

# CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station

## Questions Surround the Coffey Family Cemetery

NEWS, PAGE 9

The historic Coffey house is now being used by Burke Centre for community activities. Local historian believes there are more graves beyond the cemetery fence.



## 'A Reminder of Our Sense of Community'

NEWS, PAGE 8

## Detectives Learn of New Information From 2016 Murder

NEWS, PAGE 3

OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10

PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

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## Detectives Learn of New Information from 2016 Murder

Shopping trip before the murder may hold clues.

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

**O**n March 11, 2016, shortly after 1 a.m. officers responded to de Leede's home in the 6000 block of River Drive in Lorton for a shot person. When officers arrived, they found de Leede in his home suffering from gunshot wounds to his upper body. According to the police, the officers on the scene attempted life saving measures, but he later died at the hospital. Although it has been five years since Johan de Leede was killed in his Lorton home, detectives from the Fairfax County Police Department Major Crimes Bureau continue to investigate the circumstances that led to his death, uncovering another element from the case that may help solve the crime.

Recently, a family member learned de Leede had been at the West Marine store, 13330 Gordon Boulevard, in Woodbridge the day prior to his murder. An employee at the business provided the family member with a receipt of a purchase that de Leede had made the previous morning. Detectives had been investigating this homicide based on information that de Leede had not left the home on March 10, but this new information may change things. FCPD detectives are now asking for anyone who may have seen de Leede at the store or if anyone saw him traveling to and from his home that day to call the Major Crimes Bureau. Detectives believe de Leede would have been driving the family's 2006 white Toyota Highlander or 2011 navy blue Mercedes C3000 sport.

By releasing this new information, it just might trigger a memory from someone at

the store. "That's what our detectives are asking," said FCPD 2nd Lt. James Curry. "It may seem small to some but that's why we put it out there," Curry said.

An investigation revealed a neighbor reportedly saw a dark full-sized pickup truck, possibly a Ford F-250, with its lights off leaving the area quickly following the gunshots. It drove northbound on Mallard Road and eventually took a left.

Even though it was a few years ago, the FCPD has not given up, said Curry. "We want to solve this," he said.

Detectives are asking anyone with information regarding this incident to call the Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 2. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone – 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477), by text – Type "FCCS" plus tip to 847411, and by web



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Johan de Leede with family members.

– Click [HERE](#). Download our Mobile tip411 App "Fairfax Co Crime Solvers". Anonymous tipsters are eligible for cash rewards of \$100 to \$1,000 dollars if their information leads to an arrest. In addition, the family is now offering a \$25,000 reward.

## State Candidates Seek Your Signature

BY SUSAN LAUME  
THE CONNECTION

**W**ith completion of the 2021 General Assembly session, the odd-year political election cycle is upon us in Virginia. Candidates for the office of State Delegate are now at work preparing to file with the State Department of Elections. All current Virginia State delegate terms expire January 2022, and are filled in the Nov. 2 General Election; so too, the State-wide positions of Governor, Lt Governor and Attorney General.

Would-be delegate candidates are now collecting signatures, either in person or electronically, from qualified voters in their prospective districts, as part of the filing requirements. You'll find them knocking on doors, set up on lawns of supporters, and at community locations. This year, the Virginia Department of Elections has allowed electronic signature collections of voters. A minimum of 125 signatures are needed to qualify, along with a Declaration of Candidacy, a Statement of Economic Interest, and payment of a primary filing fee of \$353.80. The fee represents two percent of the position's one year salary. A candidate for delegate must be a United States citizen, at least 21 years of age, and have been a resident of Virginia for the past year. The last day for can-



Registered voter Walt Warme, of Alexandria, with his dog David, stops to sign incumbent Delegate Paul Krizek's petition for re-election. Krizek has represented the 44th District since 2016.

didates to file is March 25; the party filing deadline is March 30.

Candidates for state-wide office have a higher threshold of 10,000 signatures to meet, including at least 400 from each Congressional District in the Commonwealth; and higher primary filing fees based on the higher position salaries.

Primary elections, if held, run on June 8. Primary elections are held only if there are multiple candidates from the same party for the same seat. Those winning their party nomination, run in the November 2 general election against the opposing party primary winner or nominee, and any qualifying inde-

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



Incumbent Delegate Kathy Tran (center) gets support from her son Daven and campaign manager Ashley Wolsefer, as she reaches out for signatures for her third term run in District 42.

pendents who filed, to determine who fills the seats.

Political interest in Virginia's elections remains high nationally, as the Commonwealth has trended more Democrat in recent years. In 2017, Democrats won the Statewide offices of Governor, Lt Governor, and Attorney Gener-

al. In 2019 Democrats flipped the House and Senate of the General Assembly after many years under a Republican majority. The Commonwealth has voted in majority for the Democrat candidate in Presidential elections every year since the election of President Barack Obama in 2008.

# We Still Need Your Help

**We all need community newspapers; community newspapers need your help.**

**A** year later, Covid continues to be the most compelling, most local issue that we face.

Here at Local Media Connection LLC, Covid has posed an existential threat to continue the community service that has been ongoing since 1784.

Every family has faced unprecedented disruption between schools being closed and the advent of distance learning; work is remote, except for those people who must go out to jobs and the risks that entails. Every business has been challenged; many have closed; some have been mortally wounded. Thousands of local people have died, with tens of thousands having been ill with Covid. We have produced dozens of stories about struggles of food insecurity, learning to “pivot,” obituaries, how to get vaccinated and beyond. We bring you details about covid, testing and vaccination with a local and personal view. Recent column: <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/03/-person-and-home-class-one-community-reston/>

An election critical to Virginia is coming up this fall. Do you know that the Democratic primary is June 8? That Republicans choose their candidates for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General and some delegates at a May 8 convention?

