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Kids and Pets: More Time For Best Friends

NEWS, PAGE 8

WELLBEING

PAGE 6

Local Breakfast Oats Company Catapulted by Reality Show

NEWS, PAGE 5

Area Witnesses Christmas Star

NEWS, PAGE 3

Area kids have more time to devote to their pets as quarantining keeps them at home together. Claire Earle, 3, and her dog Lily prepare for a welcome walk outing.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF ELIZABETH EARLE
OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10



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PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/ THE CONNECTION

About a dozen people gathered on a small hilltop in Lorton at sunset Dec. 21 to be among the first in the area to witness the “the Great Conjunction”; the convergence of the gas giant planets, Jupiter and Saturn. Visible with the naked eye, Saturn appears to approach the larger, brighter Jupiter in days preceding the event, and then to form the illusion of a single bright star on Dec 21.

Area Witnesses Christmas Star

While the planets are actually hundreds of millions of miles apart, Dec. 21 marked the closest they have been in 400 years, and the first time in 800 years their conjunction occurred at night, making the event visible around the world.



Known as the Christmas star (above left of the electric pole), the celestial phenomenon has not been seen since 1623, and will not be seen again for another 60 years. Tim and Kristen Pierce (seated), Annandale; Evelyn Novins, Falls Church; and Mia Estes with her children, Jasper and Lulu, Lorton, were among those who came out to witness the Christmas star.



Fairfax Homes All Decked Out for Christmas

Colorful lights and whimsical inflatables fill Fairfax City’s Mosby Woods neighborhood with holiday cheer.

By BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Virginia Progressive Prosecutors Call for Criminal Justice Reforms

Reforms advocated for by the group include expungement of criminal records, an end to mandatory minimum sentences, an end to cash bail, abolition of the death penalty, and an end to “three strikes” felony enhancement for larceny offenses.

Virginia Progressive Prosecutors for Justice (VPPFJ) is a group of Commonwealth’s Attorneys representing more than 40 percent of Virginia’s population who support and advocate for commonsense criminal justice reforms to make their communities safer and the commonwealth’s justice system more fair and equitable. They issued the following letter to leaders in the General Assembly regarding reforms they plan to advocate for in the coming legislative session.

Dear Speaker Filler-Corn, Leader Her-ring, Leader Saslaw, and Chair Ed-wards:

We are a group of reform-minded Commonwealth’s Attorneys who represent and are responsible for the safety of over 40 percent of Virginia’s population. We supported many of the groundbreaking criminal justice reforms that you and your colleagues in the General Assembly implemented in the August special session. In the coming legislative session, we encourage you to build on these reforms and continue to make the Commonwealth a national leader in promoting justice. Specifically, we write to encourage the General Assembly to advance the following proposals, which we believe will help keep our communities safe while producing more equitable outcomes in our courts:

❖ Automated, automatic, and free expunge-ment of criminal records for formerly system-in-volved community members: Our communities are safest when we more fully reintegrate those convicted of crimes into society, instead of forcing them down a path of recidivism. Too often, a persistent criminal record prevents those who have interacted with the criminal justice system from finding employment, securing hous-ing, or attaining an education long after they have proven to no longer pose a safety risk to the community. Ensuring equal access to such second chances for those who have achieved rehabilitative benchmarks will improve safety outcomes while promoting equity across our criminal justice system. We can achieve this by automatically expunging certain criminal

records free of charge after individuals have maintained a clean record for an amount of time that corresponds to the severity of their offense.

❖ End mandatory minimum sentences: We wrote in advance of the special session in support of the General Assembly striking manda-tory minimums from state law. We once again urge you and your colleagues to implement this critical reform. Mandatory minimums prevent judges from taking an individualized, holistic approach to each sentence based on the spec-ific circumstances of a given case. They lead to the irrationally lengthy prison sentences that fuel mass incarceration while exacerbating the racial and socioeconomic inequities that have come to characterize our criminal justice system. Banning mandatory minimums will make our communities safer and stem the tide of mass incarceration.

❖ End cash bail: Cash bail leads to a two-tiered justice system – one for the rich and one for ev-eryone else. Those who sit behind bars while awaiting trial are exposed to significant collat-eral consequences, like the loss of a job or even custody of their children. What’s more, these impacts are disproportionately experienced by Virginians of color. If someone poses a signif-icant safety or flight risk, no amount of money will change that, and that person should be held pretrial. Otherwise, we should rely on Virginia’s comprehensive suite of pretrial services to help decisionmakers make informed determinations about the interventions and supervision that will allow for pretrial release while keeping the community safe and incentivizing defendants to show up to court. The state should increase its investment in pretrial services, social services, and support networks to provide for universal access to resources like social workers that help mitigate recidivism. Ending cash bail is a vital step toward ensuring fair and equal access to justice in the Commonwealth.

❖ Abolish the death penalty: The death pen-alty is unjust, racially biased, and ineffective at deterring crime. We have more equitable and effective means of keeping our communi-ties safe and addressing society’s most heinous crimes. It is past time for Virginia to end this antiquated practice.

❖ End the “three strikes” felony enhancement for petty larceny offenses: The collateral con-sequences associated with felonies far exceed

those of misdemeanors. State law currently saddles too many Virginians with these collat-eral consequences by transforming a misdemea-nor larceny offense into a felony offense when an individual has previously been convicted of misdemeanor larceny offenses. This senseless-ly punitive means of addressing a nonviolent property crime fuels mass incarceration and furthers recidivism. Ending this “three strikes” enhancement will make our communities safer and our criminal justice system more equitable.

