Volunteers in a Science Technology Art Music Philanthropy (STAMP) program at Waples Mill ES in Oakton, along with Girl Scouts from Oakton/Fairfax area, made more than 1800 valentines in this year’s Valentine Challenge with Volunteer Fairfax. Recipients included Oakton Fire & Rescue Department.

Downtown McLean Re-Imagined

Sealing the Record
Valentines for Covid Heroes in Oakton

Volunteers in a Science Technology Art Music Philanthropy (STAMP) program at Waples Mill ES in Oakton, along with Girl Scouts from Oakton/Fairfax area, made more than 1800 valentines in this year’s Valentine Challenge with Volunteer Fairfax. Recipients included Foster Care to Success, kids in foster care in Fairfax County, health workers at INOVA, Fair Oaks police, Oakton fire, Oakton post office, Oakton library, local grocery workers, Oak Marr RE-Center, medical & dental clinics, Waples Mill ES staff, Franklin MS staff, Fairfax County School Board members, Providence Supervisor Dalia Palchick & Providence district staff, Fairfax County Park Authority Invasive Management Area, Sanctuary DMV Food Justice Initiative, residents at Sunrise senior living.

— Sara Holtz

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News
Sealing the Record

By Michael Lee Pope
THE CONNECTION

For people haunted by a conviction for felony drug possession or misdemeanor or disorderly conduct, a debate now happening in the Virginia General Assembly is one that could have dramatic consequences for finding a place to live or landing a job. Lawmakers are considering legislation that would allow those people to seal their criminal record, expunging old convictions and helping them wipe the slate clean.

But Democrats are bitterly divided over how to accomplish that goal.

House Democrats are pressing for an automatic model for sealing the record on many crimes, allowing people to wipe the slate clean without needing to hire a lawyer or missing a day of work. Senate Democrats are rejecting that approach, holding out for a petition-based process where judges would review individual cases to determine whether they deserve to have convictions or charges sealed. Neither side appears to be willing to back down as the legislation heads toward a closed-door conference committee, where lawmakers will either cut a deal or end the session without taking action.

“It’s time to act during this session to have the robust debate about how to best conduct the process of expunging people’s records,” said Gov. Ralph Northam in his State of the Commonwealth address. “This will make our system more just and equal — and it needs action this session.”

Although the governor told lawmakers he wants them to find a resolution before the end of the session, he pointedly declined to take a position. The lack of leadership from the governor has intensified the struggle between Senate Democrats and House Democrats as the General Assembly session reaches its halfway mark this week. At this point, the most likely scenario is that each side would insist on its version, sending the legislation into a conference committee where lawmakers might end up adopting some kind of hybrid approach, expunging some crimes automatically while requiring a petition or automatic, very few people avail themselves of it,” said Ashna Khan-na, legislative director at the ACLU of Virginia. “The need is system that will not create more inequities when it comes to race and socioeconomic status.”

SENATE DEMOCRATS are taking a much more conservative approach. Sen. Scott Surovell (D-36) has a bill that would allow automatic expungement for some minor offenses, like speeding or shopping cart theft. Felony drug possession and jailable misdemeanor like larceny or trespassing would require a judge to review an individual’s case and get a sense of who the defendants are and what happened in their lives that resulted in the criminal record. That way judges can identify significant drug problems or mental health problems.

“When somebody is convicted of is often a legal fiction to achieve a compromise in a criminal proceeding,” said Surovell. “And from my perspective the circumstances of the crime that led to the compromise are partly what need to be considered before a charge is expunged.”

Although Herring’s bill has automatic expungement for a narrow set of offenses, Surovell’s bill has a petition-based process for a much larger list of crimes. Currently, Virginia law offers no way for people to seal old convictions, and the Senate bill would create a new process for expunging the record for hundreds of crimes. Surovell’s bill also includes a provision to provide legal services to some people who can’t afford lawyers and penalties for private companies that sell expunged criminal records online, a grift that’s often used to extract money out of people who are trying to clear their names on the internet.

“The more expungement available the better,” Andrew Elders, policy director for Justice Forward Virginia. “I keep wanting to take the best parts of these bills and smash them together until we get the most expansive reform possible.”

