

CONNECTION

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PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

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'This Is an Opportunity for Connections'

Council extends Fairfax City's e-scooter pilot program.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax City has extended its pilot program for e-scooters in the City through the end of this year. And it made that decision in great part because of the adverse effect the pandemic has had on it.

On May 14, 2019, City Council authorized a one-year, pilot program permitting dockless, shared-mobility devices (more commonly known as e-scooters) to operate in Fairfax. Under the program, three companies – Bird, Lime and Spin – were allowed to rent e-scooters here, subject to the City's terms and conditions.

But because of COVID-19, all three companies suspended operations in Fairfax last spring. So in May 2020, the pilot program was extended for six months. It was then slated to end on Dec. 31, 2020, unless the City took action – which it did at a recent Council meeting.

It was important for Fairfax to do so because – if it didn't renew the program or replace it with a regulating ordinance – under the Code of Virginia, these e-scooter companies would be permitted to operate without City permits. In the summer, two



Some parked, Lime e-scooters awaiting new riders.

of the companies – Bird and Lime – relaunched with updated sanitation practices, even though their operations in the

City had to be scaled back.

Chloe Ritter, the City's Multimodal Transportation Planner, explained that the pandemic affected and changed people's activity patterns. For example, she said it resulted in more e-scooter usage on the GMU campus than in the City.

Therefore, Ritter told the Council, "We're recommending the pilot program be extended for a year, because we haven't had a chance to adequately evaluate its operation. And we don't yet know what will happen in the long term."

Agreeing, Councilmember Tom Ross said, "We haven't really had the proper circumstances to see if this would work well. What are the takeaways you've learned?"

"This is an opportunity for connections," replied Ritter. "And people are using e-scooters instead of transit – and for transit's first and last miles – plus for shorter trips, like from GMU to Old Town."

Councilmember Joe Harmon asked, "Is GMU using the same companies the City is?" Ritter answered yes. Harmon also wanted to know how many scooter trips

there have been since the pilot program began.

"We've never reached the 250-scooter cap [per company] in the City," said Ritter. "At its height, we had about 150-200 scooters/day for all three companies. And most recently, it's been about 100-150 scooters/day – and with just two companies. There are probably about 350-400 scooters/day between the City and GMU."

Harmon also asked, "Did we bring in about \$15,000, last year, in permit fees from the three companies?" Ritter replied that the City had to pro-rate the figure, but said yes, it did.

"If we extend it for a year, will it still be considered a pilot program?" asked Councilmember Janice Miller.

"Yes, as we continue to evaluate it and what are the best options," answered Ritter. "And I believe we can impose regulations at any time."

Staff is also coordinating with GMU, whose staff is administering a similar program, to provide consistent regulations and to encourage scooter travel between the campus and the City. The latest extension of Fairfax City's e-scooter pilot program was approved to run through Dec. 31 of this year.

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Fairfax County School Board Votes for In-Person Learning

Students who opt-in would be due back by March 16.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION



FCPS Superintendent Scott Brabrand

Fairfax County Public School students, whose parents or guardians opt for in-person learning for their children, are headed back to the classroom at least two days a week by March 16.

On Feb. 2, the School Board unanimously consented during its work session to support Superintendent Scott Brabrand to proceed with his proposed timeline presented that day in the Return to School Update. According to Megan McLaughlin, Braddock District School Board member, the School Board has the ultimate authority to open and close schools.

During the final minutes of the work session and before the consensus vote, given the Board's apparent agreement on the proposed timeline, Laura Jane Cohen, Springfield District School Board member, said, "I can only vote to support this plan, Dr. Brabrand, if you are going to keep your foot on the pedal of making sure that our teachers are getting the support that they need ... Mr. Smith [Marty Smith, chief operating officer] has done incredible work of trying to get with Inova and figuring out what teachers haven't gotten [the vaccine] and prioritize. But we have to keep going in both directions, full tilt, of continuing to put pressure on to get those vaccines in people's arms and also to make

sure folks have what they need in the buildings to be successful," said Cohen.

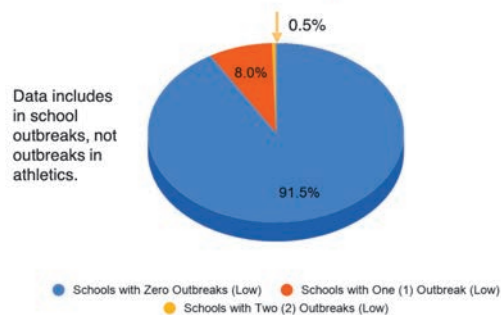
Cohen added that data must be released in real-time. "Our staff and families deserve to know what they are walking into."

Brabrand said, "We've come this far. I'm not about to quit on the Board, the community, or FCPS. We will see this through."

Brabrand acknowledged the vaccines and the plan for getting children back into schools was only "step one" of getting out of the pandemic. There would be challenges, and they needed to turn their time and attention to doing this well. "I will honor that commitment to you and your colleagues," said Brabrand.

The Board first supported, in a vote of 8-to-2, a procedural action to move forward with a pending consensus vote on the timeline, rather than wait and formally take action during the upcoming Feb. 4 regular meeting. School Board members Karen Keys-Gamarra (At-large) and Tamara Derenak Kaufax (Lee) opposed the consideration to vote on the matter on Feb. 2. "I don't believe that's how we inform the community," said Keys-Gamarra.

Level of School Impact: COVID-19 Outbreaks in FCPS Transmission in Schools - Sept. 8th - Jan. 23rd



Level of School Impact

Criteria	Low	Medium	High
Transmission within Schools	Zero or sporadic cases with no evidence of transmission in school	Two outbreaks within a short time period (14 days) or sporadic outbreaks in school. Size of outbreaks remains small.	Several outbreaks in school within short time period (14 days); size of outbreaks is large or scope of outbreaks is significant (e.g. multiple classrooms or grade levels are impacted)

FCPS' COVID Cases/Outbreaks and the Level of School Impact from 09/08-20-01/23/21.