Again, we applaud the recent progress of the General Assembly on criminal justice reform. We believe that these policy changes constitute a natural extension of that progress. We stand ready to assist with the passage of these reforms in any manner you deem helpful.

Signed,
Hon. Amy Ashworth
Prince William County and City of Manassas

Hon. Anton Bell
City of Hampton

Hon. Buta Biberaj
Loudoun County

Hon. Parisa Dehghani-Tafti
Arlington County and City of Falls Church

Hon. Steve Descano
Fairfax County and City of Fairfax

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Hon. Shannon L. Taylor
Henrico County

Hon. Gregory D. Underwood
City of Norfolk

Heroes of Our Time

To the Editor:

In 1940, when the British Royal Air Force (RAF) was fight-ing the air war in the skies over England, Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister at the time made the following statement referring to the RAF pilots:

“Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few.”

This quote most certainly ap-plies today to the heroic men and women who are working incredible hours in the deadly Covid 19 environment caring for the sick and dying.

May the coming of the vac-cines protect them and lighten their heavy burden

Gerry Kirwin
Burke

Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

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Burke resident Nahum Jeannot does the sales pitch for the Sharks.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Local Breakfast Oats Company Catapulted by Reality Show

Shark Tank Success pays off for GoOats in Burke.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

On a cold winter's morning, there's nothing like coming downstairs to a bowl of hot oatmeal to warm the body and spirit. Burke resident Nahum Jeannot took that idea to another level when he founded "GoOats," that specializes in a morning treat that earned him a spot on "Shark Tank," a reality show for entrepreneurs.

"GoOats are my version of their oatmeal, a childhood favorite without the bowl," said Jeannot, who calls himself the COO, chief oatmeal officer. "We created GoOats with these two loves in mind to give you the perfect foundation of nutritious oatmeal in a convenient easy-to-eat format," he said.

Jeannot starts with steel-cut oats, mixes in milk, adds fruit and rolls it all in a ball, and cooks it before it's frozen in the box like frozen waffles. Before school or work, just pop it in the toaster oven for a quick morning snack. The oats are steel-cut, and not rolled, so the nutrition in the oats is not squeezed out, Jeannot said. "With steel cut, they are less processed," he added. Steel-cut oats are also known as Irish or Pinhead oats.

He started making these in 2017, and gave samples to friends and family while tweaking the recipe, but knew if he got to the reality show "Shark Tank," it would be a hit. He even knew the shark he wanted was Barbara Corcoran, because she had worked with start-up foods before on the show. "I knew she had good taste," he said.

They flew Jeannot out to Las Vegas for the filming of the show, and he had to be in quarantine for a few days before anything could happen. He got on the show, presented his product, and went right for Corcoran. "She was an advocate for us," he said. The show aired on Oct. 23 of last year, and the impact was felt immediately. "We ran out of product in 48 hours after the show aired," he said.

Jeannot started his company in Lorton but had to expand, so now he is located in Alexandria He has worked with the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority along the way. "They've been huge," he said. It was a good move as a startup company. "Fairfax County and Northern Virginia have developed



Barbara Corcoran used her food know-how to help GoOats.



Shark Lori Greiner asked questions but didn't bite.

a great ecosystem for startups: many people like Nahum with an entrepreneurial spirit, amazing market opportunities in the private and public sectors, and a lot of organizations such as ours that provide resources to counsel and support entrepreneurs so they can see their dream come true here," said Victor Hoskins, president and CEO of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority.

Jeannot keeps his business secrets to himself, but is looking ahead for new ideas. "I've got some items in the pipeline," he said.



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

New Signage at Laurel Hill Park

Fairfax County Park Maintenance Operations employees Beth Borostovik and Luis Sorto install new signage at Laurel Hill Park in Lorton reminding users of the park rules

Clifton Community Woman's Club Fundraiser in February

The Clifton Community Woman's Club, a locally well-known 501(c)3 organization, has held a Homes Tour for 47 years to benefit their Charitable Trust. Annually they give four \$2,000 scholarships to George Mason, NOVA, and a local high school, included in an average donation of \$20,000 to food banks, veterans, women and children in need, and others. The year 2020 cancelled their tour, but not their giving, thanks to loyal sponsor support.

This year, the Club is sponsoring a virtual fundraiser, the C.A.R.E.S. Competition. C.A.R.E.S. is an acronym for Creative, Arts, Recording, Education, and Service. Participants will enter a photo or three-minute video of their project with an entrance fee of \$25 for each entry. The five categories include the following:

CREATIVE - Crafts, Fiber, Paper, Wood

ARTS - Painting, Sculpture, (all mediums), Poetry, Creative Writing, Photography.

RECORDING - Video submission only of Music, Dance, Stories, Dramatic Reading, Acting.

EDUCATION - Video or PDF submission of any type of Class, teaching, or instructional material

SERVICE - Photos and written submission of a person serving as a volunteer with materials being created and/or donated. Any gift of service or volunteerism counts.