THE CONTOURS of a final bill might end up taking bits and pieces from two approaches, and advocates have a wide range of opinions about what should happen. Alexandria Commonwealth’s Attorney Bryan Porter says he supports automatic expungement for any charges that have been dismissed or where the defendant has been found not guilty. He also supports an automatic process for sealing all misdemeanor convictions, including convictions for larceny or trespassing. But, he says, he would like to see a petition-based process for felony drug convictions.

“There currently is no process by which you could ever have those convictions sealed, and I’m supportive of allowing people a process by which they can have those convictions sealed,” said Porter, who is part of a group known as the Progressive Prosecutors for Justice. “But I do think it’s reasonable in those circumstances where someone has actually been convicted of a criminal offense that there be a petition-based system.”

The ongoing impasse between the House and Senate on this issue has been going on for more than a year. House and Senate Democrats were unable to come to a resolution on their differences last March, and the session concluded without a bill. Then the Crime Commission released a report supporting the automatic process, and people were hopeful that a special session on criminal justice reform might have been an opportunity for compromise. But once again the House and Senate were not able to reach an agreement and the special session ended without a deal.

Now lawmakers are back at it again for a third time, and each side seems to be digesting in its heels and refusing to back down.

“The problem they have is the votes don’t exist in our body to do what they want,” said Surovell. “And if they tell me the votes don’t exist to do what I want in their body I guess we won’t have a bill again.”

“Keeping people branded with a scarlet letter for misdemeanor offenses is disgraceful.”

— House Majority Leader Charniele Herring

House Majority Leader Charniele Herring of Alexandria, shown here on the House floor last year, is leading the fight to automatically expunge criminal records, sealing records of old cases ranging from felony drug possession to misdemeanors like larceny to disorderly conduct.

Sealing the Record
Virginia’s Budget Focuses on Recovery

BY SEN. ADAM EBBIN

There had been dire predictions concerning the allocation of funds and the tweaking of expenses which together create our state budget. At the time, the economic outlook was strong, and we reported an incredibly bold, progressive budget. Within a month of its adoption it was clear many of our lofty funding goals would need to be pushed aside due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Comparably, Virginia has weathered the economic storm well, and we were able to restore some of these funding priorities this year, as well as take important new steps to begin the process of rebuilding our economy.

Last week the Senate and House reported our respective amendments to the second-year appropriations of Virginia’s biennial budget. The differences between these versions will be reconciled in the coming weeks by the joint budget conference. The Senate budget prioritizes repairing the damage COVID has done to our students’ ability to learn, bolster our education system, protects small businesses, expands access to broadband, increases affordable housing opportunities, and funds growing vaccination efforts as well as directing aid to at-risk medical patients.

In healthcare, we made prudent decisions to increase federal matching dollars for children’s healthcare and foster care, and secured a large amount of federal funding to support a statewide vaccination program. Since my last column, Virginia has become one of the most successful states in vaccine distribution, and this funding will help us further advance that mission while saving nearly $100 million for other priorities. We also appropriated dollars to add slots for Developmental Disability Waivers to support those vulnerable residents most impacted by COVID-19.

Virginia’s Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which funds short and long term projects to reduce barriers to ownership and renting of affordable housing, as well as projects reducing homelessness, has been funded at or around $5 million a year since its inception. That was simply not enough, and I am glad the Senate budget takes the issue seriously by allocating $110 million to the Trust over the biennium. We also allocated significant federal relief dollars for rent and mortgage relief. As this year has proved, access to the Internet is not a commodity, but rather a necessity. To address this reality the Senate included nearly $50 million for broadband infrastructure grants. We also included expansive tax breaks and small business loans to protect and bring back small businesses and jobs in the coming year—a major priority for members of the Senate Finance Committee.

Everyone has suffered during this pandemic, but especially of concern are Virginia’s children, who have been uniquely affected during their formative years. The Senate budget moves to address those concerns in order to get kids back into even better schools than the ones they left, with more support and a higher chance of life-long success. We increased salaries for hard-working educators, and also allocated significant dollars in order to add three additional support staff (including mental health counselors and nurses) per 1,000 students statewide. We also increased per-pupil funding for the Virginia Preschool Initiative to level the playing field, so that disadvantaged early learners have a better shot at success.

Despite economic struggles, I am glad that the Senate did not fold to austerity economics as was done during the 2008 financial crisis. This legislative session has been one to address needs, not wants, and I am glad to support a budget that addressed those needs aggressively and responsibly. With the funds allocated in this year’s budget, Virginia will recover.

Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is!

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM

STATE DELEGATE (D-36)

I have never known a politician who has not promised better schools, quality of life and safety. Although these standards are defined differently by the persuasion of the persons making them, the promises share one thing in common: to be realized fully will cost money. The true measure of an officeholder comes not in the promises made but whether that person is willing to put their money where their mouth is. I could not be prouder as a member of the House of Delegates and the Appropriations Committee of the budget passed in the House of Delegates last week. The Senate passed a very similar budget with the differences between the two to be resolved in a conference committee over the next couple of weeks.

While debate over the budget is most often about spending, discussions need also to take into account revenues and investments. There had been dire predictions about state revenues heading into

Opinion
Shepherd’s Center Expands to Serve Northern Virginia

The Shepherd’s Center serving Oakton, Vienna, Reston and Herndon and the Shepherd’s Center of Great Falls join forces to better serve area seniors.

“The merger is expected to be seamless transition,” said Philip Pifer, president of the Shepherd’s Center of Great Falls. “We at SCGF are delighted with the potential of this partnership, and with SCOVHR as our partner,” Pifer said. “We evaluated a number of organizations who expressed interest in joining forces, and SCOVHR was both the best fit and, in our opinion, offers the best potential. Working together, we hope to provide even better and more impactful services to seniors in Northern Virginia.”

“Working together, we hope to provide even better and more impactful services to seniors in Northern Virginia.” — Philip Pifer, president of the Shepherd’s Center of Great Falls

Since 1998, Shepherd’s Center Oakton-Vienna-Reston-Herndon, a 501 (C)(3) non-profit organization, has been dedicated to improving the quality of life as we age, through support programs and services, personal enrichment and volunteer engagement that enable senior neighbors to live full and productive lives while aging in place. Ihr Center’s more than 260 trained and vetted volunteers are medical and companion transportation drivers, friendly callers and visitors, food delivery drivers, handy helpers, health care advocates, and lifelong learning and cultural enrichment enthusiasts. This volunteer engagement network offers stability, encouragement and hope for connected and healthy lives.

Established in 2018, the Shepherd’s Center of Great Falls, a 501(c)3 charity, has provided free transportation for non-driving seniors in Great Falls, as well as other services supporting seniors wishing to age in place in their homes.

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Downtown McLean Re-Imagined

Open House scheduled to review McLean re-planning effort.

By Mercia Hobson

A virtual community open house is scheduled for Sat., Feb.20, 9-11 a.m., regarding the re-planning effort for downtown McLean. Dranesville District Supervisor John W. Foust posted on Nextdoor that County staff will provide an overview of the McLean Community Business Center (CBC) Study, the draft Comprehensive Plan recommendations, and changes proposed to the draft Plan recommendations since the last virtual community meeting held on Nov. 7.

Those interested can go to the Fairfax County website for the McLean Community Business Center (CBC) Study to attend the meeting using the WebEx platform. Attendees can participate virtually by laptop or desktop as well as a smart device. To receive a callback, provide your phone number when you join the event. Call 1-844-621-3956 and enter the access code:179 701 2779.

Begun in the summer of 2018, the community-driven planning study for The McLean Community Business Center started with a series of three workshops to reimagine the area. The Board of Supervisors authorized a Comprehensive Plan amendment to review approximately a 230-acre site centered around Old Dominion Drive and Chain Bridge Road.

By fall, the County had hired Streetsense to consider different vision goals for the McLean Community Business Center. Colin Greene, senior director of planning for Streetsense, presented the Vision’s second Draft. At that time, Greene said that the final recommendation, even if fully adopted by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, remained a vision. Greene said, “No one has put in applications for redevelopment. There’s no agenda.” The study was meant to be a “framework for future development.”

Following focus groups, online surveys, workshops, public comment, and direct feedback, Streetsense brought forward the community members’ Vision Plan of a reimagined downtown McLean on Dec. 18, 2018. The Plan guided the McLean CBC Task Force composed of residents and stakeholders. They discussed the new draft Plan text, working to recommend changes to the Comprehensive Plan for County staff consideration. On Oct. 6, 2020, Task Force members held their twenty-seventh meeting. According to Foust’s post: “The draft Plan retains the neighborhood serving aspect of the downtown area but identifies the center of the downtown as an area of taller mixed-use buildings that create a sense of vibrancy and support walkability. A signature urban park is expected to be a major placemaking element in the center of the CBC. Development intensities would taper away from the core area, and existing development intensities around the edge of the CBC are expected to be retained.”

