

Communities Help Fight Hunger

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WELLBEING

PAGE 9

Solomon Fausett, 5, of Reston hands another bag of food to Jose Gomes, Fairfax County MV Transportation Fastran Bus Driver in the parking lot of the Hunter Mill District Supervisor's Office in support of the Stuff the Bus food drive.

McLean High Boundary Change Down to the Wire

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

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Fairfax County Severs Cooperation with ICE

Board adopts Trust Policy barring voluntarily sharing residents' immigrant status.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County's Board of Supervisors approved in a vote of 9-to-1, the Public Trust and Confidentiality Policy (Trust Policy) introduced as a Board Matter on Jan. 26 by Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay and co-sponsored by Supervisors Dalia A. Palchik (D-Providence District) and John W. Foust (D-Dranesville District). The Trust Policy prohibits County employees, government agencies and departments, including the police, from voluntarily sharing information or cooperating with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials.

"Immigration enforcement is done by others, and unless required by law, we will not share immigration status for individuals. This is particularly important to our police department when we are trying to solve crimes in our community," McKay said.

The Trust Policy states: "It is not an appropriate use of Fairfax resources to facilitate enforcement of federal immigration law, which is the sole responsibility of the federal government. Cooperation with civil, administrative immigration enforcement is especially problematic because it lacks the constitutional protections of criminal law, and ICE civil detention requests are frequently issued in error."

The policy reasserted what McKay said was the role of local government and the community's desire to assist people by working with them, not against them.

"Having this policy in place is the humane and right thing to do to provide safeguards to those who need our services the most," Supervisor Walter Alcorn said.

THE TRUST POLICY addressed reports that some undocumented immigrants in the County avoided seeking help during the pandemic out of fear of being deported after information they shared with the County would be disclosed to federal immigration officials. Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D-Lee District) said it became clear to him from conversations with a number of nonprofit organizations that there were community members "who were fearful and not willing to come forward and ask for help because they thought they were going to put themselves in jeopardy."

According to a post by ACLU People Power Fairfax on Facebook, Jan. 26, the Trust Policy "provides privacy protection for residents' www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



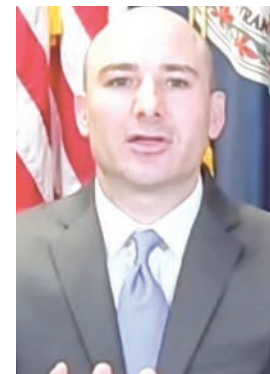
BOS Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay (D-At Large)



Luis Aguilar, Virginia State Director, CASA



Diane Alejandro, ACLU People Power Fairfax



Steve Descano (D), Commonwealth's Attorney in Fairfax County



Melvin Mancia, CASA member



ACLU PEOPLE POWER FAIRFAX FACEBOOK

ACLU People Power Fairfax members rejoice when hearing Fairfax County Adopts Trust Policy

personal information; it restricts information sharing with all outside entities. This helps all Fairfax residents, but especially immigrants because ICE is so adept at data-mining any information from any source."

A second post the next day by ACLU People Power Fairfax said that the Trust Policy does not just "codify" existing practice.

"Significant new guardrails were put in place to prevent direct AND indirect sharing of data with ICE. Immigrants can breathe easier. Their fear of government was not irrational even if county employees did not intentionally share their information; the risk was there. Now trust can be rebuilt," ACLU posted.

On Friday, Jan. 29, immigrant rights advocacy groups CASA and ACLU People Power Fairfax co-hosted a bilingual press conference. After four years of advocacy, they celebrated passage of the Trust Policy. Moderators Luis Aguilar of CASA, and Diane Alejandro, with ACLU People Power Fairfax, celebrated and spotlighted comments by McKay, Foust, Palchik, Steve Descano,

Commonwealth's Attorney, and members of CASA and ACLU People Power Fairfax.

"It is without a doubt that Fairfax County is leading the way for CASA and our 100,000 regional members," said Aguilar.

McKay said the Trust Policy passage marked a new chapter for Fairfax County. "We will do everything we can to help people, protect them from association with ICE," said McKay.

Foust said the advocacy and education provided by the CASA and ACLU teams led to the adoption of the Trust Policy, and the timing couldn't be more critical to the Latino community.

"Covid is having a grossly disproportionate impact on the Latino community," Foust said. "Everyone can take advantage of the ongoing public health efforts. Whether it be testing or vaccinating, or assisting with contact tracing, it is critical. ... This can be a huge step, I believe, toward fighting the spread of Covid in the Latino community."

For Palchik, it was personal. "It's very close to my heart, not only as the first Latino

Supervisor here in the history of Fairfax County but also as an immigrant."

Steve Descano, Commonwealth's Attorney, said that with the passage of the Trust Policy, "If you come to court, you will not be turned over to ICE. ... I'll continue to work with County leadership and get input from groups like those that are joining us today and, as always, bring the values of the community into the courthouse."

According to Alejandro, she and McKay agreed that non-law enforcement agencies already strive to protect immigration status. Still, other information that ICE has used to locate its targets remained vulnerable. "This is why the protections against sharing addresses and other private information are so important. The ones in the Trust Policy rival the best in the country. The board can be proud," Alejandro said.

DURING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, McKay said that the policy is for all Fairfax County agencies, but does not apply to those operated by towns and the City of Fairfax. "It's a little bit of a mixed bag for programs that those individual cities run. Our policy can't dictate what they do. ... For services that we run in those jurisdictions, this policy does apply to those. For example ... in some cases, we run the school system." McKay said that as for things that come up through the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force, of which the County Police Department is a member, "our officers will not be participating in that. This policy doesn't set the policies of the Gang Task Force."

