. Visit <https://www.workhousearts.org/nightmare-alley/>

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 15 AND OCT. 28

Gallery Walks -- Live Stream (30 minutes). Presented by the Virginia Museum of History and Culture. Join the VMHC Education Team for the free virtual exhibition highlight tours! The topics covered during these 30-minute tours will change regularly, so mark your calendars for the 2nd and 4th Wednesday each month. Each

gallery walk will be streamed live on the museum's YouTube and VMHC Education Facebook page. Visit www.virginiahistory.org/events.

THURSDAY/OCT. 15

Ribbons of Okra: The Black Cooks of the Federal Era. Fire, Flour & Fork – Virtual Program. Presented by the Virginia Museum of History and Culture. Fire, Flour & Fork returns this fall for its seventh year with all-virtual programming in partnership with the VMHC, and tickets are on sale now! Evening sessions are \$10 each, or buy all three for \$25. Purchase all classes and ticket to Food U and receive the entire package for \$50. Discounts will be automatically applied when the correct number of classes are added to your cart. Visit www.virginiahistory.org/events.

FRIDAY/OCT. 16

Night Flyers Campfire. 6-7 p.m. At E.C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. If you've ever wondered why a moth is attracted to light, then come to the "Night Flyers Campfire" at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park and go mothing with a naturalist.

Once you've finished looking for these delicate flyers, gather around the campfire, make s'mores and discover why moths are drawn to light. Learn what you can do to conserve them. The program is designed for participants age 4 to adult. It runs from 6 to 7 p.m. and supports the Earth Day theme "Protect Our Species." The cost is \$8 per person.

Call 703-631-0013.

OCT. 16-18

Capital Craft Fair. At Dulles Expo Center, Chantilly. The Capital Craft Fair will bring more than 100 juried artisans in more than a dozen mediums including glass, jewelry, leather, paintings, prints, photography, pottery, wearable art and wood to the Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly. Hours are Friday, Oct 16: noon - 7 p.m.; Saturday, Oct 17: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Sunday, Oct 18: 10 a.m. -5 p.m. Tickets: \$10 in advance; \$12 at the door. Senior discount available; children under 12 free. Ticket information: www.CapitalCraftFairs.com.

OCT. 16-18; 23-25; AND OCT. 30-NOV. 1

The Alden Theatre at the McLean Community Center (MCC) is presenting its third and final fall performance of its popular, socially distanced theater program, Drive-Thru Drama in October. New York City-based company Recent Cutbacks was commissioned by The Alden to write the new show, "Objects in Mirror May Be Spookier Than They Appear." The show will be presented over three weekends, from 6 p.m.-8:15 p.m., Friday-Sunday, Oct. 16-18, Oct. 23-25 and Oct. 30-Nov. 1. Tickets are \$20 per car/\$15 MCC tax district residents. The performances will be held in the parking lot of MCC at 1234 Ingleside Ave. Visit: www.aldentheatre.org or call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711.

SATURDAY/OCT. 17

Garden Photography Workshop. 1:30-4 p.m. At River Farm, 7931 East Boulevard Drive, Alexandria. Learn how to create beautiful images in the garden, from inviting vistas to intimate plant portraits. Instructor Cindy Dyer, a USPS stamp artist, combines the skills of a professional photographer and graphic designer with the enthusiasm of an avid gardener. She will share her tips and tricks for photographing gardens and flowers in their best light, whether shooting with a DSLR, point-n-shoot, or smartphone. Cost: AHS members \$50; non-members \$60.

SATURDAY/OCT. 17

Redefining the Classics -- Who and What Defines the Nature of Classical Theatre. 2 p.m. Part of the Virtual Round Table Discussion Series at 1st Stage in Tysons. Free. In these forums, they'll talk and share questions and thoughts with artists, actors, designers, musicians and directors about experiences they have faced as professional artists. Artists participating include Debra Kim Sivigny, Bob Barlett, Ron OJ Parsons, José Carrasquillo, Thembi Duncan, and more. Pre-registration is required and space is limited. Registration is available now at www.1ststage.org.

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"And Awaaay We Go!"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As Jackie Gleason would say as he segued from his monologue into the sketch comedy that followed on his Saturday night entertainment hour on CBS. So too does my entertainment - or lack thereof, continue. Six weeks or so after my treatment for thyroid cancer (three pills a day) began, per doctor's orders, we have put a halt to the proceedings. Due to increasing values in my bi-weekly lab work (monitored exactly for this purpose), specifically my kidney and liver functions, I am standing down and standing by. We will retest this coming Thursday and then wait for further instructions (smaller dose, intermittent dose, no dose?). In addition, some of the side effects that I am experiencing (fatigue, shortness of breath, a little depression/a little malaise) also encouraged my oncologist to pause the treatment. Hopefully, it's the pause that refreshes as Bud Collins the long time tennis commentator for NBC once said to describe female tennis star, Amanda Paz.

The lab work is the first line of defense and indicator, along with side effects as to what might be going on inside. A scan would be useful as well but due to the radiation exposure, the doctors try to keep its use to an absolute minimum. And since I'm not scheduled to be scanned for another month (every two months), my status is best determined by how I feel and what the lab work shows. In the interim, I will ride the roller coaster of emotions and fear and try to enjoy the reduction in the side effects (which I can do. I'm good that way). I just have to hope that the values in my next lab work go back down or I may very well go off the rails and onto some other ride that might not be so manageable.

All that remains is 'all that remains.' Nothing in my life/cancer routine is likely to change much. Again, what I have been told is that what I have incurable: stage IV papillary thyroid cancer, the kind that doesn't respond to radio iodine therapy, so every minute of every day will be spent hoping, praying, wondering and waiting to see if the end is near or thankfully not near at all, like a mirage, almost. Just another day in my cancer conundrum. As Tom Branson said on an episode during the final season of Downtown Abbey about something completely unrelated: "What a palaver!" But that's really what being a cancer patient is all about: Confusion, lack of clarity, few guarantees and changes in your attitude along with your latitude if Jimmy Buffet were writing this column. If my wife were, it would be about going with the flow. However, since I'm writing it, it's about changes, constant change; sometimes more of the same, something completely different, and being prepared, always, to go up and down and all around and everything in between. It's highs, it's lows and its all-overs, too. It may not sound like a great way to make a living, but I can assure you, it sure beats the alternative.

As my mother used to say: "enjoy poor health," especially since isn't seem likely I'll be changing horses anytime soon. But I can do it, I'm a Red Sox fan. I've lived with disappointment and determination my whole life - and thankfully, I've lived to see some World Championships, too. The goal is to try and keep moving forward and remain positive. Like my old friend Ray use to say: "my attitude is my blood type: B+." What's another blip on the cancer radar? I've been on it so long now, Feb., 2009 that it would be abnormal not to appear. And since the experts have been telling me that it's unlikely I won't be off the grid until it's too there's either a new grid or a new drug, I am happy to take a break in the short term if it helps in the long term. Because the goal is to finish, not to falter.

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

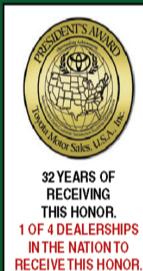
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