SCREENSHOT VIA FCPS

Getting vaccinations to FCPS employees who want them is critical to in-person learning.

ra. Given the eight votes of support to move forward with the consensus vote, the Board went ahead. Reading out the votes by name,

McLaughlin announced the superintendent's proposed timeline's unanimous support as presented.

"I hope you can see this is a more positive overall outcome," said McLaughlin. "We support this school division moving forward with its best efforts to educate our children. ... This next step to returning to in-person learning for those who have elected it is critical."

Since the start of 2021, when all FCPS students returned to virtual learning after coronavirus infection rates surged regionally and nationally, the school division worked on a plan to get all students back in the classroom.

The current downward trend in Covid cases and percent positivity in the County led Brabrand and his leadership team to present their Return to School Update on Feb. 2.

According to Brabrand, those recent COVID trends, along with the Jan. 14 issue of "Interim Guidance

for Reopening PreK-12" by the Virginia Department of Education and Virginia Department of Health, the partnership with Inova to vaccinate all staff and educators who wanted it, and finally staffing and operational changes gave him and his leadership team confidence to move forward.

Brabrand had said, "It is our desire to return all our students to in-person learning by March 16, for at least two days a week of in-person instruction."

Brabrand acknowledged the challenges, variants of COVID-19 emerging, recommendations for masking, the vaccine process and supply. "However, our return to in-person plan that we are presenting today is not impacted by these issues at this time."

View The Decision-Making Model for Return to In-Person Learning on the Fairfax County Public School website.

2021 Virtual Fairfax County Teen Job and Opportunity Fairs in March

For the past few years Supervisor Pat Herrity's office, Fairfax County Public Schools and Connection Newspapers, along with Supervisors' offices, businesses, and community organizations including our local chambers, have hosted very successful teen job fairs and career-building workshops. These events focused on students and young job seekers looking for a variety of employment opportunities; full time, after-school, seasonal positions, internship opportunities, and volunteer positions. The fairs

have provided thousands of teenagers the opportunity to get in front of employers and for our employers to find talented Fairfax County students to fill their positions.

This year Herrity is once again teaming up with Connection Newspapers, Fairfax County Public Schools, community chambers and organizations and fellow Board members to bring our community two Fairfax County Teen Job Fairs and Career-Building Workshops. Normally, there are 5-6 fairs at local high schools. With the limitations of the ongoing pandemic, this year's fairs

will be hosted virtually through Brazen, a professional virtual job fair platform. The virtual fairs are scheduled for Saturday, March 13, 2-5 p.m. and Saturday, March 20, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The fairs will be open to all teens in Fairfax County looking for employment, volunteer opportunities, or tips on building their resume. Free online booth space will be provided to businesses and organizations to advertise their available positions. We will also host resume and career building sessions with our Chamber

of Commerce partners.

Beginning Feb. 1, students as well as employers can register to attend at this link, www.fairfaxcounty.gov/springfield/teenjobfairs.

First jobs are important, and these events help connect teens with employers and prepare our youth for the workforce. This year especially, students and employers are desperate for opportunities provided by the fair with the hope that some normalcy will begin this summer.

Black History and Regional Parks

BY PAUL GILBERT
THE CONNECTION



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Karen Campblin at Tinner Hill

In 1889, a fourteen-year-old named Orion Anderson was jailed in Leesburg for chasing a neighbor girl. The Ku Klux Klan took him from the jail and lynched him a few blocks away at a railroad station on land that is today on the W&OD Trail. In the summer of 2019, a moving dedication of the sign that tells this tragic story took place.

In 1915, a group of civic leaders gathered at a house in Falls Church to organize in opposition to a proposed law that would have required Black residents to sell their property and move. The proposed law was what they called a "sunset law" where no one of color could legally be in the town after sunset. The house where they organized was in a Black community called Tinner Hill. Those brave individuals were successful in opposing the proposed sunset law, and that group became the first chapter of the NAACP outside of a major city. In 2015 NOVA Parks partnered with the City of Falls Church, Fairfax County, and the Tinner Hill Heritage Foundation and opened a small park on that site. On Martin Luther King Day this year, NOVA Parks hosted an event at Tinner Hill to unveil new interpretive signs that tell this story.

In 1959, the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NOVA Parks) was established. One of the reasons the local governments in our area chose to create the first regional park au-

America has a troubled history with justice and racism. The regional parks of Northern Virginia help to tell these stories, from Colonial time to the modern-day.

thority in Virginia was the State Park System at the time was segregated. Essentially, NOVA Parks was an integrated state park system for the region.

In 1969, NOVA Parks opened the largest pool in Virginia to all people, at Bull Run Regional Park. The same year the public pool in Leesburg was being closed instead of integrating. None of the facilities built by NOVA Parks in the often segregated decades of the 1950s and 1960s were ever segregated.

In 2020, after the killing of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, Black Lives Matter marches sprung up all over the country. At Algonkian Regional Park, over 2,000 people organized by high school student Ocean Akinotcho came to express their frustration and lack of justice in a peaceful and somber march.

America has a troubled history with justice and racism. The regional parks of Northern Virginia help to tell these stories, from Colonial time to the modern-day. Part of growing as a society is acknowledging our past and learning from it. Black History Month is a time to focus on these important stories.

In many ways, the history of Northern Virginia is the history of America. It is complicated and has many facets. February is Black History Month and a good time to consider the many stories that our historic places have to share. Here are a few of the Black history stories told through your regional parks.