Other comments shared during the celebration of the passage of Trust Policy:

Melvin Mancia, a CASA member, resident of Fairfax County since 2004, said police pulled him over for a traffic violation. "I am one of those persons who have suffered the consequences of the previous law," Mancia said. Police took him, handed him over to ICE, and detained him in a facility for months. Unlike some of his friends, Mancia got out. He lost his home and his business. His friends lost more. When they were de-

Putting Just Into Justice

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)



COMMENTARY

Under current Virginia law a person who steals something of value less than \$1,000 can be punished by up to 12 months in jail with fines up to \$2,500 along with any restitution that might be owed. As tough as that sentence may seem, if that same person commits another misdemeanor larceny of whatever amount less than a thousand dollars within any time frame in the future, that person under current law can be jailed for between 30 days and 12 months. A third or any subsequent offense at any time in the future results in a Class 6 felony with up to five years in prison.

Persons who practice law defending individuals facing such charges tell me that the accused are most likely to be poor, and the vast majority are homeless and/or mentally ill. Upping the penalties on such persons is neither just for the vulnerable persons involved nor does it make

society any safer. With thanks to Justice Forward of Virginia (justiceforwardva.com) for bringing my attention to this injustice, I introduced HB2290 that is now making its way through the House to repeal the enhanced penalties.

This bill is but one example of laws that have been on the books for years but upon examination are clearly not just laws; they do not agree with what is considered morally right or good. For most of the years I have served in the House of Delegates, I was the lone vote against a series of bills that added to the list of capital crimes. Along the way conservative Republican Frank Hargrove of Hanover County joined me in my opposition to the death penalty. In more recent years, opposition to the death penalty has grown to the point where it appears likely that the death penalty will be abolished this year by a bill of which I am a co-patron.

Abolishing the death penalty would help put

just into the justice system in the Commonwealth. Between 1901 and 1981, 258 Black people were executed in Virginia at a rate nearly six times the rate of white people. Not a single white person was executed for any crime other than murder while Black persons were executed for crimes that included armed robbery and attempted sexual assault. During its history stretching back to 1608, Virginia put to death 1,300 people including the most women and young children of any state in the Union.

This legislative session may be the most historic yet in reforming the criminal justice system. Bills pending before the current session include repealing mandatory minimum sentencing, ending felony possession for drugs, reforming the broken probation system, instituting automatic expungement of criminal records, establishing pay parity for public defenders, and ending presumption against bail.

Virginians will be no less safe in their person or in their possessions when the laws become more just, fair and equally applied regardless of one's race. Laws that are just are more likely to be respected and certainly easier to defend.

Volunteering for Area Parks

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

As many citizens take a renewed interest in community service as an energy outlet and to help others during the challenges of the pandemic, we note the on-going efforts of 2018 Ellie Doyle Park Service Award honoree Michael Applegate. Applegate, a familiar figure to users of Laurel Hill Park, has been logging a minimum of 30 hours weekly since 2016. Initially concentrating on mowing along walking and biking trails, of late he has been spending more time on drainage improvement and expanding trail verge areas into the thicker brush.

This week we found Applegate assisting the area's County Maintenance Operations crew in improving an old broken drain at the Park's Ashton-Snowden entrance. A small broken pipe and brickwork dating from the prison era, lining a portion of Giles Run, were improved with a larger volume pipe and added trail for access. Applegate hand dug rocks into the stream bank using a shovel and pick, framing the large water carrier pipe. County maintenance crew members then



Laurel Hill Park volunteer Michael Applegate stands at his hand dug rock wall lining creek drainage.

used mechanized equipment to cover the pipe and line the passage with border rocks.

The enhancements add improvements needed after relocation of some Giles Run Disc Golf Course



County park maintenance employees Gabe Fetzer and Christian Croke (in cab) work with volunteer Michael Applegate to improve the trail and drain dated from the prison era.

holes to accommodate the land sale and housing development adjacent to the course.

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NEWS DEPARTMENT:
vienna@connectionnewspapers.com

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

Mercia Hobson
Community Reporter
mhobson@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
debfunk@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@connectionnewspapers.com



Communities Help Fight Hunger

Stuff the Bus rolls into action throughout the County: Next run on Saturday, Feb. 6.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Wheels on the Bus is a classic children's song that tells the story of a little bus going "All 'round the town." On Saturday, Jan. 30, Fairfax County's little Fastran buses, CEUs and school buses traveled all 'round the county, to 21 locations, in a fight against hunger. For its tenth year, Stuff the Bus was at it again to meet the critical need to help restock local food pantry shelves after the holidays.

The demand for food has never been greater than this year due to the economic disruption caused by the pandemic. The buses parked from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. outside county facilities, including public libraries, Board of Supervisors' offices and the Pennino building in Fairfax to allow donors to comply with social distancing recommendations and collect non-perishable food donations outside. The buses would return for second runs on Saturday, Feb. 6.

Cars arrived at the Dranesville District, Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, shortly after 10 a.m.

Residents of the district had been generous with prior Stuff the Bus donations during the pandemic. Collections at this site would benefit LINK, Inc., a nonprofit that provides emergency food and financial assistance to qualified people in need.

"We can't let people go hungry in our affluent community," said Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville District). "The loss of jobs and small business failures caused by the COVID virus have greatly increased the need for food assistance. In the midst of this awful pandemic, it is awesome to see how Dranesville residents have stepped up to support Stuff the Bus with unprecedented levels of food contributions."