If you think state elections don't matter, we'll try to convince you how important they are between now and then. Recent story on the race for Governor: <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/12/mcauliffe-picks-support-alexandria/>

Perhaps you are more concerned about schools, teachers, students and holding elected officials accountable for your children's education, teacher safety and returning to the classroom. Recent story on schools: <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/mar/03/-person-and-home-class-one-community-reston/>

ly struggle to get information about protocols and worksites is stunning--we've resorted to relying on the FCPS website and informal networks among co-workers for information and updates, not our supervisors. Plus, the apathy towards employees' concerns continues to be demoralizing.

Sadly, in an industry like childcare, where the majority of workers are women and people of color, the work and safety concerns of employees are often dismissed. Pay inequities and lack of benefits are basically ignored. All workers deserve to be respected, protected on the job, and paid a living wage. As a white man, I've seen the level of privilege that has been afforded to me and denied others, further perpetuating racial disparity and lowering the morale of some of the county's most dedicated and skilled workers. The same issues can be found in other Fairfax county departments. We can and we must do better; for the sake of the county, its employees, and the diverse community we serve.

This is why we are joining together in our union, SEIU Virginia 512, to win a new tool—called collective bargaining—to push for bigger investments in our jobs and the essential services we provide. By negotiating a contract with the county through collective bargaining, we can lock in our gains and win a seat at the table so we can push for the changes we need to ensure all of us can thrive.

We urge the county to partner with us to pass a collective bargaining ordinance and invest in good jobs so together we can build a stronger Fairfax, no matter where we are from or the color of our skin.

The concept isn't new -- 47 other states have the right to collectively bargain and it's time that Virginia employees have the same rights. Also, recent polling shows 68 percent of Virginia voters strongly support public service

You need local newspapers. Local newspapers still need your help.

We at the Gazette Packet/Local Media Connection are so grateful for the 500 people who have pitched in more than \$38,000 to get us this far. It has made all the difference. Many more people have helped by sharing our appeal, by telling us why our efforts matter to them. You send a letter to the editor here: [www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter/)

We are more than \$10,000 short of our original Go-Fund-Me goal. And we are going to need more to keep going. Soon you will hear about our membership plan.

In the meantime, we hope if you haven't contributed that you will consider doing so now. And if you have contributed, we hope you will consider doing so again.

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/save-america-cas-oldest-newspaper>

— MARY KIMM

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## In Fairfax County, the Pandemic Shows that Workers Need a Voice

To the Editor:

County employees work tirelessly to provide essential services, often behind the scenes, to make sure our county continues to run and families get what they need during this difficult time. As the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors discusses the budget for the next fiscal year, county employees find themselves in the same position; wringing their hands hoping that the county will hear their concerns, respect their hard work and invest in them. Every year, county employees must testify to justify the pay, resources and support we need to do our jobs and maintain the services that Fairfax county families depend on. If this pandemic has taught us anything, it's that we must listen to each other. Fairfax county employees deserve a voice and a seat at the table.

So, here's my testimony...

When the pandemic hit, like many people, I was filled with worry and uncertainty. Worried about my job and my fellow childcare providers in the School Age Child Care (SACC) program in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). Worried about the well-being and safety of the kids in my care. The safety of my wife and me was also a major concern, since we are both considered high risk for COVID-19 for medical reasons. Fortunately, I was able to be temporarily reassigned as part of a job match program, but many of my colleagues weren't as fortunate.

We are essential workers who provide affordable childcare before school, after school and during school breaks for school-aged children in Fairfax, including children with special needs. For many parents, including essential workers, we are their only source of childcare and the only way they can actually go to work. We are here, even when schools are closed. But despite the importance of our work, we are often left behind. For county childcare providers, the dai-

ly struggle to get information about protocols and worksites is stunning--we've resorted to relying on the FCPS website and informal networks among co-workers for information and updates, not our supervisors. Plus, the apathy towards employees' concerns continues to be demoralizing.

Sadly, in an industry like childcare, where the majority of workers are women and people of color, the work and safety concerns of employees are often dismissed. Pay inequities and lack of benefits are basically ignored. All workers deserve to be respected, protected on the job, and paid a living wage. As a white man, I've seen the level of privilege that has been afforded to me and denied others, further perpetuating racial disparity and lowering the morale of some of the county's most dedicated and skilled workers. The same issues can be found in other Fairfax county departments. We can and we must do better; for the sake of the county, its employees, and the diverse community we serve.

This is why we are joining together in our union, SEIU Virginia 512, to win a new tool—called collective bargaining—to push for bigger investments in our jobs and the essential services we provide. By negotiating a contract with the county through collective bargaining, we can lock in our gains and win a seat at the table so we can push for the changes we need to ensure all of us can thrive.

We urge the county to partner with us to pass a collective bargaining ordinance and invest in good jobs so together we can build a stronger Fairfax, no matter where we are from or the color of our skin.

employees having collective bargaining rights. Those who know how to do the job should have a seat at the table and be involved in the decisions about those jobs. It simply makes sense and is the right thing to do.

If Fairfax County Employees are allowed to partner with the county, we could save precious time and money, effectively expand and adjust services that families rely on, make responsible choices that invest in workers and create good jobs, reduce turnover in the workforce, improve public services and improve worker morale.