Submission dates are Feb. 1 through March 31. Open to all age groups, children's participation is welcome. Garden club flower arranging classes, craft guilds, Eagle Scout projects, food bank volunteers, museum docents are just a few suggestions. The winners in each category will be recognized on ZOOM on April 17, with first place winners in each category receiving \$100 and second place winners receiving \$50. All will receive certificates of participation in the competition for their own resume. For more information, please visit the competition website <http://cliftoncwc.org/cares>

Gentle and Subtle Resolutions for 2021

Try small, simple and achievable goals.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

For 2021, local mental health professionals advise being gentle with yourself when creating the daily schedules and resolutions that often come with the beginning of the New Year. As many are feeling drained and defeated after a tumultuous 2020, making tiny, downsized resolutions can offer reassurance and hope as we embark on a new year.

“The year 2020 really highlighted that we can’t control what happens, but we can control how we respond,” said therapist Marla Zometsky, manager of the Wellness, Health Promotion for Fairfax County. “We are resilient and we can learn how to adjust based on the changes that are presented to us. It is okay to grieve things that did not turn out how we wanted, we can grieve and move forward.”

Create a routine by making a small change to one’s day, advises Karina Guzman, Director of Wellness, Prevention and Education at Marymount University. “It might be helpful to create a simple daily routine or make uncomplicated new year resolutions focused on being present,” she said. “Meditating, practicing gratitude and staying connected with our support networks like friends and family are some quick and free activities to incorporate. They can be done at your own pace and are easy to include into a daily routine long-term.”

Simple daily routines are great for producing structure. “Most people thrive on having structure in their daily lives and find that it makes them feel more productive, which then helps their mood and feeling good about themselves,” said Bethesda therapist Carol Barnaby, LCSW. “A great way to add structure is to think about what your goals and responsibilities for yourself are daily. Then make a plan for your day that includes these goals. Make sure the goals are small and specific.”

Some have created broad and generalized goals like getting fit in 2021, but Zometsky suggests starting with a purposeful, meaningful and achievable goal.

“Instead of focusing on a resolution, which is something that typically focuses on what is lacking, in 2021, perhaps set an intention,” she said. “An intention helps us to focus and it is mindful that we are on a journey.”

“2020 may have been the most challenging year many of us have experienced,” said “As we plan for this brand new year, perhaps the best resolutions won’t

generate additional stress, but help us focus on positive self-care, reducing stressors and nurturing human connections,” said therapist Tara Wooldrige, LCSW of Arlington County Government. “Routines and rituals can provide comfort. Scheduled physical exercise, mindfulness, meditation, quiet, reflective moments, support groups, and sharing with others are all ways to foster well-being. Choose what feels right for you and follow through. Our mental and physical health must remain priorities as we battle the ongoing global pandemic.”

What do you aim to do more of this year? Intentions can give you a sense of purpose, and focuses on what is motivating you. Maybe your intention is to slow down or to continue to form deeper and meaningful relationships? Maybe your intention is to be more present in certain situations, or be more holistic in your health and wellbeing. Setting an intention will help you...identify your actions and navigate your response when faced with adversity.”

For those who’ve created broad and generalized goals like getting fit in 2021, Zometsky suggests replacing those with purposeful, meaningful and achievable goals. “Instead of focusing on a resolution, which is something that typically focuses on what is lacking, in 2021, perhaps set an intention,” she said. “An intention helps us to focus and it is mindful

that we are on a journey. What do you aim to do more of this year? Intentions can give you a sense of purpose, and focuses on what is motivating you. Maybe your intention is to slow down or to continue to form deeper and meaningful relationships? Maybe your intention is to be more present in certain situations, or be more holistic in your health and wellbeing. Setting an intention will help you...identify your actions and navigate your response when faced with adversity.”

Practical resolutions might feel comforting in this year of uncertainty, says psychologist Jerome Short, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology at George Mason University. “Try small changes, evaluate, adjust, and praise yourself for improvements, he said. “It may help to have a daily schedule, usual healthy meals and exercises, and specific times alone and with others.

Paring down ambitious resolutions to those that are practical can feel satisfying this year, suggests Short. “Declutter your house, wear a basic wardrobe, and eat simple meals. Share work and household tasks with others,” he said. “Evaluate when you work most efficiently and what energizes you. Make sure you have time for breaks and enjoy your five senses with favorite sights, sounds, foods, and hugs”.

“Instead of focusing on a resolution, which is something that typically focuses on what is lacking, in 2021, perhaps set an intention.”

— Marla Zometsky,
Wellness, Health Team for Fairfax County

“Meditating, practicing gratitude and staying connected with our support networks like friends and family are quick and free activities.”

— Karina Guzman, Director of
Wellness, Prevention and Education at Marymount University



David Braun the CEO of Capstone unloading boxes of food at Food for Others.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF
CAPSTONE STRATEGIC

Capstone Donates 841 Pounds of Food for Food for Others

To commemorate 25 years of being in business, Capstone’s philanthropic arm, Capstone Cares, held a food drive to benefit Food for Others, a nonprofit food pantry and food rescue operation serving Northern Virginia. With the help of clients and friends, Capstone

was able to collect 841 pounds of food through the donation drive.

Between March and July, Food for Others has served food to a total of 68,367 households, a 30 percent increase over the number of families they served between March and July of 2019.



Capstone employees getting ready to drop off food at Food for Others.