A copy of the Dec. 9, 2020 Draft can be found online.
Leveling the Playing Field in School

Advocating for children with special needs or learning disabilities.

By Marilyn Campbell
The Connection

When Lisa Lightner’s son Kevin was two-years-old, she discovered that he would need special learning support in school. She has spent more than 12 years working to make sure he received the necessary assistance in the classroom. Now she is helping other parents avoid the frustrating and overwhelming process she endured. Lightner is now a special education advocate, blogger and host of the podcast “Don’t IEP Alone,” a title that references an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). She uses her platform to raise awareness and share information and resources to help other parents navigate the complicated and overwhelming path to securing the best education for special needs.

“Working to get help for Kevin was a challenge. It’s really an overwhelming process,” said Lightner, whose son is now 14. “I’m college educated and I had so much trouble figuring it out.” Changes that remove barriers and provide your child with equal access to learning.

Recognizing that a child has and a learning disability, such as dyslexia or Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and determining the type of accommodations and adjustments in school to ensure that they have equal access to learning, is an arduous process. Though the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides children the right to have IEP that includes a learning plan tailored fit their learning differences, they don’t always receive it.

The special education climate has really changed in recent years,” said Lightner. “Schools are doing more with less. Teachers have larger class sizes, fewer resources. It’s very easy for a child to fall through the cracks if you don’t stay on top of their progress.”

Learning disabilities can often go unnoticed, but red flags that a child might have a learning disability include low grades and difficulty keeping up with their peers academically. “Parents are often the first to recognize that their child may be struggling with certain learning endeavors, for example reading, math, or writing,” said Clara Hauth, PhD Associate Professor, Special Education Marymount University. “The terms for these learning disabilities are dyslexia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia.”

“A more obvious telltale is when the child shares with you an ongoing pattern of frustration about schoolwork or shows a lack of engagement in school,” added Kelley Regan, Ph.D. Professor and academic program coordinator for special education at George Mason University. “Also, if work completion is taking an unusual amount of time or the child shows little in independence or a lack of understanding of assignment or there is an avoidance of schoolwork; these could be signs that the child’s needs may or may not be met.”

The current virtual learning environment and the resulting restructuring of the way that accommodations or IEPs are being administered might make no noticing whether a child’s academic needs are being met more challenging. “We also have seen firsthand over the last year how unprecedented circumstances like a pandemic have impacted delivery of instruction for students with disabilities,” said Regan. “The delivery of services for students with disabilities had to be revamped by school districts across the nation and now we are seeing the impact of school closures on student achievement and social-emotional learning.”

A diagnostic test will help identify and confirm a learning disability. “Parents who feel that their student may have a disability should contact both their family doctor and the school to request initial meetings to discuss their concerns,” said Hauth.

Such tests could provide information to guide the creation of an IEP that outlines the accommodations that will meet a child’s learning needs. Examples of these accommodations include additional time to take tests and complete homework and assignments or having tests administered on a one-on-one basis.

Even with an IEP in place though, some children might not get the resources they need. “Research tells us that many novice special education teachers and even veteran teachers feel overwhelmed by their workloads and managing these workloads can be challenging,” said Regan. “To meet the needs of students, teachers need adequate resources and materials, and they need devoted time to collaboratively design meaningful instruction for students. Limited resources and time may be one explanation as to why children with learning disabilities may not be receiving what they need.”

In an ideal learning environment, a general education teacher collaborates with a special education teacher and they design specialized instruction that allows the student to succeed with the general education curriculum. “If … the needs outlined on the child’s IEP are not being met for the child, a parent should advocate.”

Almost everything is more challenging within a virtual learning environment, monitoring a child’s academic performance is still essential, says Lightner. “Engage in the IEP process, all of it, all year round,” she said. “You have to stay engaged and in contact with your team and your child’s progress. Understanding the evaluations and progress made is essential.”

Sometimes, the needs of the child with learning disabilities changes. In such cases advocacy is necessary, advises Regan. “When the individualized program is not providing the supports that previously sufficed, a parent may need to and should advocate,” she said. “For example, a parent may observe that his or her child appears very disorganized with his or her school materials, is turning in assignments late or not at all and needs an effective strategy in place for an observed problem. Likewise, there may be a need for adjusting the intensity or frequency of instruction. Instruction should be appropriate for the child.”
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

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

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.