In 1751, John Carlyle, a wealthy merchant from Scotland, and his wife Sarah Fairfax Carlyle started construction on the largest house in Alexandria. The big house and lavish lifestyle they had was made possible by enslaved people. Many people have called the slave economy "America's original sin."

Twenty years ago, NOVA Parks developed an interpretive video to help tell the slave story that underpins the Carlyle House. And in the last few years, the Carlyle House has hosted genealogy programs that help people discover if their ancestors were enslaved people at this colonial site. Lt. Governor Justin Fairfax discovered his ancestry to the Fairfax family slaves from Maddy McCoy, who leads the 'Breaking Down the Walls of Slavery at the Carlyle House' programs.

In 1854, a young man named Daniel Dangerfield, who had worked at Aldie Mill in Loudoun County, escaped to freedom in Philadelphia. Someone from Virginia spotted him on the streets of Philadelphia, and there was a trial to see if he should be returned to slavery. He won that case, but it was close. He later moved to Canada to be free from the Fugitive Slave Act. The Civil War's primary reason was increasingly northern states were not enforcing the Fugitive Slave Act, as can be seen in the Dangerfield trial. A new interpretive sign telling this story has been installed at Aldie Mill.

Electrification of Virginia Transportation

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



COMMENTARY

In 1998 I chaired a task force of business and community leaders to collectively document what Northern Virginia needed to do to be an "EV Ready Community." Our work was part of a national effort in-

volving ten communities under the sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Energy and the Electric Vehicle Association of the Americas to prepare for the introduction of electric vehicles. Our inch-thick report was very comprehensive in detailing the infrastructure needed in charging stations, building and roadways, and other changes that electric vehicles would require.

We were ahead of our time. Within about a year of our report the first commercial electric car, EV1, was no longer available and other manufacturers were not offering electric vehicles. Move ahead less than two decades and electric vehicles are becoming commonplace in many areas. I even own one, and on trips in my community I always see more than one.

What happened in the meantime is a greater awareness of our transportation system's con-

tribution to greenhouse gases and pollution. In the United States alone in 2017, the transportation sector accounted for 29 percent of the nation's total emissions of 6.4 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, or CO₂e (the CO₂ equivalent of an individual greenhouse gas). Driven largely by the transportation sector's emissions of fossil fuels, concentrations of CO₂ in the atmosphere have risen steadily since the early 1980s, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Interestingly, when there is a recession there is a corresponding dip in emissions.

In addition to the increased awareness of the adverse effects of our conventional transportation on the environment, there has been an increase in the number of entrepreneurs who are willing to make major investments in developing electric cars and other vehicles and increased competition from abroad. A Super Bowl commercial sponsored by General Motors lamented the fact that in Norway 54 percent of the new cars sold are EVs. The president of General Motors announced recently that the

company would phase out gasoline vehicles and sell only electric passenger cars and trucks by 2035. Press accounts are that Ford Motor Company is making major investments in electric vehicles and VW that is about to move its US headquarters to Reston will be investing \$37 billion in electric vehicles.

In the General Assembly I am a co-patron along with the patron Delegate Lamont Bagby of HB1965 that directs the State Air Pollution Control Board to implement a low-emissions and zero-emissions vehicle program for motor vehicles with a model year of 2025 and later. The legislation will help resolve the problem of consumers in Virginia who want to buy an electric vehicle but must go out of the state to do so. Along with a rebate program the vehicles will become more affordable for persons of limited income. There have been major investments in charging stations throughout the state enabling travel without the fear of running out of juice. You may have noticed the Wawa in Vienna that sells electric charging only but no gas.

I need to review more carefully that report of two decades ago to make sure we are ready for EVs. Ready or not, here they come!



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MT VERNON DISTRICT OFFICE



Supervisor Dan Storck, County Executive Bryan Hill, Dr. Gloria Addo-Adyensu.

Mount Vernon's Virtual Town Hall Meeting Hits All Levels

Pandemic in the area was looked at, along with other issues.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

The common thread for all the speakers at Supervisor Dan Storck's (D-Mount Vernon) town hall meeting was the need to defeat the coronavirus, and rebuild the economy as the virus impact is lessened in Virginia. These town hall meetings are an annual event for Storck's office and have included an exhibit hall in the past.

"We have the resources to tackle this, we need the members of the community to stand with us," said Chairman Jeff McKay (D), and mentioned more federal relief funds that may be coming in the near future. "The Route One corridor needs it more than anyone right now," McKay said. The covid vaccines are working their way into the population, but McKay said "we are not getting enough vaccines to support the demand." He also noted his contact with Richmond to get more vaccines. McKay invited communications with anyone from the community.

"Our door is always open," he said.

SUPERVISOR STORCK introduced County Executive Bryan Hill. Hill touted the county's response to the pandemic, and talked about the support the non-profits have gotten, particularly New Hope and Good Shepherd, both in Mount Vernon. "We have really stepped up our networks," Hill said, referring to the food relief events that have taken place in those areas.

Hill also mentioned the search his office is involved with for the new police chief as Chief Edwin C. Roessler steps down. "We have over 40 candidates that we're getting down to 10," Hill said.

The "One Fairfax" plan was mentioned a number of times, and that is a joint social and racial equity policy of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and School Board. It commits the county and schools to intentionally consider equity when making policies or delivering programs and services. It's a declaration that all residents deserve an equitable opportunity to succeed — regardless of their race, color, sex, nationality, sexual orientation, religion, disability, income or where they live, the county website said.

On Richmond Highway, the assortment of business-



Supervisor Dan Storck and School Board Member Karen Corbett Sanders.

es, housing and transportation is varied like nowhere else in Fairfax County, so the One Fairfax concept could be felt there immensely. There is a One Fairfax task force, McKay said.