Melissa Morgan and her daughter, Hannah, 7, were among the first to place their items on the bus. "We know a lot of people are struggling to find food because they've lost their jobs. We wanted to help," said Melissa. Hannah said she liked the Cocoa Puffs cereal that was in her bag. Melissa said they also chose tea, coffee, rice and beans to donate.

According to the County website, for those who cannot donate in person, monetary donations can be made by visiting the partner nonprofits' websites or by visiting Volunteer Fairfax's Stuff the Bus Donation Page. Nonprofits can turn donated dollars into more meals with a monetary donation by purchasing food in bulk or through special discounts. Monetary donations also allow pantries to purchase culturally appropriate foods, fresh fruit and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, and lean proteins, which can't be collected through food drives.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Hannah Morgan, 7, hands her food donation bag to Manuel Caverro, a Fairfax County MV Transportation Fastran Bus Driver, to place on the bus located at the Great Falls Library parking lot during the Jan. 30, Stuff the Bus food drive.

Make a Difference in Your Community! Run for a Seat on the McLean Community Center Governing Board

PUBLIC NOTICE OF ELECTION

MCLEAN COMMUNITY CENTER GOVERNING BOARD
SMALL DISTRICT 1A-DRANESVILLE
FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA



This **OFFICIAL NOTICE** of election to select members of the 2021-2022 Governing Board of the McLean Community Center (the Governing Board) is given to residents of Small District 1A-Dranesville, Fairfax County, Virginia (referred to as "Small District 1A"). The McLean Community Center (MCC) operates as a Special District Agency of the Fairfax County Government through a Memorandum of Understanding between the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Governing Board. On February 8, 1984, the Board of Supervisors approved the Memorandum of Understanding, which authorizes the election. MCC is funded by residents of Small District 1A in Greater McLean for their use through a real estate tax surcharge, the result of a 1970 Small District 1A bond referendum.

Open Voting (in person or by U.S. Mail upon request) will be from March 17, through May 15, AND a drive-through option for voting will be available from 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on McLean Day (May 15, 2021) at MCC.

Candidate Qualifications:

Each resident who lives within Small District 1A is eligible to run for a seat on the Governing Board within the appropriate category. If you need help determining whether you reside in Small District 1A, please contact MCC at **703-790-0123, TTY: 711**, or by email at elections@mcleancenter.org.

ADULTS: Candidates must be residents of Small District 1A and must be at least 18 years of age on or before May 15, 2021.

TEENS: Candidates must be 15, 16 or 17 years old on or before May 15, 2021, live within Small District 1A, and live in the boundary area for either Langley or McLean high schools. You **do not** have to attend either high school. You may attend another school, including one that is outside of Small District 1A, or you may be home schooled. You can only run for the seat representing the high school boundary area where you live.

Available Governing Board Seats and Terms:

Three (3) adult Governing Board seats will be filled through the election. The candidates who receive the three (3) highest numbers of votes will serve three-year terms on the Governing Board.

One (1) Governing Board youth seat representing the Langley High School boundary area will be filled for a one-year term.

One (1) Governing Board youth seat representing the McLean High School boundary area will be filled for a one-year term.

Candidate Petitions Requirements:

ADULTS: Must collect the signatures of ten (10) residents of Small District 1A who are 18 years old or older on or before May 15, 2021.

TEENS: Must collect the signatures of ten (10) residents of Small District 1A who are 15, 16 or 17 years old on or before May 15, 2021.

Candidate Packets containing a petition, instructions and all pertinent paperwork may be obtained at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean, Virginia, 22101, starting on Thursday, Jan. 21. Candidates must pick up and return their own petitions in person.

DEADLINE: Each resident seeking election to the Governing Board shall file a completed petition with MCC at the address shown below **by 5 p.m. on Friday, March 12, 2021:**

**McLean Community Center
1234 Ingleside Ave.
McLean, VA 22101**

For more information about the election, please call **703-790-0123, TTY: 711**, go to www.mcleancenter.org/about/candidates, or email MCC at elections@mcleancenter.org.

Terri Markwart, Chair
Elections & Nominations Committee
McLean Community Center Governing Board

**Vienna Metro Station
Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements
Fairfax County**

Virtual Public Information Meeting

Wednesday, February 24, 2021, 7-8:30 p.m.
www.virginiadot.org/ViennaMetroBikePed

Inclement weather date: Monday, March 8, 2021

Find out about planned bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the area of the Vienna Metro station along Country Creek Road/Virginia Center Boulevard between Sutton Road and the ramp to westbound I-66, and along Sutton Road between Blake Lane and Country Creek Road. The improvements include shared-use paths, sidewalks, two-way cycle tracks, road diets, traffic signals, signal optimization, pavement markings and signage.

The meeting will be held as a **virtual/online meeting**. Information for accessing and participating in the virtual meeting is available at www.virginiadot.org/ViennaMetroBikePed. The project team will make a short presentation beginning at 7 p.m. and answer questions for about an hour after the presentation.

Review project information and meeting details on the webpage above or during business hours at VDOT's Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call ahead at 703-259-1794 or TTY/TDD 711 to make an appointment with appropriate personnel.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR 771, a Programmatic Categorical Exclusion was prepared under agreement with the Federal Highway Administration. Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 and 36 CFR 800, information concerning the potential effects of the proposed improvements on properties is included in the environmental document.

Give your comments during the meeting, or by **March 8, 2021** via the comment form on the project website, by mail to Mr. Zamir Mirza, Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or by email to meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov. Please reference "Vienna Metro Station Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements" in the subject line.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT Civil Rights at 703-259-1775.