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

by Andrea Edelstein

In a school year that's left many things out due to the pandemic, high school sports is forging ahead this year. In August that they usually experience partway through the 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. In the week before the first football game, the FCPS had some fans to attend, but have a playbook addresses the same things possibilities, and the playbook addresses the same things possibilities, and the playbook addresses the same things

By Mike Salmon
The Connection

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.

incident

Suspicous Event -- 100 Block Patrick Street, SE, Feb. 1, 9:46 p.m.
A resident stated that he communicated with a woman over the internet and gave her his phone number. A short time later, he began receiving text messages wanting money from him. Stolen Vehicle - Wawa, 465 Maple Avenue, West, Feb. 4, 12:35 a.m.
A citizen, a DoorDash driver, reported that he left his vehicle running in the parking lot while picking up a food order. The citizen stated someone stole his vehicle while he was in the store. The citizen waited several minutes before calling the police to report the incident. Shortly after a lookout for the vehicle was given to surrounding jurisdictions, Fairfax County Police officers located the vehicle unoccupied and running at Chain Bridge Road and Glengyle Drive. The citizen reported that it was a PlayStation 4, a keyboard, and marijuana were missing from the vehicle. The citizen did not wish to pursue charges and did not wish further investigation on the incident.
Assist EMS - 1000 Block Lynn Street, SW, Feb. 5, 12:47 a.m.
Officers responded to assist rescue personnel with a man suffering a drug overdose. The man was transported to an area hospital in non-life-threatening condition.
Petit Larceny, 7-11, 537 Maple Avenue, West, Feb. 6, 4:48 a.m.
An employee reported that a man stole three cases of beer.

SUSPICIOUS PERSON, 500 Block Stephen Circle, SW, Feb. 7 between 4 a.m. and 7:30 a.m.
At 9:40 a.m., a resident reported that her security camera captured a suspicious person at her home earlier in the morning. A vehicle pulled into the driveway, and the female driver approached the resident's front door several times, talking to herself. The woman moved her vehicle to another driveway, then back at the resident's home. Nothing appeared to have been disturbed.

Domestic Dispute, Nutley Street, SW, Feb. 8, 11:13 p.m.
Officers responded to a verbal dispute between a husband and wife.

Business Alarm -- CVS, 264 Cedar Lane, SE, Feb. 9, 9:23 p.m.
Officers responded to the report of an alarm at the store. The alarm company advised that someone could be seen inside the store on the surveillance cameras. When officers searched the store, they did not find anyone inside, and nothing appeared suspicious. From the surveillance video, it appeared that the last employee closed and secured the store without realizing there was a customer inside. The customer, who was observed on the camera, approached the register to make their purchase, realized there were no employees in the store, left the items they were going to purchase, and left the store.

Natural Death – Elaine Circle, SE, Feb. 10, 9:37 a.m.
Officers responded to assisting rescue personnel with an elderly resident who suffered from medical issues and was deceased in his home.

Arrest - Narcotics Violation -- Nutley Street, SW / Tapawingo Road, SW, Feb. 11, 7:04 p.m.
During a routine traffic stop for expired registration, Sgt Tracy detected an odor of marijuana coming from the vehicle. A bag of marijuana and other paraphernalia was located inside the vehicle. Sgt Tracy cited the 33-year-old man from Cedar Lane, SE, Vienna. The driver was charged with expired registration as well as possession of marijuana. He was released on his signature.

Crashes

Maple Avenue and Niblick Drive, SE, Feb. 5, 8:06 a.m.
Vehicle-1 was stopped at the stop sign on Niblick Drive, turning left onto Maple Avenue. Vehicle-2 was traveling eastbound in the left lane of Maple Avenue. At Vehicle-1 the intersection, it was struck by Vehicle-2. Driver-1 was issued a summons charging Failure to Pay Full Time and Attention.