Other speakers at the town hall meeting included Mount Vernon District School Board Member Karen Corbett Sanders, Health Department Director Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu, Fort Belvoir Garrison Commander Col. Joshua SeGraves and special guests U.S. Reps. Gerry Connolly and Don Beyer.

When the time came for the viewers to ask questions, they wanted to know about zoning changes, COVID-19 vaccines, the safety of students returning to classrooms and whether real estate taxes would go up this year.

As the grand finale, Supervisor Storck took the audience on a virtual tour of the District, highlighting changes across the District ranging from the urban development in the Huntington area to the upcoming groundbreaking for the South County Police Station and Animal Shelter, in Lorton.

THE TOWN HALL usually has an exhibit hall to kick off the event, and this year, Storck's office didn't want folks to go away empty handed, so they put together "our ever popular 'Goodie Bags' that will be filled with much of the information typically found in the Exhibit Hall." Bags can be picked up outside the Mount Vernon office by the front door starting Monday, Feb. 8, in the Mount Vernon Governmental Center at 2511 Parkers Lane.

The meeting will be on Facebook, and available to watch on Channel 16 on Sunday, Feb. 14 at 8 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 20 at 8 p.m. and Thursday, Feb. 25 at 8 p.m.

Little River Turnpike and Guinea Road Intersection Improvements Fairfax County

Virtual Public Information Meeting

Monday, March 1, 2021, 7 p.m.

www.virginiadot.org/LittleRiverGuinea

Inclement weather date: Thursday, March 4, 2021

Find out about planned improvements at the intersection of Little River Turnpike (Route 236) and Guinea Road (Route 651). The improvements include creating a free-flow right-turn lane from northbound Guinea Road to eastbound Little River Turnpike, adding a refuge island for pedestrians crossing Guinea Road, and creating a new through/right-turn lane via restriping on eastbound Little River Turnpike between Guinea Road and Old Hickory Road.

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/LittleRiverGuinea. 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 703-259-2409 or TTY/TDD 711 to make an appointment with appropriate personnel.

Give your comments during the meeting, or by **March 11, 2021** via the comment form on the project website, by mail to Ms. Jessica Paris, P.E., Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030 or by email to meetingcomments@VDOT.virginia.gov. Please reference "Little River Turnpike and Guinea Road Intersection Improvements" in the subject line.

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PHOTOS BY LUIS ALVAREZ.

Like the kitchen, many of the rooms feature large windows, at Park Grove in McLean.

New Community with Park-Like Environment

McLean's Park Grove neighborhood inspired by former National Parks Director George Hartzog.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION



The modern and minimalist design allows the natural surroundings to be integrated into the décor at Park Grove in McLean.

A former public servant's creative vision and dedication to preserving parklands was the inspiration behind a new residential area in Northern Virginia. Park Grove, an eight-home community in McLean, Virginia is built on land that was once owned by former National Parks Director George Hartzog.

"His considerable contributions to our national parks formed the seed of the idea for the theme of Park Grove," said Jamie Gulick, Vice President, Gulick Group, the company that developed the neighborhood. "We've designed a warm, park-like environment in the community by using materials that evoke nature, invite sunlight into the homes with high ceilings and abundant windows, and create a clean-lined, peaceful, spa-like feel inside."

"We incorporated his work in a very literal sense with a small sculpture honoring his work in the community park area," added Gulick.

To bring the vision of living as if in nature into (or to) reality, Gulick engaged architect Bill Sutton, President, Sutton Yantis Associates Architects "They gave me a clean canvas to create, and I began my design process with layers and layers of hand sketches," he said. "... A consistent theme in my sketches was using low pitched hipped roof lines and wide eaves echoing the prairie style of Frank Lloyd Wright.

That design aesthetic is consistent throughout each home. "For the interiors, we wanted to complement the linearity of the exteriors inside with clean-lined simplicity," said Gulick. "The black exterior windows are white on the inside to promote an airy feel, and

they have only horizontal mullions, so we selected an interior door style that reiterated that shape."

The modern and minimalist design allows the natural surroundings to be integrated into the décor. "The main level ceiling is more than 10 feet tall, and the windows have transoms above to flood the homes with light," said Gulick. "We kept the decor understated, to accentuate the subtlety of the architecture."

A major architectural feature, says Sutton is the stairway leading to the second level. "The upper floor is likewise spacious, with an open loft area at the top of the stairs...and a large open owner's suite," he said. "The dominant feature is the openness of the floor plan."

Plans for the subdivision include expansive bedrooms, each with a walk-in closet and private bathrooms, features that Park Grove's current homeowners enjoy. "They appreciate the loft space upstairs off of the secondary bedrooms, as well as the size and functional design of [those bedrooms], which gives everyone their own private place to unwind," said Julie Zelaska, Principal, Executive Vice President, Smith | Schneider, LLC, who is the sales rep for the community.

Four of the eight homes remain. For more information on Park Grove, visit www.parkgroveinmclean.com.

THE CONNECTION Alexandria Gazette Packet Mount Vernon Gazette Potomac ALMANAC

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PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



Flames fueled by gas line explosion rise high over Hooes Road in Springfield.

Gas Explosion Rocks Springfield

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

A loud explosion broke the quiet in Springfield about noon on Feb. 3, when a gas line exploded on the 8500 block of Hooes Rd near the historic Sydenstricker Schoolhouse and the Sydenstricker Methodist Church.

Two blocks away, the explosion was loud enough to wake Collin Allen from his sleep, thinking it might be a transformer explosion. Soon he was hearing a chorus of sirens and his phone ringing repeatedly as worried friends and family members began checking on his safety after early reports of the incident were heard on police scanners and news stations.