WEEK IN FAIRFAX

Scavenger Hunt Jan. 9 Helps Children with Cancer

The Young Hearts Foundation works with Providence Players of Fairfax to support local, pediatric-cancer patients and the search for cures. For 11 years, these two groups have co-produced an annual, holiday production to do so. But this year, because of COVID-19, they’ve found a different and creative way to continue their partnership and raise money for those struggling with cancer. This Saturday, Jan. 9, from 1-2:30 p.m., they’re holding a theatrical scavenger hunt. For details, including how to register, go to <https://one.bidpal.net/scavengerhuntforacure/welcome>.

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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.

Jan. 20-Feb. 24
Caring Circle Support. 4-4:45 p.m.
Virtual. This group will use music therapy, art, and movement to share grief experiences, learn coping skills, and connect with other bereaved children. This group will be co-facilitated by a children's grief counselor and a music therapist. Group sessions will last between 30-40 minutes. Registration

required. Visit the website: <https://www.capitalcaring.org/get-help/our-services/grief-support/>

STARTING JAN. 26, 2021
On-Line ESL Classes. 7-9 p.m. Free on-line ESL classes will be offered Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7-9 PM, from January 26 to April 1, 2021. Must register online December 10, 2020 at www.lordoflifeva.org
Class size limited. Free.

NOW THRU JAN. 21
Citizenship Test Preparation. 7-8:30 p.m. Free On-Line Citizenship Test Preparation classes. Register

at www.lordoflifeva.org. We will use ZOOM software. For permanent residents who are eligible for citizenship. Sponsored by Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Fairfax and Centreville.

FAIRFAX COUNTY ACTIVATES CORONAVIRUS INFO CENTER
Fairfax County activated a Joint Information Center in response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) on March 13.
Fairfax County Health Department COVID-19 webpage – www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/novel-coronavirus

Emergency Information Blog (you can subscribe by email or follow by RSS) – www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog
Coronavirus (COVID-19) Call Center – The community may call 703-267-3511 with questions. The call center is open from 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends.
Residents may also text FFXCOVID to 888777 to receive updates from Fairfax County about COVID-19.
Twitter – @fairfaxcounty and @fairfaxhealth
Facebook – www.facebook.com/fairfaxcounty and www.facebook.com/fairfaxcountyhealth <hdr30> Bulletin

SUPPORT GROUPS
Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthy-mindsfairfax or www.nami-north-ernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 8

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PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Tytus, 10, Orange Hunt Elementary, and brother Maksyn Jacewitz, 13, Irving Middle School, Springfield, with rescue kittens, Marigold and Lily. Along with their younger brother Justyn, the boys fostered 11 cats during the Covid quarantine. Asked why is adopting/fostering important to them. Tytus told us, "Personally, if you save animals from shelters that's good. You save lives. They die if you don't adopt them."



PHOTO COURTESY MICHAEL BRADLEY

Kids throughout the area await Santa's arrival, increasingly with a pet at their side. TJ Bradley, 13 months, and his dog, Penny, share in leaving cookies and milk for Santa. Is it difficult to save the cookies for Santa? TJ did not respond, but was holding a cookie; Penny's watchful eye tracked the cookie.

Kids and Pets: More Time for Best Friends

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Families throughout the area adopted pets in record numbers during 2020 as a reaction to Covid-19 restrictions. More time at home and fewer social interactions created the perfect pet opportunity for many. Shelters reported more than double the normal adoptions, and breeders reported long wait lists. Virginia's Attorney General alerted citizens to Internet scams related to sales of non-existent puppies. Connection asked area kids to take pictures with their pets and answer questions about pet ownership.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GIOVANNA DIBICCARI

Michela Zoe Babb, 10, Mason Crest Elementary, Annandale, with rescue dog, Willie. Why not buy a dog from a puppy store? Michela said, "I think you should get dogs from shelters because they don't hurt dogs and you can adopt instead of buying. You should adopt, not buy, a dog who will be in your family."



Area kids have more time to devote to their pets as quarantining keeps them at home together. Claire Earle, 3, and her dog Lily prepare for a welcome walk outing.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ELIZABETH EARLE

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 7

Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke sponsors a monthly meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, noon-1:30 p.m., for caregivers to learn and to share with others experiencing similar challenges. Before attending, contact the facilitator, Eileen Thompson at 703-451-8626 or eileen.thompson1@gmail.com. Haven of Northern Virginia provides support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. To become a Haven volunteer, please call 703-941-7000 to request an orientation. Volunteers

must complete a 30-hour training and commit to one year of service answering Haven phones (2.5 hours weekly). Next training is scheduled for fall 2017.

ONGOING

STEM Professionals Needed. Volunteers are needed to assist K-12 STEM teachers in northern Virginia as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, stemvolunteers.org, during the 2019-20 school year, beginning in September. Please contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488 or donaldrea@aol.com.

Docents Needed. Sundays 1-4 p.m. at

the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Greet museum visitors and tell them about the exhibits, the museum and its railroad and Civil War history. Ideal for those interested in railroads, the Civil War and Northern Virginia history. Training and orientation provided. Other volunteer opportunities are gardening, publicity and exhibit planning. Call 703-945-7483.

Haven of Northern Virginia is committed to offering, support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. Volunteers provide individual and group support to those suffer-

ing from a loss. Volunteers must participate in a 30 hour training. Training will be offered in October 2018. To volunteer, call Haven at 703-941-7000.