Imagine how much stronger Fairfax County would be if we were allowed to work together? Maybe, county employees won't have to testify every year to justify being respected and paid a living wage for the work we do, because it's recognized in a contract. I and thousands of other county employees look forward to that day coming soon.

**Norman Hall**  
Childcare Specialist

### Let Us Know Your View

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# Trail Improvements at Random Hills Park

The trail in Random Hills Park will be improved, and the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) is seeking public input on its design. The park is located off Random Hills Road in Fair Oaks.

The Park Authority is planning to upgrade about 1,000 linear feet of asphalt trail in this park as part of the I-66 Trail/Transform I-66 project. The goal is to connect VDOT's proposed trail along I-66 with the existing trail network within Random Hills Park to Random Hills Road.

Construction access will be from Random Hills Road and Route 50. The trail will be built entirely on Park Authority property and will extend through the park on the eastern side of Difficult Run. It'll be designed and constructed to ADA standards, so it'll serve both pedestrians and cyclists of all abilities.

To limit the trail's impact to natural resources, it will follow the path of the existing trail, as much as possible. All relevant county, state and federal permits will be obtained for any potential impact. Furthermore, the Park Authority will perform an archeological investigation of the area to make sure that no cultural resources are affected.

FCPA welcomes residents' suggestions and concerns about this project before the design



Some 1,000 feet of asphalt trail within Random Hills Park will be upgraded.

is finalized. The public-comment period will close March 25.

For more information, contact Park Authority Project Manager Amy Linderman at 703-324-8629 or Amy.Linderman@fairfax-county.gov. Comments may be emailed to Parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov.

— BONNIE HOBBS

## Fairfax Water

### Notice of Public Hearing

Resolution Authorizing Acquisition of Property Necessary for Public Purposes by Condemnation or Other Means  
April 1, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

The Fairfax County Water Authority ("Fairfax Water") will hold a public hearing pursuant to Va. Code Ann. § 15.2-1903(B) at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 1, 2021, to receive and consider public comments on the proposed acquisition, by condemnation or other means, of the following: a temporary construction easement on a portion of certain real property located at 8435 Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22031; a temporary construction easement on a portion of certain real property located at 8439 Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22031; a public street dedication, sight distance and temporary construction easements on a portion of certain real property located at 8501 Lee Highway; and stormwater and temporary construction easements on a portion of certain real property located at 8523A Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22031. The subject properties are more particularly described as Fairfax County Tax Map Parcel Nos. 049-3-(1)-0046, 049-3-(1)-0047, 049-3-(1)-0049 and 049-3-(1)-0050C (the "Properties"). Fairfax Water seeks to acquire these easements and this public street dedication on portions of the Properties for public use in order to construct a maintenance facility to serve as a base of operations for water distribution system crews and other staff responsible for water main repair, water system flushing, and other water distribution system maintenance activities.

Following the public hearing, Fairfax Water's Board may vote on or after April 1, 2021, to adopt a Resolution approving the proposed public use and authorizing and directing the acquisition of such dedication and easements on portions of the Properties for the public use by condemnation or other means.

A proposed Resolution and other related information will be made available for public review prior to the public hearing on Fairfax Water's website at [www.fairfaxwater.org](http://www.fairfaxwater.org).

The public hearing will be held in Fairfax Water's offices at 8570 Executive Park Avenue, Fairfax, VA 22031. The meeting will be accessible online for remote attendance. To attend remotely, visit [fairfaxwater.org/meeting-schedule](http://fairfaxwater.org/meeting-schedule) for more information.

Those wishing to speak at this hearing (in person or remotely) or desiring a copy of the proposed Resolution when it becomes available should call Karen Barnette at (703) 289-6029. Interested parties also may submit written comments to [PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org](mailto:PublicHearingComments@fairfaxwater.org) or mail written comments to:

Fairfax Water Public Hearing Comments  
8570 Executive Park Avenue  
Fairfax, VA 22031

All written comments must be received by close of business on Wednesday, March 31, 2021, to be included in the record of the public hearing.

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Limited time only, restrictions may apply. Financial commitment must be made before community opens, and resident must move in within 30 days of community opening in order to be eligible for the program. See community representative for full details and restrictions.



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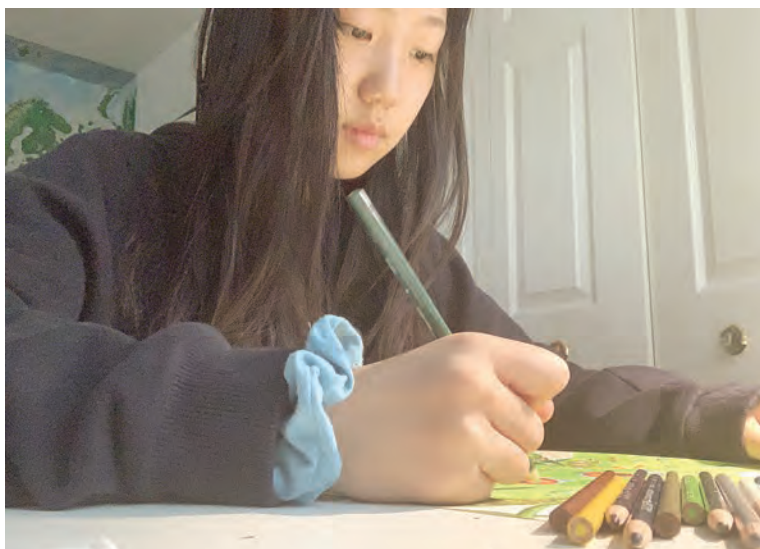
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PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Lizzie Kye of Chantilly High School plans to pursue a career in art when she graduates high school this spring.