Deputy Fire Chief Tracey Reed, reported that 50 units responded to reports of an explosion and open fire at 12:30 pm. Reaching the scene, they found two vehicles burning and fire raging to a height of more than 30 feet above the street level from a gas line in a large hole in the center of the street

Two homes were evacuated and power was shut off to the area as a safety precaution. Fire units remained on scene until the multiple lines feeding the damaged line could be shut off and the fire extinguished. The process took several hours with flames visible



About 50 units of fire, ambulance, and police responded to the Feb. 3 incident.

from approximately noon until 4 p.m. Washington Gas company equipment and personnel stood by waiting to make line repairs and restore service and power to the community.

Allen and his neighbors were unhurt, and the homes in the area were without damage. Three Washington Gas employees, on the scene for repairs, received non-life threatening injuries and were transported to the hospital for treatment; later reported in stable condition; a fourth crew member was treated at the scene. Two Washington Gas vehicles were burned. Repair work continued and was completed the following day at the fire site and at multiple points in the area where lines were accessed to shut off the flow of natural gas.

Washington Gas was actively conducting an investigation into the cause of the incident at the time of this writing but verified that the crew was on site for planned repair work at the time of the explosion. Damages are estimated at \$250,000.

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Fairfax City's police station needs an expansion and upgrades.

BONNIE HOBBS/
THE CONNECTION



Fairfax Mayor, Council Discuss Capital Projects

City Police Station, Property Yard both need improvements.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Besides working on the upcoming FY 22 budget, Fairfax City Manager Rob Stalzer and his staff have also been preparing the City's draft FY 22-26 Capital Improvement Program (CIP). And during the Jan. 12 Fairfax City Council meeting, Stalzer presented the proposed CIP so he could receive the members' feedback.

Before then, the City Planning Commission sent a letter with its own CIP recommendations, and Councilmember Janice Miller brought it up. She said the Commissioners had suggested feasibility studies be done for certain school projects, but they weren't included in the proposed CIP.

At a joint, City Council/Planning Commission meeting in November, Miller said, "We're running out of flexible learning spaces in our elementary schools. New families with elementary-aged children are moving to the City. So we'll need more classroom space, including for between 200-240 youngsters in universal preschool – which means 20-24 additional classrooms."

She said she was "concerned that one of our essential, core services to the citizens isn't being looked at. Our elementary schools are 20 years old, and we need a work session with the School Board and Planning Department, in the spring, so we can get a better idea of enrollment trends."

Agreeing, Councilmember Sang Yi said, "This is the time for us to really prioritize schools. The [development] projects we've approved will bring more school-aged children; and with social distancing, schools need more space."

AT THE JANUARY MEETING, Stalzer explained that he'd already spoken with Fairfax Schools Superintendent Phyllis Pajardo about the school system's needs. "All four of our school buildings have work that needs to be done," he said. "For example, both the high-school and middle-school roofs need some significant work – which would cost \$14 million. So I suggested putting money in the School Board's CIP, to do the work over two or more years, for all four buildings."

Miller also said that she and Councilmember Tom Ross had recently toured the City Police Station and spoken with Chief Erin Schaible, Deputy Chief Daniel Grimm and Officer Jeffrey Morrison. As a result, said Miller, they learned about two, critical needs of the station:

- ❖ An enclosure to protect specialized equipment, such as the SWAT Team van; and
- ❖ Changing rooms and lockers for men and women, because there's currently a "huge disparity" between the facilities provided for male officers vs. those available for female officers.

In addition, said Ross, "The dispatch center on the first floor is very crowded and [potentially] vulnerable to outsiders coming in."

"Another item I believe we absolutely need to move on is the Property Yard," said Miller. "It's important for all the things carried out by Public Works. And I'd also like to know what's been completed on the past CIP and what's still on our to-do list."

Stalzer replied that the City had to cut back \$1 million from the current CIP, because of the pandemic. But because of favorable interest rates, he'd encouraged Fairfax Mayor David Meyer and the Council to go ahead with borrowing and "We're moving forward with the projects we've identified."

Meyer said he, too, took the police-station tour. Noting that it was planned in 2002-03 and opened in 2006, he said, "A lot of things have changed [since then]. There are 61 lockers for men and 14-15 for women, and there are 19 women on the force."

Besides that, said Meyer, "Cyber forensics and using computer technology and IT to solve crimes is so important today. But the space for it there is a room designed for storage and is unacceptable and way too small. So we need a comprehensive plan on how we can improve that building's operations and security – perhaps, by building onto the back where there's room to do so."

The proposed FY 22-26 CIP earmarks money for feasibility studies for needed projects. For FY 22, there's \$100,000 for the Property Yard, \$107,000 for Police Headquarters, and \$50,000 for the Police Vehicle Garage.

"All the public works projects happen out of the Property Yard – a significant portion of which is in a floodplain," explained Meyer. "Our workers have had to scrape mud off the building's floor because of heavy rains and flooding – and that is unacceptable."

SEE CAPITAL PROJECTS, PAGE 10

West Springfield Rotary Club Recognizes Outstanding Teachers

At its virtual meeting Jan. 27, the West Springfield Rotary Club honored three outstanding teachers: Jen Shaddrix from Orange Hunt Elementary School, Lauren Ryan from Keene Mill Elementary School and Joanne Lewenhaupt from Nativity Elementary School. These teachers were all recommended by their principals for their outstanding teaching skills and hard work teaching during the pandemic.

Even in normal times, teachers often spend their own money to buy special teaching aids for their classroom and supplies for children who cannot afford their own. In the changeover to virtual classrooms, they have had to do this even more than in normal times. Each of these teachers was given a \$250 stipend to help them meet these needs.

Renee Miller, the principal at Keene Mill Elementary School, and Karen Tuttle, the principal at Orange Hunt, reported that all their classes are virtual at this time; this took a lot of planning in August and was challenging at first, but is basically going well now. The teachers are anxious to get back to live class as soon as they can be vaccinated, and the children are anxious as well - many just want to be able to give their teachers a hug.