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that feeds, clothes and educates children in need. Assistance League's philanthropic programs touch the lives of thousands of children, including those at 11 Title 1 elementary schools in Fairfax and Prince William counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need through Weekend Food for Kids, tu-

toring programs and providing new clothing and layettes. To learn more, email: info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org. Docents Needed. Sundays 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Greet museum visitors and tell them about the exhibits, the museum and its railroad and Civil War history. Ideal for those interested in railroads, the Civil War and Northern Virginia history. Training and orientation provided. Other volunteer opportunities are gardening, publicity and exhibit planning. Call 703-945-7483.

CHILDREN'S & TEENS' CONNECTION

WHITE OAKS ELEMENTARY *Holly Rodgers, the lead ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) teacher at White Oaks Elementary School in Burke submitted a selection of writings by her students.*

Birds

Birds can fly.

They have different colored wings.

There are over 10 types of different birds.

They make nests on tree branches.

Robins, blue jays, woodpeckers, crows, sparrows, hawks, eagles, owls, parrots, hummingbirds, cardinals, finches, mourning dove, mouse birds, flamingos, kiwis, cuckoos.

Some species of birds hibernate so they can keep their body warm.

These birds hibernate as nighthawks, nightjars, hummingbirds, caprimulgiform es, and mousebirds.

The largest bird is the ostrich. An ostrich is about 2.8 metres (9.2 feet) and weighs over 156 kilograms (344 pounds).

A Bee hummingbird is the smallest bird in the whole wide world.

Bee hummingbirds are about 2 - 2.4 in.

— AMBER LE, GRADE 6,
WHITE OAKS ELEMENTARY

All About Wolves

My favorite animals are wolves because they're smart, fast, and strong. They are also babysitters and protectors. While the mothers go out hunting the father watches over the babies. When the babies are endangered the fathers or mothers protect them. Also when the babies are little grown up they hunt, train, sometimes play with siblings, and most of the time they sleep.

Yes, sometimes they can be lazy. But the alphas and Beta are not lazy. Well alphas are leaders of the pack and beta are the mates of the alpha. Betas are also new alpha when the alpha dies the beta turns into a new alpha and leads the pack. When the beta dies the pup of the beta and the alpha turns into a new alpha.

Also, wolves have different colors. The rarest wolf colors are red because it's beautiful. The others are just common or rare. Wolf colors are white, black, gray, brown, gold, and silver. Those are normal wolf colors. What do wolves eat?

Wolves eat deer, rabbits, fish, sheep, elk, bison, and moose. Their favorite food is a deer. The reason they like the deer is because it's big. It can feed all the wolves in the pack too. Wolves have sharp teeth to rip up prey.

That's the reason I like wolves. They're my favorite animals in the world.

— ELISHA CHOE, GRADE 6,
WHITE OAKS ELEMENTARY

Too Many Ideas

My name is Misael Garcia, and my story is about me having too many ideas of what to write about.

I have ideas like how I recently bowled a new high score of 263 in my youth league. Also, the time I bowled in my very first tournament, and I won first place, and scholarship money for college.

I also want to write about my love for trains. I have a train table with a model train in my bedroom, and I have the Polar Express train set up on the living room floor.

The engine of this train has real peppermint patty cake scented steam that turns into smoke, in the shape of rings.

My great grandfather William Anderson Farley (Amazing Bill), just turned 107 years old, and he lives in West Virginia. He drove a little red car until the beginning of this year which is pretty amazing to me. I love and miss him very much every day. I always love to talk about the Amazing Bill.

During this pandemic, I moved into a bigger house with a bigger yard. My dad had a real bowling lane built for me outside.

I play this game on my Nintendo Switch called Animal Crossings: New Horizons, and it will start snowing in the game on December 10.

These are all the things in my head that I want to write about. Can't you see I'm having a hard time picking one idea?

— MISAEAL GARCIA, GRADE 6,
WHITE OAKS ELEMENTARY

Kpop

Kpop is my favorite type of music.

Kpop is Korean pop music.

There are many types of music. Some songs are fast and some songs are slow.

Blackpink is my favorite girl group.

Sometimes Blackpink is working with American musicians like Selena Gomez and Cardi B.

In their music videos, they wear Hanbok, which are traditional Korean dresses that women wear for New Years.

I am also from Korea.

— JENNIE LEE, GRADE 6,
WHITE OAKS ELEMENTARY

Burke, Springfield Irish Dancers Win Championship

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Eight-year-old Ciara Foley, Burke, and nine-year-old Gabby Brown, Springfield, were among five dancers from McGrath Morgan Academy of Irish Dance to bring home a championship title from the annual Oireachtas.

In December, the school sent 33 dancers to the Oireachtas, a regional championship where about 2,000 dancers from the southern United States compete not only for day of recognition, but also to qualify for upcoming national and world competitions.

The competition was fierce, but five McGrath Morgan dancers—Ciara Foley, Burke, Gabby Brown, Springfield, Aisling Reynolds, Manassas, Va., Meghann Mullarkey, Hurdon, and Sophia Rankin, Cabin John, Md.—brought home first place trophies.



Ciara Foley

Thirteen McGrath Morgan dancers qualified to compete in the world championships, which will be held in Dublin in the spring. An additional nine dancers qualified to compete at the North American championships this summer in Phoenix.



Gabby Brown

Christmas at Mosaic District

Pictures taken at Mosaic District during the Christmas time 2029.

PHOTOS BY KAREN HIGA



Fairfax County General Assembly Delegation to Hold Public Hearing

The Fairfax County delegation to the General Assembly will hold a public hearing on the 2021 session on Saturday, Jan. 9, from 9 a.m. to noon. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the hearing will be held virtually. County residents may provide testimony by phone or video submission. Fairfax County is assisting with logistics for the delegation's event.