State Project: EN18-029-423, P101, R201, C501
UPC: 113611
Federal: TAP-5A01 (964)



FCPS

Over the past 10 years, McLean HS has grown in student membership, increasing its capacity deficit to "substantial," at 118 percent as reported in SY 2019-20.

McLean High Boundary Change Down to the Wire

After the last public hearing, the School Board votes on Feb. 4.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The McLean/Langley High School Boundary Study is at the end of its multi-year process for the School Board to take action by vote and provide capacity relief, or not. On Thursday, Jan. 28, the School Board welcomed final testimony. Students and parents weighed in, each citing different concerns from different perspectives. One parent asked who she was addressing. "There doesn't seem to be a single school board member with their cameras on," said Bonnie Arthur, a McLean parent.

Over the past 10 years, McLean HS has grown in student membership, increasing its capacity deficit to "substantial," at 118 percent as reported in SY 2019-20.

FCPS implemented capacity solutions beginning in SY 2012-13 and continuing through SY 2020-21. FCPS installed twelve temporary classrooms, expanded the weight room; removed lockers from the hallways, converted two classrooms to Bio/Chem Labs, and installed a twelve classroom modular that replaced the twelve temporary classrooms. The solutions reportedly increased program capacity at McLean HS from 1,992 to 2,343, according to FCPS.

The School Board is scheduled to vote on the boundary adjustment at its Feb. 4 business meeting. Information will be provided to the Board before the meeting.

Following community feedback to include middle schools to address split feeders at all levels and in accord with School Board Regulation 8130.9, at the January 21 School Board meeting, FCPS recommended the School Board approve a boundary adjustment of a portion of the Spring Hill Elementary split feeder area to feed from Longfellow Middle and McLean High to Cooper Middle and Langley High.

The Connection reported on the January 21 School Board meeting, noting that the approved boundary adjustment would not affect the elementary school boundary.

Students, Parents Weigh In

On Thursday, Jan. 28, the School Board welcomed the testimony of thirty-one individuals allotted 3-minutes each. The following are highlights of

the testimonies:

I've made a few casual virtual friends, but they are not very meaningful friendships. I would not miss them if I moved to Cooper Middle for eighth grade. If I were grandfathered and stayed at Longfellow for eighth grade, I would gather friends next year while in person but have to say goodbye to them when I went off to Langley... It makes sense to resume rising eighth-graders from Longfellow to Cooper next year. - Ava Carter, resident at Wolf Trap Woods, seventh grader at Longfellow MS

I am wondering why and how Option C was proposed to the Board... Looking at the map, Colvin Run neighborhoods are closer to Cooper and Langley than Spring Hill was in Option C. I've also heard diversity. I do not care about the race factor in making this decision - Connor Chun, Longfellow MS student

In my school, almost all kids go to Cooper and Langley. Where I live, I'm the exception. I'm supposed to go to Longfellow and then McLean... During all my years at Colvin, I have developed relationships with people at this school... I'm asking the Board to fix this.- Sara Powell, sixth grader, Colvin Run ES

We've heard from the students so far tonight. It comes down to the fact that if you eliminate feeders at the elementary school level and make any boundary changes starting with rising seventh graders, you would address all the issues that you just heard from those very articulate kids. - John Callanan

I'm not sure who I'm addressing here since there doesn't seem to be a single school board member with their cameras on...Table this issue until the results of this disastrous year can be analyzed, and the resulting actual enrollment numbers can be used as a calculation for school boundaries.- Bonnie Arthur, McLean parent

I'm part of a small new neighborhood, Summer House Landing... We're currently assigned to Herndon High, while all of our surrounding neighborhoods are assigned to Langley. Under the Fairfax County Public Schools policy, 8130.7, the Board can adjust the boundary for various reasons, and my neighborhood clearly falls under three of these... My intent is not to detract from tonight's conversation. I just want to highlight that I think it's important for every student to be given the same thoughtful consideration. - Hana Kong

The bottom line of my remarks can be summarized through one question. Why would we, as a community, proceed with the boundary adjustment during a pandemic? I cannot stress enough that this is an increase in the stress of many students and my family, who are potentially on the chopping block during this long deliberative process. - Michael Wautlet

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AREA ROUNDUPS

Celebrating Black History Month

The Alden and the Fairfax County Public Library are cosponsoring free virtual event "Meet Kiley Reid," bestselling author of "Such a Fun Age" on Sunday, Feb. 7, 2 p.m.

Registration is required. Celebrate Black History Month with the instant New York Times-bestselling author of a critically acclaimed new novel that shines a bright light on the subtle, yet deeply impactful aspects of race and privilege in America. To register or for more information, visit www.aldentheatre.org.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MCC
Kiley Reid



McLean Branch of AAUW to Host Discussion on 'Navigating Pandemic'

McLean Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) will host "A Guide to Navigating the Pandemic," discussion via Zoom with Dr. Michele A. Romano on Saturday, Feb. 6, 2021, 10 a.m.

Dr. Romano, a Board-Certified Family Physician, was in private clinical practice from 1987 until her retirement in 2015. Dr. Romano was also an Associate Clinical Professor in the Department of Family Medicine and Population Health at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), Richmond. During this period, she also served as the Chairman of the Department of Family Medicine and a member of the Medical Executive Committee at Inova Fair Oaks Hospital in Northern Virginia. Dr. Romano was a Registered Nurse for 12 years. She



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED
Dr. Michele A. Romano

then supervised the Critical Care Units at Retreat Hospital in Richmond for six years.

Dr. Romano was regularly named as a Top Doc by Washingtonian magazine. She has also served on the Board of Trustees of the Medical College of Virginia Foundation, on the VCU Board of Visitors, and the VCU Health System Board.