Nativity Elementary School Principal Maria Kelly reported that they are able to have regular class, but they do provide an opportunity for students to attend virtually if they wish. Desks are separated by six feet and there is plexiglass on the desks for added protection.

— BILL KRIST

BULLETIN BOARD

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

FRIDAY/FEB. 12

Toastmasters Public Speaking. 7-8:30 p.m. Via Zoom. Need help with public speaking and zoom presentations? They meet twice a month, 2nd and 4th Fridays at 7 p.m. and normally would meet in Providence Community Center, Vaden Drive, Fairfax. Visit the website: <https://tba.toastmastersclubs.org/>

FEB. 12-14

Fall in Love. In Fairfax City, 10455 Armstrong Street, Fairfax. The "Fall in Love in Fairfax City" Valentine's Day Gift Guide highlights Fairfax City businesses that are offering promotions from Friday, February 12 through Sunday, February 14, 2021, on gifts, dining options, and experiences. Visit the website: fairfaxcityconnected.com/fallinlove

NOW THRU FEB. 13

Patriots in the City Discounts. In support of George Mason University's (Mason) annual Brave and Bold Homecoming celebration, Fairfax City is once again partnering with the University to showcase its Patriot Pride and support of Mason's community with the discount program, "Patriots in the City". The "Patriots in the City" program unlocks discounts and specials for Mason's community which includes students, faculty, staff and alumni when a Mason ID or alumni card is shown. This year there are over 45 businesses participating within the restaurant, retail, personal care/grooming, and professional service sectors with discounts and specials beginning now through Saturday, Feb. 13, 2021. To help identify which businesses are offering promotions, visit fairfaxcityconnected.com/masonhomecoming where an interactive map can be filtered by category.

FEB. 5-13

George Mason Homecoming. Located in Fairfax City. George Mason's 2021 Homecoming will be cele-

brated a bit differently this year. Mason students, faculty, alumni and staff are eligible for special discounts from participating Fairfax City businesses from now through Feb. 13, 2021. Visit the website: fairfaxcityconnected.com/mason-homecoming

VIRTUAL TEEN JOB FAIRS

Supervisor Pat Herryty will be hosting two Virtual Teen Job Fairs on Saturday, March 13 from 2-5 p.m. and Saturday, March 20 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Normally, he hosts 5-6 fairs at local high schools. With the limitations of the pandemic, this year's fairs will be hosted virtually through Brazen, a professional virtual job fair platform. The fairs will be open to all teens in Fairfax County looking for employment, volunteer opportunities, or tips on building their resume. Free online booth space will be provided to businesses and organizations to advertise their available positions. They will also host resume and career building sessions with their Chamber of Commerce partners. Visit the website: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TeenJobFair-Registration>

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia is accepting applications for college scholarships for the 2021 – 2022 school year. Eligible students include high school seniors, undergraduates, and graduate students in Northern Virginia. Community Foundation manages 12 scholarships and administers the funds for 18 other scholarships that support Northern Virginia students pursuing undergraduate and graduate degrees. The applications for scholarships are due by 5 p.m. on April 2, 2021. To learn more about each scholarship opportunity and to apply visit: cfnova.org/grants-and-scholarships.

At Lake Braddock, the freshman and junior varsity have tryouts with snow on the ground -- a change from the hot temperatures in August that they usually experience early in the season.



PHOTO BY ANDREA EDELSTEIN

High School Football and Other School Sports Start Soon, Masks and All

Winter tryouts and practices in snow are not the only change this year.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

High school sports is forging ahead this year in Fairfax County, with the football season geared up to start in February, for a shortened season, but at least the players are getting a chance to compete despite the disruptive year due to the pandemic. It's cold, it gets dark during practice and the snow threat lingers this February, but football players are tough, like Leland Cabus who likes the cold. "You get used to harsher environments," the West Springfield Spartan said. Fellow Spartan Aaron Fields is looking at the future and maybe a scholarship. "I've been waiting for the season since last year," Fields said.

Everyone is looking for a little normalcy during the pandemic, and around the schools the students and families are hopeful. With football on the school field, at least it brings on a sense that things may get back to normal.

"This is an opportunity," said Bill Curran, the FCPS athletic director. "They'll play within their respective regions, they don't need to go far," Curran added.

That's fine with Andrea Edelstein, a Lake Braddock Secondary School parent whose son is trying out for the freshman team this year. "The coaches, athletic trainers, and our Director of Student Activities have been amazing and put protocols into place that have allowed student athletes to do conditioning in a safe way," Edelstein said. The LBSS football program has been the highlight of the past year for the Edelsteins. "The ability to remain connected to the school through sports during the virtual first half of the academic year has helped to keep my son motivated," she said.

In a school year that's left many things out due to the covid requirements, school officials are working with everyone and watching the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to avoid catching or spreading the virus. That includes fans in the stands watching the athletes. For the NFL's Super Bowl, they allowed some fans to attend, but have a "Playbook," set up for dealing with the Covid-19 possibilities, and the playbook addresses the same things



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Practice on the snow-covered field at West Springfield High School went on despite the conditions.



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

Leland Cabus and Gage Hatalosky head to practice at West Springfield.

that have been recommended all along – social distancing, face coverings and hygiene. On the school field, the masks are part of the equipment too, and Zach Lesser from West Springfield, noted the special football masks they have. "It's Velcro, attached to the helmet," he said.

The school system is keeping an eye on Governor Northam and the recommendations from that office. In the week before the first football game, the FCPS is looking at allowing two family members per player. "We want to give the families an opportunity to see their child," said Curran.

In the past, most of the high school games across the county did not see full stadiums anyways, and with the chill of February, it may be less. "We can easily social distance," Curran said.