County residents who want to speak at the hearing can register beginning Monday, Jan. 4 through the Clerk to the Board of Supervisors page <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/bosclerk/> under Related Resources, or contact the Department of Clerk Services at 703-324-3151, TTY 711, by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 6. There will be no sign ups on the day of the event. Speakers will be limited to 70 and must be Fairfax County residents. Assistance will be provided to speakers as needed.

Additional guidelines are as follows:

Each speaker will be given up to two minutes to address the delegation.

Speaking slots will be numbered based on a first come, first served basis.

County residents may register to speak as an individual or on behalf of an organization serving county residents.

Organizations are encouraged to limit their presentation to one speaker.

Requests for ADA accommodations should be made

as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the public hearing.

The Chair reserves the right to modify the guidelines on site for the smooth operation of the public forum.

The hearing will be televised live on Fairfax County Television Channel 16 (Channel 1016 in HD on Cox; Channel 16 on Verizon or Comcast), and can also be viewed on-line through the Channel 16 live stream.

Phone Testimony: If providing phone testimony, callers will receive a phone call, originating from 703-324-1000, just before their turn. For the best connection into the meeting, use a landline or, if using a cell phone, do not use the speaker function while testifying.

Video Testimony: Video testimony is subject to the same two-minute time limit as phone testimony and must be uploaded to, and playable from, YouTube.

Speakers may only testify once during the public hearing; speakers may not testify via video and phone.

Further information on the public hearing is available from members of the Fairfax County legislative delegation. Contact information for individual delegation members is available on the Virginia General Assembly web page <https://whosmy.virginiageneralassembly.gov/>.

For questions or requests for ADA accommodations contact Arielle McAloon, 703-324-2649, or Rebecca Chenette, 703-324-2683.

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AREA ROUNDUPS

Man Dies After an Industrial Worksite Accident

A man was fatally injured Dec. 29 morning following an accident at an industrial workplace located in the 9900 block of Richmond Highway in Lorton. Officers responded at 9:35 a.m. for a report of an employee who was hit by a front loader truck. When officers and rescue personnel arrived on scene, they found Chris Baransky 54, of Woodbridge and paramedics pronounced him deceased. Preliminarily, detectives determined Baransky was performing his duties in the yard on foot. Another employee operating a front loader failed

to see Baransky and collided with him. Upon the driver noticing the deceased, the driver immediately notified fellow employees, who summoned police.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will conduct an autopsy to determine the cause of death. At this time, there is no indication of criminal activity, but detectives are continuing their investigation in partnership with officials from the Virginia Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

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Legals

ABC LICENSE

Mussie and TG Corporation trading as Mussie and TG Corporation, 7701 Southern Drive, Ste A14, Springfield, VA, 22150. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wholesale Beer license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Tregist Belay, President. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

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

CALENDAR

NOW THRU JAN. 11

Scavenger Hunt. The Fairfax County Park Authority is offering a free scavenger hunt with video clues in the Cub Run Stream Valley. Grandmother Frost has lost her gifts for the woodland animals, and it's your job to help her find the presents as you walk through the forest behind Cub Run RECenter. Videos at stops along the trail lead you to your goal and teach you about the animals in the woods. At Cub Run, visitors follow a trail of clues by scanning QR codes with a smart phone to learn the gifts the animals are receiving. Snowflake markers along the path guide you to each clue. Cub Run RECenter is at 4630 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Call Cub Run at 703-817-9407.

THURSDAY/JAN. 7

Virtual Open House with Mathnasium of Reston and Centreville. 6-7 p.m. Online Zoom Classroom. Join the Mathnasium of Reston and the Mathnasium of Centreville for their Virtual Open House. They will be answering all of your questions and sharing more about the program. Parents, guardians, teachers, school representatives are all welcome. Visit the website: <https://mathnasiumopenhouse.eventbrite.com>

FRIDAY/JAN. 8

Teen Game Night. 7-9 p.m. At The Old Firehouse, McLean. Come play some of your favorite board and party games with some friends and the Old Firehouse staff. From giant Connect Four to hopscotch, OFC has a game for you. Challenge your friends and the staff for chances to win amazing prizes. To register for Old Firehouse events, visit: www.oldfirehouse.org or call 703-448-8336, TTY: 711.

SATURDAY/JAN. 9

Lesson Zero. 7:45 to 11 pm. At JV's Restaurant, 6666 Arlington Blvd., Falls Church. More information available on www.youtube.com/lessonzero or www.reverbnation.com/lessonzero

SATURDAY/JAN. 9

Make a Bird Feeder. 1-2 p.m. At Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. If you build it, they will come. Make a bird feeder and help take care of your feathered friends this winter. Discover how you can build a feeder from natural materials and learn about some of the different kinds of birds that may come to feast on your birdie buffet. Take the feeder home with you to hang in your yard. This program is designed for participants age 3 to adult. It runs from 1 to 2 p.m., and the cost is \$9 per person. Call 703-471-5414.

SUNDAY/JAN. 10

Intro to Hammock Camping. 10 a.m. to noon. At Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Shake up your next woodland adventure with a night of hammock camping. Learn about this new trend for backpackers and campers with the "Intro to Hammock Camping" program at Burke Lake Park. Watch as an outdoor specialist demonstrates how its done. Get tips on how and where to hang your hammock and gain other important hammock camping information. This program is designed for campers age 12 to adult. Cost is \$22 per person. Don't forget to bring your own hammock. Call 703-323-6600.