She is a member of the American Academy of Family Practice.

She received her RN at Trumbull Memorial Hospital in Warren, Ohio; BA in Biology at the University of Tennessee; and MD at VCU.

Look at the McLean AAUW website for contacting the Branch Presidents for the Zoom meeting Link.

PEOPLE

Town of Vienna Names New HR Director

As Michelle Crabtree takes on her new professional role as the Town of Vienna's human resources director, she brings with her lessons learned in the hotel industry and with Walmart, a family Purdue tradition that extends



COURTESY PHOTO
Michelle Crabtree

back four generations, and a love for people and human relations.

Before coming to the Town of Vienna, Crabtree worked for a quarter of a century in human resources in the hotel industry, for the past 15 years at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City, where she also provided HR support for other Hyatt hotels in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, DC.

Before coming to the hotel industry, Crabtree worked for eight years with Walmart, first as a college intern and eventually as a store manager.

"When you get to know employees and about their families and what they like, when you develop a relationship with them, then they feel more connected and work harder for the organi-

zation," she says.

Town Manager Mercury Payton says: "We received 72 applications in our nationwide search to fill the director of human resources position. Michelle's deep experience in human resources leadership and her high level of customer service experience caught our attention, but it's Michelle's professionalism and appreciation of the value of employees at every level that set her apart from other candidates."

Crabtree also is a fourth-generation Boilermaker alumna - her great-grandmother graduated from Purdue University in 1914. She graduated from Purdue in 1990 with a bachelor's degree in consumer sciences. And Crabtree met her husband of 16 years through a Purdue alumni event.

They have two children, Emily, 14, and Tyler, 11. Crabtree takes over the human resources director role in Vienna from Maggie Kain, who retired effective Feb. 1.

THE CONNECTION Alexandria Gazette Packet Mount Vernon Gazette Potomac ALMANAC

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Publishes:

February 24, 2021

Ads submitted by:

February 18, 2021

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Tightening Criteria for Entering into Gang Database

Gang Task Force use of DataWalk under scrutiny.

Part two of a two-part series.

On Oct. 2, 2018, Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force selected DataWalk as their analytical platform to support its fight against gangs according to a headline on BUSINESS WIRE.

“The Northern Virginia Gang Task Force (NVGTF), a key agency in the front line of the fight against gangs such as the notorious MS-13, has selected DataWalk as their analytical platform to support their daily operations, collaboration, and investigative support ... NVGTF members from 14 Virginia law enforcement agencies will use DataWalk to provide a secure, shared, centralized platform for analyzing data to support gang investigations, and to empower detectives to significantly extend their capabilities for doing crime analysis.”

“DataWalk delivers the critical functionality needed for our operations,” said Jay Lanham, Executive Director of NVGTF. “DataWalk empowers our team with new capabilities for collaboration and analysis, to increase our effectiveness, efficiency, and ability to fulfill our mission of making our region inhospitable to gang activity.”

“DataWalk will enable NVGTF agents to instantly search across all their data to find people, locations, and events of interest; securely collaborate on investigations; and use advanced link charts and geospatial analysis to detect and uncover criminal patterns,” according to the BUSINESS WIRE.

“DataWalk is quickly establishing its position in the law enforcement marketplace for crime-fighting software by offering a centralized repository with sophisticated analytics,” said Gabe Gotthard, DataWalk C.E.O. in the 2018 BUSINESS WIRE release. “DataWalk uniquely enables organizations like the NVGTF to effectively leverage all their data to improve public safety.”

IN AN INTERVIEW on Jan. 7, Lanham discussed the prior use of GangNet by the Northern Virginia Regional Gang Task Force, their selection of DataWalk as an alternate database, and DataWalk’s current use status.

Lanham said that in 2018, 14 agencies were part of the task force, but since then, two have dropped out. FCPD remains one of the agencies. Lanham said while the Task Force was set up with different agencies; still, each detective only had access to their own agency’s record management system in GangNet.

“We were not able to cross-reference any cases ... That is because of each individual jurisdiction’s I.T. policies as far as being able to go through the firewall. ... Our detectives did not have that ability to do that,” Lanham said.

“Keep in mind, GangNet is a database where gang members were entered into, to add their picture, tattoos, address, those kinds of things. So basically, it was a crim-

inal database where [detectives] could go in if they couldn’t identify who was a gang member.”

DataWalk, Lanham said is not a system where “we go in and enter individuals who might be associated with gangs or an admitted gang member ... DataWalk is where active criminal cases would go into the system. So, for instance, a Fairfax County detective who wrote up a report as part of his criminal investigation, it could be scanned and downloaded into that system along with any photographs and phone numbers... Then DataWalk will cross-reference cases... It negates the need for detectives and investigators to cross-reference phone numbers and spend a long, long time.”

According to Lanham, DataWalk is not a “system that is out of the box.” “They will come in and design a system the way you need it, in the way you want it to work with a lot of systems,” he said. The engineers at DataWalk sat down with detectives at the Task Force. “And our detectives told them what we needed,” Lanham said. “Only our detectives on the Task Force, no other police officer in Northern Virginia, have access to anything we have except the Task Force member,” said Lanham.

However, the Task Force does not have DataWalk up fully running and working because of the lack of funding. “It’s made it very difficult,” Lanham said. “We work with one hand tied behind our back most of the time because of our minimal funding.”