# Student's Art Contains A Global Message, and Wins a Scholarship

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

Lizzie Kye of Chantilly High School was awarded a scholarship in the Regional Scholastic Art Awards Ceremony for the Fairfax County Art Region for her series of artworks that depicted nature vs global

Global warming is just one of the many messages expressed in arts competition.

warming. Her entry painting was a bear melting over a snow globe of the industrial world – a pretty heavy depiction for this high school senior.

"I'm very concerned with the effects of global warming on the world. As my painting suggests, I'm concerned for how it affects animals and natural environments, but I'm also extremely concerned about how it affects human life," Kye said.

Her melting polar bear picture is part of a portfolio titled "How Have Humans Affected the Natural World." In Lizzie's portfolio, she has other colorful pictures of wildlife being impacted by humans in a negative way. There is a frog with machine-like orthotics, mechanical fish envying the natural fish scene in a bottle, and a marionette bird flying above factory smokestacks.

"I've lived in Virginia my whole life, and the changes in the weather I've observed scare me," she said, and noted the role an artist plays with global statements like this. Lizzie started art in eighth grade, but learned over time that there needs to be a statement with every piece of artwork and this is important to grow an artist's personal beliefs and artistic style. "Of course, I'm still young, and I'm still developing the substance piece in my art, however, I want to keep trying to making art that can show off my personality and move people at the same time," she said.

This annual event is hosted by Fairfax County Public Schools to celebrate talented young visual artists in the Fairfax Region. Her scholarship was sponsored by FCPS but awarded to her from the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton.

"The amazing artwork made by Fairfax County Region middle and high school students can be a great inspiration, and the online exhibition is a unique opportunity to have full access to all gold key and silver key work in a way we have not in the past," said Debra Balestreri Director of Visual Arts Education at the Workhouse Arts Center.

was open to students from all over the area, and there were many different entities that were the awardees. Others that took part in recognizing the students in addition to the Workhouse included the Fairfax Art League, League of Reston Artists, Blick Art Materials, and more.

On a video introduction, Dr. Scott Braband, the Superintendent for Fairfax County Public Schools, appreciated the talent and creativity of the artists. "I am in awe of the talent by our students," he said. Susan Silva, a fine arts chair, noted the angle the judges take, addressing the abstract nature of some pictures. "They are looking at the student's voice, what are they trying to say?" she said.



This bear and the snowglobe is part of her portfolio called "How Have Humans Affected the Natural World."

A majority of these abstracts were paintings and computer drawings of students, but another was a video commercial called "Chelsea's Masks," by Chelsea Hu in the Film and Animation category. It showed a variety of masks made by Chelsea, and at the end it states "Get Yours Today at ChelseaMask.org, and it was marketing her side gig too. "The Chelsea Mask is designed to be kid-friendly in pattern and wearability," and she came up with this idea after seeing children put up a fight to wear the masks..

Another gold key award winner was a colorful graphic painting of

The Scholastic Arts Award show

SEE YOUNG ARTISTS, PAGE 11

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# Creating Healthy Mother-Daughter Relationships

Local authors and therapists offer thoughts and guidance.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

As a middle school student, Sofie Jacobs was at times mocked by other girls for her fastidious study habits and the good grades she received as a result. She joined an after-school cheerleading and dance class, but was taunted because of her lack of talent. At the time she didn't want to discuss the pain she felt from the rejection by peers, who she now labels as "mean girls." Initially, Sofie rebuffed her mother Meredith's efforts to console her. There was one place, however, where she felt comfortable expressing her feelings without the shame or humiliation: her journals.

"I remember so clearly the night she came home, ran to her room, and slammed the door," said her mother, Meredith. "I could hear her crying, but she didn't want to open the door or talk to me. Finally, she opened the door and handed me the journal where she had poured everything onto the page. After I read it, we were able to talk about it."

"Writing in my journal took away any worries about my mom's immediate reactions," said Sofie, now 24. "It also let me work out my thoughts and have space for myself. I've always thought the most important thing in writing is the eraser. You rarely risk saying something you wish you hadn't said when you're writing."

Journaling became part of the foundation of Meredith's relationship with Sofie. To help others, they created an interactive journal called, "Just Between Us: Mother & Daughter Journal" that is designed to inspire conversations and healthy communication. It will be released next month and is an updated version of their first book, which they published ten years ago.

**MOTHER-DAUGHTER** relationships can be among the most difficult to navigate and maintain, say mental health professionals. Patterns range from an unhealthy closeness to a distant connection that is devoid of emotional intimacy, affecting mental and emotional health.

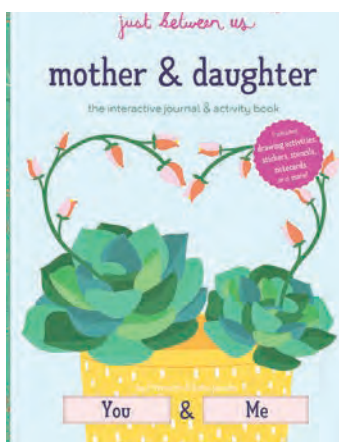
Enmeshed, is the way that Springfield psychotherapist Joyce Marter describes relationships that lack boundaries. "This is when the mother and daughter have a symbiotic relationship that doesn't allow for healthy separation and independence," she said. "They simply are too close. This can make it difficult for the daughter to develop a healthy sense of self as her own individual person or to separate and individuate into an independent adult."