Maple Avenue West / Nutley Street, SW, Feb. 5, 1:36 p.m.
Vehicle-2 was stopped at a red light in the right turn lane of Nutley Street, SW, at Maple Avenue West. Vehicle-1 was traveling behind Vehicle-2. Vehicle-1 failed to stop and rear-ended Vehicle-2. Vehicle-2 proceeded to make a right turn onto Maple Avenue West then pulled into a parking lot. Vehicle-1 also made a right turn onto Maple Avenue West but continued eastbound, not stopping with Vehicle-2. The driver of Vehicle-1 was later located, and insurance information was exchanged. Driver-1 was issued a summons charging Failure to Pay Full Time and Attention.
**Innovating Young People in Creative Learning Activities**

**Fairfax Symphony named a Dominion ArtStar.**

*By David Siegel  
The Connection*

With more than five decades as an honored symphony, Fairfax Symphony Orchestra (FSO) adds 2021 Dominion Energy ArtStar to its accolades. FSO received the ArtStar award for its innovative music-learning program, “Link Up,” in partnership with Carnegie Hall. The award was received at the Virginia Commission for the Arts “Art Works for VA” virtual conference.

FSO was one of five organizations from Virginia that received the ArtStars award for inspiring people in creative endeavors. The organizations represent Virginia organizations with annual operating budgets under $1 million. Each received a $10,000 grant to support their winning arts or cultural education program.

“These organizations show ways the creative spirit continues to thrive – whether through outdoor, virtual or digital programming,” said Hunter A. Applewhite, president of the Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation. “Virginia is very fortunate to have these talented organizations.”

“The Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA) congratulates all the ArtStars Award recipients, including the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra,” said Janet Starke, Executive Director, VCA. “This award affirms the good work being done by the FSO, and their peers from across the state.”

Where and When

To learn more about the Fairfax Symphony Orchestra partnership with the Carnegie Hall “Link Up” program and other Fairfax Symphony education programs, visit www.fairfaxsymphony.org. Additional support for the Fairfax Symphony “Link Up” program provided by ArtsFairfax, The Rea Charitable Trust, and the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation.

**County Department of Public Works, Environmental Services Wins Eight Awards**

*By Mike Salmon  
The Connection*

The Noman M. Cole Jr. Pollution Control wastewater treatment plant was recently recognized for their “Tertiary Filters Rehabilitation Project,” and “Rehabilitation of Three Equalization Basin and Ancillary Facilities,” by the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA) in its annual Mid-Atlantic Region awards.

The Noman M. Cole Jr. plant was among eight Fairfax County’s Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) facilities awarded by the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the APWA in its annual Mid-Atlantic Region awards. Five of the awards were for Project of the Year and three for honorable mention.

“Having Mid-Atlantic APWA recognize the work of DPWES and our partners with these awards acknowledges the excellence in the building and enhancement of the county’s infrastructure,” said DPWES Assistant Director Juan Reyes.

Reyes was featured in the county video documentary that focuses on the water cycle, and the activities at the Noman M. Cole Jr. Pollution Control wastewater treatment plant. They discuss the process and focus on the clean water going back into the waters of Gunston Cove “clean enough to sustain life,” one of the officials said. Mau- reen Gable, the science department chair at Lake Braddock Secondary School, uses examples from the plant to teach students in her AP Environmental Science class.

Noman M. Cole Jr might be best known for his efforts to improve the water quality in the Potomac River. He was principal author of the 1971 Occoquan Watershed Policy, which prompted establishment of the Upper Occoquan Sewage Authority and the creation of one of the world’s most advanced sewage treatment plants. Cole died in 1997 at age 63.

The following projects were selected for 2021 awards. Each winning project was completed by either the Wastewater Design and Construction Division, the Building Design and Construction Division or the Utilities Design and Construction Division. All three divisions are in the DPWES Capital Facilities business area.

**Winner** - Scotts Run Trail Project  - Project of the Year Award for the category of Transportation

**Winner** - Innovation Center Station Parking Garage Project  - Project of the Year Award for the category of Structures $25 - $75 million

**Honorable Mention** for the Rehabilitation of Three Equalization Basin and Ancillary Facilities  - Project of the Year Award for the category of Environmental $5 - $25 million

**Winner** - Backlick Run Gravity Sewer Emergency Abandonment Project  - Project of the Year Award for the category of Disaster or Emergency Construction/Repair Less than $5 million

**Winner** - Tertiary Filters Rehabilitation Project at the Noman M Cole Pollution Control Plant  - Project of the Year Award for the category of Structures $5 - $25 million

**Winner** - Reston Community Center Aquatics Facility Renovations  - Project of the Year Award for the category of Structures $5 - $25 million