SUNDAY/JAN. 10

Free Online Concert. 7 p.m. Enjoy an evening of robust sea chanteys with Forty Degrees South, coming to you live from Australia on Sunday, January 10 at 7 p.m. Forty Degrees South excels in performing full throated, gloriously gutsy harmony singing. Virtual Doors open at 7 p.m.; Concert begins at 7:30 p.m. Register at <https://fsgw.org/event-4082739>

JAN. 11, JAN. 25

Unmeltable Snowman Workshop. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. It's always sad to watch a snowman melt away, so discover how you can create a four-season snowman that will still be with you when summer arrives. Sully Historic Site is hosting a series of "Unmeltable Snowman" workshops for families on three Mondays in January - Jan. 4, Jan. 11 and Jan. 25, 2021.

At the workshop, you will learn to use a felting process to make an unmeltable snowperson and decorate it with style. Keep your creation through winter, spring, summer and fall. This program is suitable for participants age 5 to adult and is being offered on the hour from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The workshop is designed for a family of up to four people, and the cost is \$20 per family. Call 703-437-1794.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 13

MCC 2021 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration. 7 p.m. Hosted by the Staff at The Alden, McLean. Virtual Book Discussion on "The Sound of Freedom: Marian Anderson, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Concert That Awakened America" by Raymond Arsenault. "The Sound of Freedom..." recounts the life of Black contralto Marian Anderson and her experience as a Black woman in the classical music field. Arsenault gives context to Anderson's historic 1939 concert at the Lincoln Memorial, drawing on her own words and those of scholars. They will discuss this book that celebrates civil rights and the performing arts. Register online at www.aldentheatre.org.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 13

Interior Illustrations. 10 a.m. to noon. At Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Capture a moment in time with your artwork through the unique "Interior Illustrations" program at Sully Historic Site. During this program, you will have the chance to use graphite or pencils to relax and draw a historic interior at Sully. Focus on specific artifacts or capture the essence of life during the early 1800s. The program is designed for participants age 16 to adult. The cost is \$15 per person. Some supplies will be available. Social distancing and face coverings are required. Call 703-437-1794.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 13

The Unruly Theatre Project's Virtual Improv Show. 7 p.m. Join (the) Unruly Theatre Project's virtual fall improv shows from the comfort of your couch! Register online and a Zoom link and password for the show will be emailed to you. Participants must register two hours in advance of showtime. Register online at www.aldentheatre.org.

JAN. 14 TO FEB. 18 (THURSDAYS)

MCC 2021 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration. 7 p.m. Virtual Podcast Discussion Group on "Seeing White"—Season Two of "Scene on Radio" from the Center for Documentary Studies. Where did the notion of "whiteness" come from? Hosts Jon Biewen and weekly guest host, Dr. Chenjerai Kumanyika, delve into the historical origins of whiteness and racism in the U.S. The series looks at the history as well as the social constructs and emotional grappling that Americans engage in when discussing race and whiteness. Register online at www.aldentheatre.org.

SUNDAY/JAN. 17

Catching Atomic Spies. 2-3:30 p.m. At the Cold War Museum (100% Virtual in the Zoom Room, 1742 Lineweaver Rd., Warrenton. How an Astonishing Work of Decryption Led to the Atomic Spies, the Cambridge Five, and Much More. Presented by the Historian of the National Security Agency. Cost is \$20. Visit the website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/venona-the-secret-tool-that-found-key-spies-in-the-early-cold-war-tickets-123765105763>

TUESDAY/JAN. 19

Waterfowl Program. At Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. While some birds may be wintering in the South, there are still plenty to see on local waterways. In fact, for some migratory birds, Fairfax County seems mighty balmy this time of year. Come to Burke Lake Park in January and learn about the birds that are making the lake their home for the cold season. Join the "Waterfowl" program on Tuesday, Jan. 5 or Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2021, to search for birds such as loons, lesser scaups and ring-necked ducks. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. The program is designed for participants age 12 to adult and runs from 10 to 11 a.m. The cost is \$8 per person. Call 703-323-6600.

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New Year, Old Problem: Cancer



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As I sit and write here, with too much time on my hands, I can't help but consider my lot in life. In a little less than two months: Feb. 20, I will celebrate (if that's even the right word), the 12-year anniversary of my original cancer diagnosis. On that date, I received a phone call at work from my internal medicine doctor advising me that the previous week's surgical biopsy indicated a malignancy in my lungs. The following week, Team Lourie was sitting in an oncologist's office waiting for the other shoe to drop. And boy, did it drop: non small cell lung cancer, stage IV. Accompanied by a "13 month to two year" prognosis with very little encouragement or statistical probability to give us much reason to hope. In answer to our predictable question, the soon-to-be my oncologist offered up a tantalizing prospect: "Could you be the one" (literally) that outlives your prognosis? It was hardly heartfelt, but his answer was "Yes."