At the opposite end of the relationship spectrum is a relationship that is characterized by control and disconnection. "The mother and daughter are not emotionally close," said Marter. "This can happen when they haven't had a proper bonding experience, haven't spent enough time together, or don't relate or connect



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MEREDITH AND SOFIE JACOBS

**Meredith and Sofie Jacobs of North Potomac use journaling as a way to maintain a healthy relationship.**



**"Just Between Us: Mother & Daughter Journal" will be released next month and is designed to strengthen mother-daughter relationships.**

on a deeper emotional level. It can also happen when a mother is too authoritarian and controlling and there isn't a sense of respect or trust for the daughter as a capable person."

An ideal relationship has a healthy balance of attachment and healthy separation, advises Marter. "The daughter feels loved, understood, respected, valued and supported by the mother and also feels free to be her own person with her own life and interests," she said.

It is possible to repair what is broken, cultivate what doesn't exist and maintain what is working, says Tori Stone, PhD, Assistant Professor, Counseling at George Mason University. Stone said there are many ways to develop healthy mother-daughter relationships, particularly at an early age.

"Try to be emotionally present when you are with your daughter and listen when she is ready to talk," she said. "Resist the impulse to provide advice or solutions. You can ask, 'Is there anything I can do to help?'"

During teen and preteen years, mother-daughter relationships can be difficult to navigate. "Give choices whenever possible Set expectations [and] reasonable limits that have reasonable end dates," said Stone. "Let your daughter know the consequence in advance. For example, cell phones are a privilege, if you do not follow through on responsibilities, you will lose your phone privilege."

Securing and harmonious relationships requires parental guidance, but also space to flourish, says Stone. "Detaching with love does not mean we don't care about our loved ones," she said. "Rather, it means having a healthy separation in relationships where you do not try and control. We must separate enough to allow them to make their own mistakes so they can learn. They need to be free to be their authentic selves instead of living as we hope or expect them to be."

Infusing an element of light-heartedness into a mother-daughter relationship is an important element that the Jacobs express in their books.

"We thought we could help other mothers and daughters have the kind of conversations we had through our journal, but insert the humor that Sofie and I share to make it fun," said Meredith. "There is a lot of trust that is built through those silly moments that help form the foundation for when it's time to have harder conversations."

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PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



The eight colorful murals, created by Fairfax High art students, illustrate life in Fairfax City.



David Meyer applauds while Enrico Cecchi unveils the first mural, as its artists, PJ Naber and Sofia Mesa-Morales, look on.

# 'A Reminder of Our Sense of Community'

FHS students' murals adorn Boulevard VI construction site.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**M**ulti-use development Boulevard VI is replacing the former Paul VI High School along Fairfax Boulevard in Fairfax City. And to honor the site's historic importance, plus the City's quality of life, developer IDI Group asked Fairfax High art students to create murals for its construction fence.

Guided by digital arts teacher PJ Naber – who collaborated on one mural – students Arian Assadzadeh, Rockett Beeson, Sarah Bird, Kaia Collins, Austin Eilbert, Isabela Colon Matthews and Sofia Mesa-Morales did just that. And during a special ceremony, last Saturday, March 13, their eight 6x8-foot murals were unveiled.

Sparked by the City's slogan, "#Live Life Connected," they designed original works depicting the many features that residents enjoy about Fairfax. They showed people connected by their city's history, nature, social life, schools, the arts, transportation system and volunteerism. The students' digital artwork was then transferred to 27 fabric murals, with each individual panel hung three times along 250 feet of construction fence.

**NABER AND HER STUDENTS** were there Saturday, along with IDI officials, Fairfax Mayor David Meyer, City Council members Sang Yi, Janice Miller, Tom Ross and Joe Harmon; City School Board members Carolyn Pitches and Mitch Sutterfield; and Carol Caputo of the Commission on the Arts. And Naber couldn't have been prouder of her students.

"They've been working on this since September," she said. "They were given a tall

## Digital Arts Students Explain their Murals

❖ Kaia Collins – History: "I was inspired by the lasting grace and historical importance of these three buildings – City of Fairfax Regional Library, Historic Blenheim and Fairfax Museum and Visitor Center. The spliced look allows them to be showcased and appreciated equally."

❖ Austin Eilbert - Nature: "I aimed to represent the diverse people and activities within Fairfax City's natural world. Inspired by early 20th-century Art Nouveau, this piece is irregular and non-symmetrical to mirror the complexities of nature."

❖ Sarah Bird – The Arts: "My work depicts important aspects of the arts around Fairfax – 'The Dancer' by Chris Emy, 'Peace Bird' by Michael Cain and my personal favorite, 'Dogwoods' by Amanda Lutz. Seeing art around Fairfax makes me happy and makes everything lively and interesting."

❖ Isabela Colon Matthews – Socializing: "The girls' outfits are inspired by clothing from one of my favorite video games. I mixed different styles to make distinctive outfits; creating the girl on the left's pattern was a challenge. There's a light show going on, around the city they're walking in, and I included falling snow for additional movement."

❖ Sofia Morales – Transportation: "Sustainable, environmentally friendly



In front of the murals and the remainder of Paul VI High are (from left) Enrico Cecchi, Arian Assadzadeh, Rockett Beeson. Austin Eilbert, Sarah Bird, Sofia Mesa-Morales, Isabela Colon Matthews, PJ Naber and David Meyer. (Not pictured: Kaia Collins).

transportation in Fairfax means a lot to me. If I could, I'd bike everywhere. I was an avid CUE Bus rider before COVID-19; it takes Fairfax citizens where they need to go at a reasonable cost, and public transit is infinitely better for the environment."