**Winner** - Mclean Metro Gravity Sewer Capacity Improvements Project  - Project of the Year Award for the category of Environment Less than $5 million

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the awards will be announced during a virtual ceremony. The date is pending.
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

Chason, June D. (Wilner) of Wellesley, MA, passed away on February 10, 2021. Beloved mother of Susan Hope and her husband Mark, Martha Chason-Sokol and her husband Jerry, Mark Chason, Cynthia Cohen and her husband Andrew, and the late Andrew Chason. Proud grandmother of Rachel, Ilana, Ben, Shaul Rick, Genevieve, Joshua, Sarah, Meir, and Rachelli. Loving sister of Stanley Wilner and his wife Phyllis. Private graveside service at Beth Abraham Cemetery, Auburn, ME. In lieu of flowers, donations in June’s memory may be made to the Alzheimer’s Association, ME Chapter, 383 US Route 1, Scarborough, ME 04074.

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Mon-Thurs: 8am-11pm, Fri-Sat: 8am-5pm, Sun: 2pm-8pm EST

BULLETIN

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

LOVE VIENNA! RESTAURANT WEEK

The Town of Vienna Economic Development is launching Love Vienna! Restaurant Week on Feb. 14-21 to tie in the love theme for the month but with a twist to encourage residents and visitors to support and love the Town’s local eateries and restaurants. Businesses ranging from restaurants, wine shops, coffee shops, other eateries will offer socially distant dine-in and take out specials throughout the week. On Valentine’s Day, several notable businesses such as Clarity, Maple Ave Restaurant, and Blend 111 will offer pre-fixed offerings. During the week, the Town of Vienna also encourages diners to flash a heart sign with their hands in front of their favorite spot(s) and post on social using the hashtag #LoveVienna for a chance to win a prize pack filled with prizes and gift cards from the local town businesses. While in the Town of Vienna, folks can stop by the Valentine’s themed LOVE letters located at the W&OD Trail Entrance near Northside Park (Address for GPS: 429 Center Street).

FEB. 19 TO NOV. 19 (FRIDAYS)

Virtual Great Decisions Discussion Group. 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. A Program of the Shepherd’s Center serving Oakton-Vienna-Reston-Herndon. Great Decisions is America’s largest discussion program on world affairs. Cost: $32 per person (includes briefing book) which must be ordered from the Foreign Policy Association. Contact SC Coordinator, Mike Mulreany, at mulreany@verizon.net to register and get the information to order the books. Participants who have pre-ordered their books will have the books delivered to them in mid-January. Class meets the third Friday of the month.

CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD EVENTS

The Church of the Good Shepherd, a United Methodist church in Vienna, will have its 22nd annual Devotions for Lent publication online and in print as of Ash Wednesday, Feb. 17. The church invites all to join its online Ash Wednesday service at 7:30 p.m. that night. Good Shepherd will hold an Ash Wednesday service online at 7:30 p.m. via a Zoom link and its Facebook page, thus no imposition of ashes. The church also welcomes all to its online worship services, including Palm Sunday (March 28), Good Friday (April 2) and Easter (April 4). The 22nd annual Devotions for Lent and information for the Zoom link to church services will be available on the church’s website at www.GoodShepherdVA.com. The church will also post each day’s devotional on its online Facebook page at www.facebook.com/goodshepherdvienna. Additionally, the church will hold various weekly online Zoom gatherings to discuss the devotional. For more information, call the church office at 703-281-3987 or visit the church website at www.GoodShepherdVA.com or its Facebook page at www.facebook.com/goodshepherdVienna.
in a powerful program of witness. Visit the website: http://www.woodlawnpopeleighton.org/voices-of-woodlawn

FRIDAY/ FEB. 26
Color Utilization. 10 a.m. to noon, Via Zoom. Walt Barton, the founder and director of Yellow Barn Studios and Gallery, will be giving a demonstration on color utilization at the Friday, February 26 Meeting of the McLean Art Club. (0) 703-790-1234. Visit: www.mcleanartclub.org to register. Cost: $20.

FRIDAY/ FEB. 26
Virtual Family Bingo Night. 7–9 p.m. Visit: www.oldfirehouse.org for details. Feel free to call 703-448-8336, TTY: 711.

FRIDAY/ FEB. 19
Virtual Family Bingo Night. 7–9 p.m. Virtual event sponsored by the Old Firehouse, McLean. Register at www.oldfirehouse.org/ or call 703-448-833 TTY: 711.