So off I didn't fly into the wild blue yonder. Instead, I shuffled out his office and with my head down, exited the building and staggered into my car where my wife, Dina and I attempted to process the information we had just been given. I don't recall there being much discussion during the 30-minute drive home or even after we had arrived. To tell you the truth, besideS still processing the information we had just received, we were pretty much in a daze (hence the overall name for my columns: "Daze of My Life") and were so blindsided by the seriousness of what we had just heard (no cancer history in my immediate family as well as my being a lifelong non-smoker), we almost couldn't talk, probably didn't talk and any talking we did was likely empty and hollow. Imagine being told, out of the blue, that you could be dead in less than a year, maybe even before your 55th birthday. Heck, both my parents lived past 85. That's what I've been anticipating. To think that 30 years yet of my future life had just been taken away was almost too much to believe. But since the oncologist was not the least bit in doubt about any of the results or how to proceed (we didn't feel the need, given the urgency and conviction with which the oncologist spoke, to even get a second opinion), we decided and committed that very day to starting chemotherapy the following week. It seemed clear that there was absolutely no time like the present.

Though the dozen or so tumors in my lungs "never acted" as my oncologist expected (growing and moving) it wasn't until Dec. '19 a year or so after a large tumor appeared below my Adam's apple that a new surgical biopsy was performed. The results of which indicated thyroid cancer which a few weeks later led to my having a thyroidectomy (thyroid removed) per the direction of my newest doctor, an endocrinologist (who has been treating me ever since). When the post-surgical biopsy confirmed yet again the existence of thyroid cancer, my reclassification as a thyroid cancer patient was official. Soon thereafter, my treatment for thyroid cancer began, first an overnight at the hospital and then daily levothyroxine pills. As a result, I am no longer being treated for lung cancer, just thyroid. The question has raised its ugly head in these last few months: Was I misdiagnosed or did I have two types of cancer? And if I do have two types of cancer and one/the lung cancer is not being treated, am I in reality a "dead man walking?" Ignoring/not treating lung cancer is generally speaking, not advisable. As my oncologist said to me many years ago about my having lung cancer: "I can treat you but I can't cure you." Not exactly words to live by.

It's on these anniversaries and the last few months leading up to them when I focus even more on my circumstances. How does that actually occur when my having cancer already consumes my conscience and subconscious? I can't really explain it other than to express the amazement and good fortune that I'm still alive. All I know is, I'm always happy when I wake up the next day and the anniversary has finally passed.

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

Tyson's Bakery Offers Tempting Choices

BY ALEXANDRA GREELEY
THE CONNECTION

Review: Classic Bakery.

This tiny, classy destination, Classic Bakery, is a hidden treasure among the numerous store-front businesses and big-box stores that make Tysons Corner a popular destination. Although there is limited indoor seating,

outdoor tables are open for warm weather, and the ease of takeout for local folks surely contributes to its draw to those who love great food.

Of course, baked goods are part of the name, and patrons might get shocked at the huge

assortment of cookies, muffins, croissants, cakes, shortcakes and the staggering number of specialty cakes on display. In fact, to the right side of the checkout counter is a glass case filled with shelves of luscious and tempting cakes... too bad that each is really too

large for a personal dessert right after their in-store lunch.

Another draw is the store's array of coffees. Not only does staff offer regular drip coffee and hot tea, but coffee aficionados can sip cups of espresso, cappuccino, latte, and several flavored versions of the standard offerings. How about a cup of latte macchiato or

espresso macchiato? On offer, too, are Armenian coffee and affogato espresso, plus chai latte, pistachio rose latte, and assorted iced drinks. Of course, soft drinks and water are available, too.

But it is the food menu that really attracts. Early-morning workers can drop in for a sit-down or pickup from among five choices: a bagel; oatmeal; an organic yogurt parfait; an egg-and-cheese sandwich; or an egg white dish with spinach and feta cheese. It helps locals that the weekday hours run from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. That way, any time hunger strikes, the Classic Bakery offers so many treats.

For patrons dropping by for lunch or an early supper, Classic Bakery offers a diverse sandwich menu, with some of the offerings rather unusual, such as the turkey, brie, and cranberry sandwich (which is likely seasonal) or the toasted pesto caprese. More familiar and equally yummy are the tuna salad and chicken salad sandwiches on a croissant and the grilled cheese with bacon, cheddar, Gruyère, and Swiss on whole grain bread with an option to order a bowl of tomato soup alongside.

Regardless of when anyone stops in, a sampling of pastries is a must. The chocolate-filled croissant is delicious, but the final choice or choices must come after studying the glass-covered display case. With so many options, probably the best step to take is to order a box of several or many sweet treats, and head home to splurge.

Classic Bakery, 8605 Westwood Center Dr., Suite 150, Tysons, 703-992-7807. Hours: Mon.-Fri., 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Sun., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Regardless of when anyone stops in, a sampling of pastries is a must.

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Pictured: One of the several historical buildings that has housed the Alexandria Gazette Packet since its 1784 founding.

The pandemic has crushed many newspapers across the country, and one of America's oldest newspapers and its affiliated Connection Newspapers, websites and digital media is at risk. The Northern Virginia, DC, and MD area's best read and most trusted source for community news, which includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Connection Newspapers in the metropolitan region. The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyperlocal news to residents. Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years - countless residents have grown up with this local paper covering significant moments in the life of your family and children, news, sporting events,

school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cars. Internet news and large national newspapers do not provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers provide.

Help save these historical papers. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of a local community newspaper.

Thank you for helping to keep your community dialogue alive throughout Northern Virginia and Potomac, Md. All funds will be used to continue providing vital community dialogue and meeting obligations to our loyal and patient employees, contractors and suppliers due to continuing loss of advertising.



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