❖ Arian Assadzadeh – Education: "Education is one of, if not the, most important thing in one's life. It shows you your passion and carves the road for your future. I'm always excited to learn. and this project allowed me to convey how important education was for me."

❖ Rockett Beeson – Volunteerism: "I used a shape that envelopes the actions and links the characters. With a circle, I centered the focus on the sun and the name 'Fairfax,' which set the tone. The characters are of varying race and gender, with different clothing, to portray the diverse and open community Fairfax has and wants to represent. I used warm yellows to show Fairfax's calm and welcoming tone that's part of its charm."

— BONNIE HOBBS

order but were invested in the quality of their work and in ensuring their voices were heard. Kaia's history mural even received a Scholastic Gold Key award and now moves on to national competition."

IDI also reproduced the students' artwork onto tote bags, face masks, large magnets and bookmarks, which both surprised and pleased Naber, as did the ceremony itself.

"In my nine years of teaching at Fairfax High, I've never seen the Art Department get such a reception," she said.

IDI funded the artwork's creation and installation. The ceremony also marked the official start of construction of The Flats at Boulevard VI – the project's condos section. Planned are 144 condos, 115 townhomes and seven single-family homes. The front

lawn facing Fairfax Boulevard will become a village green and host events.

The original, 1934 portion of the school building – which housed Fairfax High before Paul VI – will contain 12,000 square feet of retail. Another 20,000 square feet of retail elsewhere on the 18.5-acre site is slated for

SEE STUDENTS' MURALS, PAGE 11  
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



# Questions Surround the Coffey Family Cemetery

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

**Local historian's investigation delves into Coffey history in Burke Centre's Woods Community.**

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

In the Woods community of Burke Centre, the Coffey family cemetery contains several of the younger Coffey family graves from the time around the Civil War, but local historian Corazon Sandoval Foley believes there are more graves outside the fence. According to her research, the graves of Captain Thomas Coffey and his younger brother Ensign Francis Coffey IV, both War of 1812 veterans, are there in a sparsely wooded section between the cemetery fence and the playground.

The 15x15 foot fence surrounds the graves of Joshua Coffey, born in 1814 and died in 1862; Hulda V. Coffey, 1840-1905; and Joshua Coffey Jr., 1862-1881. These Coffeys were here during the Civil War times, and that puts their father in the timeframe of the War of 1812, but there are no signs of his grave. Foley has done a lot of research, and found that Joshua Coffey was in the Civil War. "He died in a Confederate prison in Richmond," she said.

There was an African-American family involved too by the name of the Roots, and Foley initially got involved in the cemetery investigation when Mary Goins Roots told her all about the family connection. Roots was 70 years old when they started looking into it, her ancestors were part of the Coffey family, Foley said.

In the early 1990s, when Roots was still alive, she gathered information and approached Fair-



The Coffey house is now being used by Burke Centre for community activities.

fax County with this issue but it didn't go far because there was no record of these burials. Roots was a resident of Burke, and her Great-Great-Grandfather, Charles T. Pearson was a slave owned by Francis Coffey in the early to mid-1880s. He was freed before the Civil War and owned a farm in the area too, according to Foley's research.

Foley talked to Roots before she died in 1997 while working with the Burke/West Springfield Senior Center Without Walls, and made honoring that family part of her cemetery investigation. "I'm working with her family," Foley said, referring to the Root family.



In the cemetery, Corazon Sandoval Foley believes there's more graves beyond the fence.

## Library Records

Foley's research at the county library dug up some history about the cemetery. "A 1969 survey conducted by the Pioneer America Society's Tony Wrenn described a 54'x 60' fence surrounding three graves with head and footstones. Thick undergrowth hid any additional burials. By 1998 the gravestone of HULDAH COFFEY (1840-1903) was surrounded by a 15'x15' wooden fence," the library documentation stated. The size of the cemetery varied widely, according to this. Although there are gravestones and markers in the existing cemetery, the county website states "The gravestones of JOSHUA COFFEY (1814-1862) and JOSHUA COFFEY, JR. (1862-1881) are being stored by the Burke Center Conservancy," which may have been true at that time but now, there are currently two crumbled headstones embedded in the ground at the cemetery.

There was an Ella Coffey-Hall in the family too, but "she killed herself by lying on the railroad tracks in Burke," said Foley.

Foley hired an archeologist to take a look at it, and he noticed some things by looking at aerial

photos of the site although he did not visit in person. "I also suspect there might be burials beyond the existing fence. I think the modern parcel lines were placed where they are because that's where that earlier, larger fence was when it was subdivided. Looking at the aerials, I don't think there are burials as far west as the slide, but again, this is all just from looking at it and not actually doing any of the research or testing," wrote Benjamin Skolnik, an archeologist in Alexandria.

The Burke Conservancy is aware of Foley's theory but has no information to confirm that this is the case. "We would welcome any information that confirms the boundary of the cemetery and/or the presence and location of any additional gravesites beyond those currently marked," said Jeannie Winslow, the Director of Administration at the Burke Center Conservancy. The Burke Historical Society had a similar response. "The Burke Historical Society has no evidence to suggest that there are graves located outside the current cemetery fencing, or that Captain Thomas Coffey, War of 1812, is buried in that cemetery," they wrote.