Lanham said in 2002, when the Task Force was formed; it received the support of the Honorable Frank R. Wolf of Virginia’s 10th Congressional District, funded with earmarked grants through the Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (J.A.G.) Program. “Suddenly, in 2013, all the funding went away. We had a \$3 million budget... Now it’s just law enforcement. Each police agency contributes \$25,000 to the budget... We get no money from the state government or the federal government.”

According to DataWalk: It is a link analysis software platform to connect numerous large data sets, both external and internal, into a single repository for fast visual analysis. DataWalk enables data-intensive organizations to blend all desired data from various internal and external sources into



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

There is no current mechanism by which to challenge one’s placement in GangNet.



PHOTO FCPD

Trained and certified law enforcement could query GangNet to determine if an individual they encountered was a suspected gang member or gang associate.

a unified view, such that they can instantly search, visualize, and collaboratively analyze all of their data through a comprehensive set of simple visual tools.

“We haven’t been able to get it to where we need it to be at this point because of funding. In essence, Task Force funding went from \$3 million in 2013 to \$300,000 in 2020,” Lanham said.

Fairfax County Police Department currently uses I/LEADS, the Intergraph Law Enforcement Automated Data System, as it has been

GANG TASK FORCE MEMBERS

While 16 jurisdictions originally comprised the Northern Virginia Gang Task Force, Ray Lham said there are 12 as of Jan. 11, 2021. Most recently, the City of Alexandria and City of Falls Church withdrew because of “funding problems,” and the Town of Dumfries and Town of Warrenton, Lanham said, withdrew before he arrived at the Gang Task Force. He did not know why they withdrew.

Arlington County
City of Fairfax
Fairfax County
Fauquier County
Town of Herndon
Town of Leesburg
Loudoun County
Manassas City
Manassas Park
Prince William County
Town of Vienna
Virginia State Police

for some time, learned Kofi Annan, president of The Activated People in early Jan. 2021. Concerned about the Department’s or the Task Force’s use of I/LEADS or other databases and their criteria for labeling area residents “gang members,” Annan said, “There is still a need for greater transparency and due process.”

ON JAN. 8, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas “Tom” Ryan, Deputy Chief of

Police for Administration for the Fairfax County Police Department, said in an email to Annan, “The entry criteria have not been reviewed or updated in quite some time, and I agree there are aspects of it that can and should be changed. I have had discussions with our Gang Unit, and they fully support this effort. We will begin work on tightening up our entry criteria and will provide you a copy to review when this is completed.”

According to Fairfax County Internal Audit Office, I/LEADS (the Intergraph Law Enforcement Automated Data System), “Is a comprehensive records management software package from Intergraph, Inc.,

to provide integrated, comprehensive management and processing of the many types of data used by the Department, such as citation, accident, arrest, and incident data. It tracks FCPD’s compliance with the many federal and state requirements and regulations and interfaces with systems used by other divisions of the criminal justice system, such as the Fairfax County Sheriff, the Commonwealth of Virginia courts, and with National Capital Region Law Enforcement Information Exchange (N.C.R. LInX).”

When a Loved One Is Hospitalized with Covid-19

Coping with separation and uncertainty.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

For years, being able to talk with his mother, Carole Isaacs, nearly every day was a gift that Marc Stern treasured, so when he was unable to reach her for several days, he became concerned. After contacting the assisted living facility in which she resided, he learned that she had been found unconscious in her room and suffering from a high fever. Rushed to the emergency room, Isaacs tested positive COVID-19 and placed in the intensive care unit. While her life remained in limbo, Stern and the rest of his family could not see or visit her due to hospital safety policy. He was overcome with anguish and anger as he realized that he might never see her again. Having someone listen as he discussed those feelings provided relief in his period of helplessness. Now he is offering that service to others

"The pandemic is still new, still raging, still scary," said Marc Stern, who is a self-described professional listener and runs Need to be Heard, a service in which others – by telephone or video conferencing – can express their feelings freely as another person listens empathetically and without judgment. "Fear stalks us wherever we are. Compounding that with the potential of losing someone you love is enough to rock the foundation of your center and provoke extreme anxiety and sadness. The main coping strategy comes down to two simple yet powerful words; loving and listening."

When a loved one is hospitalized with COVID-19, the agony of being separated from them while they are battling a life-threatening and unpredictable illness can feel overwhelming. Often occurring without warning or time to prepare, the sudden life change can lead to a tidal wave of emotions.

Those feelings vary from person to person and are affected by the resources available to them, says Lisa Jackson-Cherry, Ph.D., Professor of Counseling at Marymount University's

College of Health and Education. "Normal reactions for the majority of [people] may include feelings of anxiety, depression, helplessness, hopelessness ... and thoughts of abandoning their loved one," she said. "This may be exacerbated if the caretaker also has health issues, lack of support or a clinical mental health diagnosis or history."

A lack of control can exacerbate those feelings. "Gaining any control over the situation – even when limited – is helpful," said Jackson-Cherry. "This could mean gaining as much information as possible about the medical situation in order to make decisions [and] trying to build in some normalcy in the abnormality of the situation."



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARC STERN

After testing positive for COVID-19, Carole Isaacs was hospitalized and isolated from loved ones.

Drawing up one's support systems and creating a collection of soothing or supportive remedies or a 'mental health tool box', such as taking a walk with a friend or meditating, are useful when dealing with the stress and anxiety, advises Dr. Anton C. Bizzell, MD. "This is the time to shore up all the support you have," he said. "For some people, this could mean contacting close friends and family, clergy, or neighbors to ask for emotional support. Ask for help with child care, household tasks, or other needs that could be alleviated to allow you to focus on your loved one."

It is important not to be in solitude, added Jackson-Cherry. "Isolation is not helpful and can be harmful."