Football kicks off on Feb. 22, competition cheer, cross country track and field hockey starts on March 1, and baseball, soccer and other spring sports start April 26.



Larry & Jan Gould get into the spirit of Valentine's Day with their garden display.

Burke's Brightest Seasonal Corner

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Drivers traveling on Lee Chapel Road in Burke are reminded that Valentine's Day is upon us, thanks to Larry Gould's eye catching red heart garden ornamentation.

Retired federal employees, Gould, assisted by his wife Jan, regularly decorates for Cupid's day, and every other major holiday, with four themed displays for months without major celebrations. His ornamentation is displayed on the lawn and front entry of their corner property; visible to travelers from the busy Burke thoroughfare. They have been decorating for seven years; and people have noticed.

Larry Gould says many people stop, bring children, take pictures, and thank them for their efforts. Some have left letters in the Santa's mailbox, when included in their Christmas decoration. The pair often dresses as seasonal characters, such as Mr and Mrs Claus, Uncle Sam, and the Easter bunny, giving out candy to those who stop for a closer look. Jan relates that she was once concerned to see a police car arrive and was prepared to explain

they were not operating without a business license, just giving away treats. As it turned out, she said, the police officer too wanted to take a picture of the display with her cell phone.

Evidence found by archeologists indicates ancient Romans used garden ornamentation, as excavated in Pompeii and Herculaneum.

The "Williamsburg style" of holiday decorating outside with natural plants and fruits actually started in the 1930s. Philanthropists J. D. Rockefeller and Reverend William Goodwin, who were restoring the colonial town, wanted to create a "festive spirit" for tourists who had begun coming to see the town. The style now is often copied throughout the country.

The Goulds in modern day Burke may not have considered the history of garden decorations when they started their tradition with a goal to delight passers-by. But, as one of their neighbors shared, with all the traffic on Lee Chapel they surely have brightened thousands of lives every day. The Goulds' monthly displays can be seen at the intersection of Lee Chapel and Holly Prospect Roads, between Old Keene Mill and Fairfax County Parkway.



Colonial Williamsburg 1930 vintage decorations feature pineapples, pinecones, sumac, magnolia leaves, and evergreens.

Capital Projects Discussed

FROM PAGE 8

Meyer also stressed that the City Museum needs an expansion, as well. It opened on July 4, 1992 – more than 28 years ago. “We’re currently storing historic artifacts donated by many residents in two storage facilities because we don’t have the room [in the museum] to display them,” he said. “And it doesn’t meet national, historic, accreditation standards, so it can’t receive traveling exhibits.”

“The building is in dire need of a loading dock, a storage elevator and more space,” continued Meyer. “So in the next few years, this building’s capital needs should be addressed, as well.” Meanwhile, the proposed FY 22-26 CIP contains \$50,000 in FY 23 for a feasibility study for expansion of the museum.

Other projects included in the draft CIP are a feasibility study for Fire Station 3 on University Drive and the Old Town Hall rehabilitation. “Fire Station 3 and its land are owned by its volunteers,” said Stalzer. “And this building is older than the one on Fairfax Boulevard that was demolished. We should see if this is the best location for Station 3 or if this land could better be used for some other purpose.”

REGARDING OLD TOWN HALL, he said, “It took us all by surprise when one of its four columns fell down in the middle of the night. But it signaled that there’s something wrong with the building and we’ve got to take a look at it. We estimate \$950,000 to repair it, and \$50,000 for a Request for Proposals for an architectural-engineering firm to assess what needs to be

done to get the building structurally sound.”

Yi noted that a Stormwater Fund increase equal to 3 cents on the City’s tax rate is being proposed. So, he asked Stalzer, “If we don’t get enough revenue, we couldn’t do the stormwater projects?”

“Yes,” answered Stalzer. “Or we’d have to take the money from somewhere else.” Yi then told him he wants to receive a list of the stormwater-management projects and their priorities.

Public Works Director David Summers said these projects fall into three categories – compliance requirements, maintenance and improvements. To clarify further, Chief Financial Officer Dave Hodgkins explained that, “In FY 22, we’re projecting a shortfall of \$1,650,000 to do all the stormwater projects we want to do.”

Councilman Joe Harmon said that, in the Planning Commission’s letter, “Under educational needs, it has \$1.4 million in capital improvements, but very little is directed to the elementary schools. I’d like us to make sure they have what they need.” Meyer added that it would be helpful if the School Board could come back to the Council to discuss those needs.

Ross said he, too, would like such a meeting to happen. He also noted that he wants to visit Fairfax’s Property Yard, plus other places within the City, “to learn, firsthand, what they need.”

Stalzer said he believes a joint, City Council/School Board work session is scheduled for March. Summing up, Meyer said, “I think all the items in the CIP belong there and are all worthy of consideration. And I appreciate hearing all your different points of view.”

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Announcements

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

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. 10

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

FEB. 12-14

Fall in Love. In Fairfax City, 10455 Armstrong Street, Fairfax. The "Fall in Love in Fairfax City" Valentine's Day Gift Guide highlights Fairfax City businesses that are offering promotions from Friday, February 12 through Sunday, February 14, 2021, on gifts, dining options, and experiences. Visit the website: fairfaxcityconnected.com/fallinlove

SATURDAY/FEB. 13

Monte Carlo Night. 6-8 p.m. Virtual event. Join in a two-hour Virtual Social on Saturday, Feb. 13, 6-8 p.m. Create your own Paint and Pour vase or heart-shaped cutting board. Cost is \$40. Visit the website: <https://www.jlnv.org/montecarlonight/>

SATURDAY/FEB. 13

Beer Celebration. Noon to 6 p.m. High Side craft beer bar in Fairfax City will host a virtual celebration for its third anniversary. The event includes:

Meet the brewers (beer tasting & brewery tour) – Tabol Brewing, Oozlefinch Beers and Blending, Wheatland Spring Farm + Brewery, and Bluejacket;
Music performance from the City of Fairfax Theatre Co. and Dalia Liliy;
Charity raffle benefiting Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA);
Virtual bar trivia;
Craft beer industry panel discussion;
High Side Beer Banter;
High Side themed ASMR.