A plaque was placed years ago, memorializing the Coffeys in the three graves that can be seen in the cemetery.

## Honoring Good Neighbors

Whether Foley's investigations and outreach efforts will ever result in finding any of the other graves still remains to be seen, but she has documented everything in a book she recently published called "More Burke Vignettes, 1728 - 2020: In Honor of Good Neighbors." The book "aims to honor those Burke residents who did the right thing by the American ideal of human equality and good neighborliness. The Hopkins, Sheads, Curtis, Latney and Goins practiced kind neighborliness regardless of color — while the black community helped each other during segregation when Fairfax County was oppressing them, particularly in denying equal education," her description read.

### CALENDAR

#### MARCH 20 TO APRIL 11

Fairfax County's Festival Central at the Fairfax County Visitor Center. The official Fairfax County Visitor Center in Tysons Corner Center (on 2nd level outside Nordstrom) is "Festival Central" in Fairfax County. The public is invited to stop in for free souvenirs, Festival schedules and the latest information on activities throughout the region. On March 27, the Center will host its annual National Cherry Blossom Festival Day with a special event from 1-3 p.m. with craft demonstrations, free gifts, and more. (<http://www.fxva.com/plan-your-trip/visitor-center>; 703-752-9500)

#### SATURDAY/MARCH 20

Fairfax Genealogical Society Spring

Fair - "Power Up Your Family Research with DNA". Virtual meeting. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Genealogist Karen Stanbary will present this one-day program featuring tips and tools for using DNA data to aid your family research. Registration (\$50 for non-members; \$30 for members of FxGS) at <https://fxgs2021mar.eventbrite.com> or on the FxGS web page, [www.fxgs.org/2021springfair](http://www.fxgs.org/2021springfair). Details of the program and other FxGS activities on the web site, [www.fxgs.org](http://www.fxgs.org) or by calling 703-644-8185.

Teen Wellness. 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Burke Lake Park, at 7315 Ox Road, Shelter B, Fairfax Station. Learn how gardening and exercise can help improve mental health! These Girl Scout Gold Award Projects are designed to teach about healthy coping mechanisms and how to im-

prove physical and mental health during the pandemic. Maple Syrup Boil Down. 11 a.m., noon, and 1 p.m. At Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. It's sugaring time at the mill, so bundle up, brave the weather and watch and learn as sap is boiled down into a sweet syrup over an open fire. While supplies last, sample some of this delicious syrup over cornbread baked with cornmeal ground at Colvin Run. Call 703-759-2771.

#### MARCH 20 TO APRIL 11

The Science Behind Flowers. Join the Children's Science Center virtually to explore the chemistry at work behind the petal and witness how capillary action can help flowers become acid-base indicators. Hear from a celebrity scientist to learn more about invasive and

native plants, and the science of ecological restoration. Then, join in on the fun at home by trying out an experiment of your own. Program will be streamed online from March 20 - April 11. (<https://childsci.org/>; 703-648-3130) In addition, visitors can plan self-guided tours of the region's splendid gardens, including these sites: Meadowlark Botanical Gardens, a 90-acre oasis featuring more than 100 cherry trees surrounding a lovely lake, plus an extensive shade garden, native wildflowers, gazebos, birds, butterflies, seasonal blooms and the very unique Korean Bell Garden. Green Spring Gardens, an outdoor classroom, national historic site, and museum featuring a wooded stream, a valley with ponds, a native plant garden, over 20 thematic demonstration gardens, and a

greenhouse filled with tropical plants. George Washington's Mount Vernon, the home to America's first president, features four bountiful gardens to explore and enjoy. In addition, experience wide-open spaces, wooded landscapes, and a quarter-mile-long forest trail - not to mention the vast educational resources available on site.

#### MARCH 21

CIA Covert Actions. 2-3:30 p.m. At Cold War Museum, 1734 Farm Station Road, Warrenton. When Did Covert Action Work for CIA? Cost is \$20. Visit the website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/secret-missions-the-cia-covert-actions-during-the-cold-war-tickets-124788159745>.

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.  
 -Werner Heisenberg

# Students' Murals Welcome New Community

FROM PAGE 8

food, shops and services. Boulevard VI will also have five, additional, pocket parks; two playgrounds; an outdoor fitness area; a perimeter, biking/walking path; and signs detailing the site's history.

Reaching this point, said IDI Managing Director Enrico Cecchi, "took a lot of hard work from [IDI's] many different partners. And we could not have done this without the cooperation of the City's elected leaders and staff."

Regarding the murals, he said once IDI learned of Fairfax's signature hashtag, "Our PR consultant, Laura Nickle, suggested the idea for these artistic panels."

"We're happy to be here today to celebrate the hashtag, the artistic expressions of some of the City's most talented students and the kickoff of Boulevard VI," continued Cecchi. "And we're so excited about this display that'll be enjoyed by passersby and put a face on this project."

Noting how successful IDI's Enclave project in the City turned out, Meyer said, "IDI brings a great project to the market, and we're looking forward to [this one's] completion. And once people move in, they'll make it a community. We thank IDI for its support of Fairfax's students - and them, for bringing this place to life through creative expression."

NABER and her students were then recognized at the podium, where Cecchi gave



A closeup of Austin Eilbert's nature mural depicting people enjoying Fairfax City's outdoors.

Naber a \$2,500 check, for Fairfax High, to continue investing in digital technology. "The vibrant colors and movement in everything the students created is beautiful," he said.