As she began to heal, Stern was able to have telephone conversations with his mother. "Use technology as possible," he said. "If they are able to converse, technology is your friend," Stern said.

There are cases, says Bizzell, when one needs more support and guidance than self-help strategies can provide. "For many others, this is a time to call a counselor or family physician for help with adding extra support services and care," he said. "This is a traumatic situation, no matter the outcome, and it's not only okay to ask for help, it's essential. There is no one right way to do this. Find what works for you."

For those who might have a friend whose loved one is battling Covid-19, there are uncomplicated ways to offer comfort. "We can support friends and loved ones by expressing interest and concern," added Jerome Short, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology, George Mason University.

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Closing Notice



George Washington Day
Monday, Feb. 15

Old Firehouse Family Event



Virtual Family Bingo Night
Friday, Feb. 19, 7-9 p.m.
\$5 per family (per Zoom invite)
Registration is required.

Sponsored by The Alden



Unruly Theatre Project Virtual Improv Show
Wednesday, Feb. 24, 7 p.m.
Free; registration is required.

Old Firehouse Family Event



Virtual Family Fun Trivia Night
Friday, Feb. 26, 7-9 p.m.
\$5 per family (per Zoom invite).
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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.
-Werner Heisenberg

WELLBEING

When a Loved One Is Hospitalized with Covid-19

FROM PAGE 9

Reaching out to a friend and offering nonjudgmental presence cannot be underestimated. “Seems simple, but ... be there,” said Jackson-Cherry. “Listen to their feelings and thoughts. If needed, assist in advocating for information. Offer to step in for day-to-day errands, meals and making sure they are taking care of themselves.”

Understand that anger, anxiety and stress are a normal response to an abnormal situation, Bizzell says, “Don’t try to tell them how to feel or think, instead, listen and support. ... Rather than waiting for them to tell you what they need, offer a list of things you could help with: for example, mow their lawn, send a grocery delivery, set up a meal train, help them with technology for video visits, or offer to give their child a ride home from school.”

Though it might be awkward or fraught with discomfort, take care to observe when a friend might need professional mental healthcare, cautions, Jackson-Cherry. “Look for signs of increased daily living disruptions such as not withdrawing, isolating or sleeping or eating, that are beyond what is normal



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARC STERN

As his mother remained hospitalized in the intensive care unit, Marc Stern was overcome with sadness as he realized that he might never see her again.

in these situations,” she said. “Listen for signs of increased hopelessness and statements of despair, especially with those who may have a history of suicidal ideation or behaviors.”

Recognize that these are unprecedented times, advises Bizzell. “We are now nearly a year into a crisis of unimaginable proportions,” he said. “People are suffering. We have never needed our support community more. You don’t have to have all the answers; you just need to be there.”

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- Senior Living**, fourth week of every month.

Questions?

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FEB. 1-13

Mardi Gras at the Workhouse. In-Person on Saturday, Feb. 13., 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. The Workhouse Arts Center is thrilled to present its first-ever Mardi Gras celebration. Join them for two weeks of family-friendly events that will engage, inspire, teach and make you laugh. This mini festival will include: Online workshops on festive mask making; Online Mixology sessions; Online demonstrations on how to make floats or yard decorations; In-person glass bead demonstrations; In-person cooking classes; Parade on the Workhouse Campus; and Drive In Comedy Shows.

FEB. 2-26

The Learning Connection. At The Old Firehouse, McLean. The Old Firehouse Learning Connection is a supervised e-learning program supervised by staff, for students in the 5th-10th grades. The program will provide a supervised environment for students to complete their school-led virtual instruction. Staff will provide limited socially distant recreation opportunities for students during their breaks. Program waivers, participant contracts and additional information will be sent to all registered participants prior to the start of the program. Cost is \$300. To register, visit: www.oldfirehouse.org or call 703-448-8336, TTY: 711.

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 3

The Unruly Theatre Project's Virtual Improv Show. 7 p.m. Sponsored by The Alden. 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.

SATURDAY & MONDAY, FEB. 6 & 8

"The University of Wonder & Imagination." 11 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 12 p.m., 12:30 p.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 4 p.m., 4:30 p.m., and 5 p.m. The University of Wonder & Imagination is now enrolling students of all ages and magical abilities...and there's a place with your name on it! Assemble with your fellow students and journey to the most unusual of universities, where the mysterious Professor Bamberg will send you off to interact with the liveliest of lecturers, choose your subjects of study, enter themed rooms (such as Math, Science, and Art!) and encounter all kinds of problems and puzzles, unlocking your magical powers as you go. The decisions made by you during the event will shape your unique experience. Purchase tickets \$15/\$10 MCC district residents.

SUNDAY/FEB. 7

Folklore Society of Greater Washington's Mini-Fest. 7 p.m. Online. Featuring an online concert with international world musician Kinobe, followed by storyteller Noa Baum. After an intermission enjoy sassy blues and honky-tonk music from singer/guitarists Eleanor Ellis and Martha Burns. Free, but reservations

are required. Information and reservations: <https://fsgw.org/event-3738989/Registration>

SUNDAY/FEB. 7

Worst Spy Ever. 2-3:30 p.m. Cold War Museum (100% virtual). Most damaging spy ever? Robert Hanssen. Learn why from the Historian of the FBI. Visit the website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ultimate-betrayal-robert-hanssen-people-he-got-killed-and-the-lessons-tickets-123410242357>.