TUESDAY/ FEB. 23
Search for Winter Waterfowl. 10-11 a.m. At Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax. 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, park visitors will see the shore of Burke Lake in search of winter waterfowl. Be on the lookout for birds, such as loons, lesser scap or ring-necked ducks. Bring binoculars and dress for the weather. This program is designed for participants age 12 to 80. Cost: $8 per person. Call 703-323- 6600.

WEDNESDAY/ FEB. 24
Unruly Theatre Project Virtual Improv Show. 7 p.m. Virtual event. At The Alden Theatre, McLean. 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.

THURSDAY/ FEB. 25

March 1-13
The Smith Must Go On. The McLean Art Society in collaboration with The McLean Project For The Arts is presenting a juried painting exhibit in the atrium gallery at The McLean Community Center. (1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean, 703-790-0123). Original art work in a wide variety of subject matter and painting styles will be available for viewing and purchase.

If Michael Corleonie Had Lung Cancer
By KENNETH B. LOURIE

“Just when I thought I was out . . .” This phrase is often used in reference to the famous Italian gangster, Michael Corleonie, who is portrayed by Al Pacino in the Godfather film series. When I heard this phrase, I immediately thought of someone who was affected by lung cancer. Michael Corleonie was portrayed as a successful and powerful individual who, despite facing numerous challenges, never gave up. Similarly, those who are diagnosed with lung cancer face numerous challenges, such as treatment side effects, the loss of loved ones, and the potential loss of quality of life. But, just like Corleonie, they are determined to fight and stay strong.

“Just when I thought I was out . . .” is a phrase that represents the determination and resilience that is often seen in people facing lung cancer. It is a reminder that nothing can stop them from living their lives to the fullest. Whether it is through the support of loved ones, the strength of the medical community, or the determination of the individual themselves, they continue to fight. And just like Michael Corleonie, they continue to rise above the challenges and prove that nothing can stop them. So, just when you think you have it in the bag, don’t forget to think about the people who are facing this disease. And remember, just as the phrase suggests, “Just when I thought I was out . . .”
2009 Wellfleet Court, Falls Church
*BEAUTIFUL* 5BR/3 BA home in sought-after Nantucket neighborhood in Falls Church! This wonderful home features remodeled kit w/ quartzite counters, island, eat-in nook w/ bay window & coffee station! Open floorplan w/ hardwood floors throughout the main level; sunny, light/bright living and dining rooms; owner’s suite + 2 additional BRS on main level; LL rec room includes frpl, built-ins and walk-out to fenced yard w/ patio, & add’l bedrooms, hall ba & mud room. Quick/easy access to Metro/commuter routes! 

813 Green Street, Alexandria
*GORGEOUS* 2BR/2.5 BA townhome on 3 levels in historic Alexandria location! Sparkling hardwood floors; living room w/ bay window, fireplace and built-ins; fabulously updated kitchen w/ stainless steel appliances, quartz counters, tile backsplash, up-dated cabinets; renovated baths; updated HVAC and lighting; sliding glass door walkout to deck; beautiful owner’s suite w/ full bathroom; spacious lower level w/ recessed lighting, updated flooring and walk-up to fenced-in backyard. SUPER location - close to commuter routes, schools, shopping, DC!

1721 Chesterbrook Vale Ct, McLean
*BEAUTIFUL* 5BR/3.5 BA colonial home on 3 finished levels in sought-after CHESTERBROOK VALE! This EXPANSIVE and light-filled home features sparkling hardwood floors; updated kitchen w/ breakfast bar and breakfast room; huge GREAT room w/ cathedral ceiling, fireplace and French door walkout to patio; main level office w/ built-ins and pocket doors; wonderful owner’s suite with luxury bathroom; updated bathrooms; private, landscaped lot in cul-de-sac location! Chesterbrook, Longfellow, McLean schools!

3438 Chelsea Drive
Woodbridge, 22192
$374,900

102 Rolling Trace
Falls Church City 22046
$849,000

1469 Waggaman Circle
McLean, 22101
$1,999,000 or $6900/month

1916 Foxhall Road
McLean, 22101
$1,149,000

6624 Spring Valley Drive
Alexandria, 22312
$749,000

We’re seeing multiple contracts with escalations! Call to chat with JD today!