A pass is required to access this online event, which will be included with a High Side III Anniversary Beer Box purchase. It's available at <https://highsideva.com/anniversary> for \$65 + tax and includes High Side collaboration beer, glassware, coffee, swag and local discounts.

FRIDAY/FEB. 19

Virtual Family Bingo Night. 7-9 p.m. Virtual event sponsored by the Old Firehouse, McLean. Cost is \$5 per family (per Zoom invite). Join in a virtual evening of fun and prizes with your family. Winners will take their pick of prizes. Preregistration is recommended. Register online at www.oldfirehouse.org or call OFC at 703-448-TEEN (8336).

FEB. 21 AND FEB. 22

Doktor Kaboom! "Look Out! Science is Coming!" Sunday, Feb 21, and Monday, Feb. 22, 4 p.m. Sponsored by the Alden, McLean. "Look Out! Science is Coming!" Even if it is in your kitchen! Doktor Kaboom! is known around the world for taking his audience on an educational tour of the modern scientific method, using humor and comedy while demonstrating spectacular applications of the physical sciences. "Better than Bill Nye" — DC Theatre Scene. \$15/\$10 MCC tax district residents (this fee is per device). To purchase tickets or for more information, visit www.aldentheatre.org.

TUESDAY/FEB. 23

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.

Send in Pet Photos for Pet Connection

The Pet Connection, a twice-yearly special edition, will publish the last week of February, and photos and stories of your pets with you and your family should be submitted by Friday, Feb. 19, 2021.

We invite you to send stories about your pets, photos of you and your family with your cats, dogs, llamas, alpacas, ponies, hamsters, snakes, lizards, frogs, rabbits, or whatever other creatures share your life with you.

Tell us the story of a special bond between a child and a dog, the story of how you came to adopt your pet, or examples of amazing feats of your creatures.

Do you volunteer at an animal shelter or therapeutic riding center or take your pet to visit people in a nursing home? Does your business have a managing pet? Is your business about pets? Have you helped to train an assistance dog? Do you

or someone in your family depend on an assistance dog?

Or take this opportunity to memorialize a beloved pet you have lost.

Just a cute photo is fine too. Our favorite pictures include both pets and their humans.

Please tell us a little bit about your creature, identify everyone in the photo, give a brief description what is happening in the photo, and include address and phone number (we will not publish your address or phone number, just your town name).

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"Clinical Correlation Suggested"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Means what exactly? That was the suggestion written by the pathologist after "non small cell lung cancer" was written in the "diagnosis" section of the pathology report completed after my original surgical biopsy was performed at Holy Cross Hospital in early 2009. I had never seen this document until this past week, finally retrieving it after nearly 12 years, represents a kind of symmetry. Though 2009 is when my life as an officially-diagnosed-lung-cancer patient began, I am not at all prepared to say that my current life as a lung cancer patient is over. It's just called something else.

Nor am I prepared to say this document gives me much clarity or satisfaction for that matter. Unfortunately, getting re-diagnosed with papillary thyroid cancer recently doesn't change the past or guarantee the future. It does however, reshape it, potentially - for the better. When it comes to cancers you'd prefer to have and the ones you wouldn't, thyroid cancer, generally speaking is way more preferable than lung cancer. The survivability gap is all you need to know. The side effects and sacrifices required to live with thyroid cancer pale in comparison to those required of lung cancer patients. In fact, if you don't already know it, lung cancer is the leading cause of death among all cancers, by far. Moreover, more people die from lung cancer as do from the next four cancers combined. Lung cancer is a killer. So being reclassified from lung cancer to thyroid cancer is huge. The fact that I've survived so long already, 12 years post diagnosis, means I may have used up some of my unexpected life expectancy however. Still, it beats the alternative.

Originally, I was told my lung cancer was incurable and given a "13 month to two year" prognosis. Presently, as it relates to my current prognosis, it's sort of indefinite. The drug I'm taking is effective for three years. After which, I'm sort of on my own as there are no new drugs in the offing to manage my cancer. In effect, I am once again incurable, as the years of treatment for lung cancer had no effect on the underlying thyroid cancer and did a kind of damage that now means I can be treated but not cured. Quite different than had I been treated for thyroid cancer all along.

Yet, seeing this paperwork from 12 years ago which clearly lists "non small cell lung cancer, primary to the lung" has sort of stopped me in my tracks. So far as I understand/recall, there was no "clinical correlation." I started chemotherapy the following week. Was something neglected? Certainly, I didn't ask for a second opinion, which is on me, but was the oncologist supposed to research further? Was the pathology report sort of damning - me, with a kind of faint praise -- uncertainty, if you can extrapolate?

Otherwise, how does the profession account for my still being alive. When we got a second opinion a few months back from a head and neck (to include thyroid) cancer specialist at The Lombardi Cancer Center at Georgetown, she said, if I had lung cancer, I wouldn't still be alive so it's logical to presume the recent surgical biopsies that indicated thyroid cancer were likely confirming a long-standing cancer, and that quite probably I never had lung cancer but rather thyroid cancer that had metastasized to the lung. But there was no further investigation in 2009. The diagnosis - without a "clinical correlation" was non small cell lung cancer/carcinoma.

At the initial meeting with my oncologist, it all sounded so serious and the doctor was so clear in his assessment of my situation, that it seemed irresponsible, foolish even, to wait. We scheduled my first chemotherapy infusion for the following week and the rest is history. Now I'm wondering if it was history that need not have been made.

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

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