SUNDAY/FEB. 7

Meet Author Kiley Reid. 2 p.m. Cosponsored by The Alden and FCPL. Cosponsored by The Alden and the Fairfax County Public Library. Celebrate Black History Month with Kiley Reid, bestselling author of "Such a Fun Age." Reid is the instant New York Times bestselling author of "Such a Fun Age," a critically acclaimed new novel that shines a bright light on the subtle, yet deeply impactful aspects of race and privilege in America. To register or for more information, visit www.aldentheatre.org.

SUNDAY/FEB. 7

McLean Uncorked Part 3. 5-6 p.m. Free admission; registration is required. For beginners and connoisseurs alike, this wine experience will not disappoint! Join your friends, start your Super Bowl celebration early, or surprise your Valentine and enjoy this fun, virtual, live and interactive wine tasting and food pairing event. Four unique wines for this tasting are available to pre-purchase by registrants at Balducci's in McLean. A wine expert will lead this session and explore the selected wines as well as other interesting aspects of the art of wine tasting. To register or for more information, visit www.mclean-center.org.

MONDAY/FEB. 8

Have a Heart Program. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Give a gift from the heart this Valentine's Day by creating a handmade heart at Sully Historic Site. Learn how to create a heart using wet felt technique. No needles are required. Celebrate the season of love of by decorating the heart just the way you like and sharing it with a special someone. This half-hour program at Sully Historic Site is for a family of up to four people. Cost is \$30 per family. Social distancing and face coverings are required. Call 703-437-1794.

TUESDAY/FEB. 9

Search for Winter Waterfowl. 10-11 a.m. At Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Burke Lake Park is teeming with wildlife, even in the coldest months of winter. See what birds are calling the lake home this season with the park's "Waterfowl" program. During the program, you will walk the shores of Burke Lake in search of winter waterfowl. Be on the lookout for birds, such as loons, lesser scaups and ring-necked ducks. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. This program is designed for participants age 12 to adult. Cost is \$8 per person. Call 703-323-6600.

County Adopts Trust Policy

FROM PAGE 3

ported, Mancía said they ended up in the countries they fled out of fear of abuse. "Some of them were even killed."

Yanira Martínez is a CASA Member and resident of Fairfax County for eleven years. She is a single mother from El Salvador who cleans offices to support her family. Martínez and her family face Covid-19 without health insurance. She has fought for years so that at least now, with the Trust Policy, she has one less thing to worry about as she cares for her children.

Nuet Le is an ACLU People Power Fairfax member and has lived in the United States for forty-five years. She fled Vietnam as a youth with her family to escape the violence and persecution. "I remember what life was like in Vietnam, where police could pick you from the street or your home at any time. Then your family might never see you again. I understand why immigrants and people of color in Fairfax are afraid of the police and won't call them for help. Why they're afraid to get Covid tests or get treatment from the health department," Le said.

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Progress, I Guess?



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I received in the mail today what in the sales/marketing world, we'd call a "pre-approach" letter. It was a letter confirming that my health care provider is aware of me and my covid needs. Moreover, it offered up the tantalizing notion that one day (although they didn't specify) when it is my turn, I will indeed get contacted/scheduled for my inoculation. Unfortunately, they couldn't be any more specific because their allotment of vaccines barely scratches the surface of the actual need. Nevertheless, both my wife and I have been assured that we are on a list. I suppose that's something. As "Forrest, Forrest Gump" would say: "One less thing."

Not that I'm paranoid about catching the virus or ever do I throw caution to the wind by actually integrating into the outside/formerly normal world, especially considering the comorbidity I represent: cancer, but all things being equal, I'd sure like to receive my inoculation. I'd just as soon die of old age. And my wife is doing everything she can to make that happen. She has me on a very short leash. I'm barely able to heel. A pandemic will do that.

As we begin our second year of living dangerously, the vaccines certainly offer hope. Hope can't iron out the logistics, however. Apparently, at least according to the daily news coverage, inoculating so many people in so many places with or without the proper refrigeration is a nearly overwhelming task. Then add in the necessary ingredients: ppe, masks, syringes, swabs, trained inoculators, et cetera, and you've got a hurdle Edwin Moses couldn't overcome. To see that this virus has killed more Americans than died in World War II is a stunning reality to behold. Seeing the death tally rise every day is a jaw-dropping/head-shaking moment. Progress, so far, has been hard to come by. Though there are some alternative theories and explanations about the actual numbers, I tend to believe what the news organizations are telling us. I really don't see the motivation to do otherwise.

Ultimately, we're all responsible for our own actions - and inactions, and the consequences that follow (I only heard that a million times from my father while growing up). If I was to contract covid, I'd have no one to blame but myself. My wife might blame others as she's very impatient/indignant of people who are not adhering to public health advisories and who don't abide by the Vulcan philosophy, especially during a worldwide pandemic: "The good of the many outweigh the good of the few." And it doesn't seem a stretch to ask/expect that your fellow man - and woman, should respect the constriction of some of our freedoms as together, hopefully, we work to overcome this once-in-a-century health crisis. In an odd kind of karma, what goes around does indeed come around. And to prevent this virus from continually coming around, we must be mindful of the scientific facts as more and more is known about this virus.

Still for those of us who have survived this worst pandemic since the Spanish Flu, it's one year and counting. I don't view it as much of an accomplishment, more a series of random strokes that add up to luck. However, since luck doesn't last forever, and can't exactly be counted on, I was happy to receive today's letter acknowledging that the health care powers that be know who I am and where to find me and that I need a vaccination. Presuming otherwise, in the midst of an organizational challenge the likes of which haven't ever been experienced by the current generation in charge, or previous generations for that matter, would be illogical. Here's hoping we all "live long and prosper."

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



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