"This was an amazing opportunity and an exciting challenge for my students," said Naber. "I'm proud of the resilience they've demonstrated [during the pandemic] and the way they faced the unprecedented challenges of virtual learning and collaboration. Their works are a reminder of our sense of community and that art has a strong presence and role within the City of Fairfax."

Pleased, Cecchi added, "We got to breathe life into the Live Life Connected hashtag, the students got a real-life commission to create artwork under a deadline - and it couldn't have come out any better. As for Boulevard VI, we've already sold 60 percent of the first phase, and we can't wait to add this project to the fabric of the City."

# Young Artists Awarded

FROM PAGE 6

a teen possibly dealing with several identities or maybe a mental health crisis, by Sam Lesser, a senior at Oakton High School.

Although Lizzie's work, and others in the show seemed to be influenced from today's headlines. It is always the students choice to decide what they would like their work to

talk about, said Balesteri. "It was most likely an assignment from her school or a body of work she is pursuing as a high school student in her district," Balesteri added, "we simply thought her work was well done and worthy of an award."

The Outstanding Educator Award, sponsored by Blick Art Materials, went to Teri Thomas, also of Chantilly High School.

## The Award Goes to

- ArtsFairfax
- Uphoff Award presented to Sojung Pak, Centreville High School
- Blick Art Materials
- Educator Award presented to Teri Thomas, Chantilly High School
- Fairfax Art League
- Award presented to Caitlin Ngo, Chantilly High School
- League of Reston Artists
- Awards presented to Henry Escalante, Chantilly High School, and Caroline Mitchell, T. C. Williams High School
- School Specialty
- Awards presented to all Gold Key and Silver Key Art Portfolio winners.
- Vienna Arts Society
- Jeff Gorrell Memorial Award presented to Caroline Mitchell, T. C. Williams High School
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- Scholarship Award, presented to Lizzie Kye, Chantilly High School

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## A Shot in the Arm



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Literally and figuratively. After a year or so living the pandemic life; staying at home/quarantining, wearing a mask, social distancing, washing my hands and watching the death toll from covid-19 top 500,000 - in the United States alone, I recently became of the lucky ones to have been injected with a vaccine. I have to wait another two weeks to get my second shot. No worries. I have some protection now, but according to Dr. Fauci, the second/follow up shot increases one's protection "tenfold." It wouldn't exactly be foolish to throw caution to the wind - and reintegrate back into society (depending upon where you live), but it seems premature and irresponsible to risk being stupid when in another two weeks, I could be smart.

My wife, Dina, also recently shot, has been very smart all along, especially as it concerns my actual standing in the world. (Moreover, she has no plans to step out until she receives her second shot.) Belonging in the special comorbidity group; presumably, a 66-year old with cancer/weakened immune system, I presented a very appealing target for the virus. I mean, my immune system is already compromised and with occasional breathing problems side-effected by my thyroid cancer medication, I was potentially easy pickins. As such, Dina refused to give me passage out of our house. Victor Laszlow had a better chance of leaving Casablanca than I did of leaving Burtonsville.

But soon it appears I will have my own "letters of transit." However, Dina has already informed me that I won't be returning to my former errand-running ways. She intends to continue ordering food online from the grocery store - and then drive to pick it up contact-less in their parking lot. Actually, I might be allowed to go that far since I'd be remaining in the car and still wearing a mask while popping the trunk and keeping my distance as the groceries are loaded into the boot. We'll see; we're still negotiating. But definitely not until I receive my second shot. In the interim, I imagine our lives will change very little. Thanks to the vaccine though, there is hope that once again, I'll be able to interact with people, places and things.

But return I shall and relieved I will be. However, having lung cancer, and/or thyroid cancer which has metastasized to the lungs, in the midst of a pandemic with a virus that often locates in the lungs and creates breathing/pulmonary problems - even with the two shots, is still as scary and risky as it gets, especially if you're of a certain age as I am. In two weeks, I'll have received my booster shot, and I'll have a lot less to worry about, thankfully. And for a cancer patient still undergoing treatment with a less than a "normal" life expectancy anticipated, being fully vaccinated is as good as it gets. And I suppose I can live with that, live being the operative word.

Having cancer, irrespective of the type, your diagnosis/prognosis, is pretty damn difficult. It impacts every facet of your life. The thought (your reality) is never far from your conscious mind. And once you become a member of this less than exclusive club (more every day, unfortunately), a club that nobody wants to join, there are more risks to your life than you ever imagined, and many more for which you have absolutely no awareness. Having an external complication, like a virus, with variants that seem to spread rapidly; which have now infected over 30,000,000 Americans, and an infection for which there's no specific cure, and seems to have its greatest negative impact on people exactly like me (age and disease) is about as foreboding as it could possibly be. And with no place to hide, other than in your own home - with no visitors allowed, a precaution most recommended (to invoke the syntax of Hercule Poirot, "the greatest detective in the world") has made many of us impatient and perhaps a bit tense. I can, as many healthcare professionals have said, almost see the light. Hopefully, it will be July 4th of this year as the President has suggested and not July 4th of next year.

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



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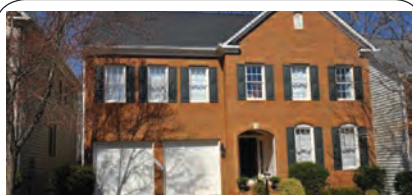


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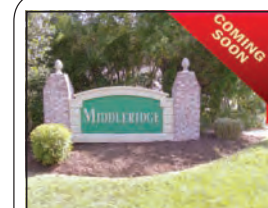
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