

CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Oak Hill Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

During Reston Association's inaugural Egg-stravaganza held April 1, 2021, children and parents are ready to hit the paths safely around Walker Nature Center and discover the many kinds of eggs different birds and creatures can lay.

'Egg-stravaganza' Walk Held in Reston

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'Pretty Much Every Drug on the Street Is Counterfeit'

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

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APRIL 13, 2021, 7 PM

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Meeting ID: **943 3712 8635**

Password: **143392**



If you would like to speak during the member comment portion of the meeting, please sign-up in advance by emailing speak@reston.org.

For Annual Members' Meeting info and Zoom instructions, visit: <http://bit.ly/RA-AMM21>



COMMENTARY

A Civic Duty

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

As we probably learned and as we teach our children, voting is the most important of civic duties. By choosing our leaders at election time and by deciding questions on referenda, we set the direction for our communities, states, and nation. Voting is a way to express our values and beliefs.

In one of the contradictions that strain the legitimacy of what we teach vs. what we do is to teach our children, proclaim in civic pronouncements and require for Scouting citizenship merit badges an acknowledgement of the importance of voting while at the same time making it difficult and sometimes impossible for some people to vote.

During the colonial period and early years of the state of Virginia, only white land-owners could vote. The Reconstruction era after the Civil War brought Black men into the electorate, but in a matter of decades that free access to voting was cut off by white supremacists who reasserted their power. An avowed purpose of writing a new constitution in 1902 was to disenfranchise Black men. It was successful in that the voting rolls were cut in half as most Blacks and poor whites were not able to make their way through the maze of requirements that one had to meet in order to vote. A blank sheet registration system and a \$1.50 poll tax to be paid three years in a row at least six months before an election kept many from voting. White people in the upper crust of local society made



it through these hurdles as the voting registrar who was part of the governing machine would provide them assistance while everyone else floundered at trying to get through the process.

Regardless of their race, women in this country have been able to vote for just over a hundred years, and that right came after incredible struggle. The Civil Rights era and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 opened up the electoral process for many

Black people. Even now there are debates in the states about ways that access to the polls can be limited.

The Virginia General Assembly has put the Commonwealth on the path to supporting citizens carrying out their civic duty with several of the most progressive voting laws in the country. A headline in the New York Times last week proclaimed that "Virginia, the Old Confederacy's Heart, Becomes a Voting Rights Bastion." Over a fourteen-month period and two legislative sessions the General Assembly has passed and the Governor has signed bills to repeal a voter ID law, enact a 45-day no-excuse absentee voting period that permits early voting, made Election Day a holiday, and established a system for automatic voter registration for anyone who receives a Virginia driver's license. The Virginia Voting Rights Act follows some of the provisions of the earlier federal law but applies to localities in the state to ensure that voting remains accessible.

In Virginia we will continue to say that voting is one of the most important of our civic duties, and now we will have a legal structure that demonstrates we believe it!

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Two Lawsuits Threaten Virginia Public Schools

Appellants ask courts to halt implementation of Student Transgender Policies; local FCPS Pride reacts.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The outcome of two lawsuits filed in Circuit Courts the last week in March threatens the treatment of transgender students in all Virginia school divisions, including Fairfax County Public Schools.

On Monday, March 29, Christian Action Network filed a Motion for Intermediate Relief pursuant to Va. Code § 2.2-4028 in the Circuit Court for the City of Lynchburg, Va., asking the court to postpone implementation of “Model Policies for the Treatment of Transgender Students in Virginia’s Public Schools.”

On Tuesday, March 30, the Founding Freedom Law Center (FFLC), along with The Family Foundation and Sarah Via, a parent from Hanover County, filed as appellants in the Circuit Court of the City of Richmond a Petition for Appeal From State Department of Education Guidance Document against appellees Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and Atif Qarni, in his official capacity as Virginia Secretary of Education over its recently adopted Model Policies for the Treatment of Transgender Students in Virginia’s Public Schools.

ACCORDING TO THE MODEL POLICIES, the fundamental guiding principle is that all children have a right to learn, free from discrimination and harassment. The policies will, among other things, allow students to use bathrooms, locker rooms, and changing facilities that conform to their gender identity or expression, as well as use pronouns and a name so reflective. The policies also address bullying, dress codes, and school record-keeping, holding educators and administrators accountable.

Jim Davids is Chief Counsel of the Founding Freedoms Law Center. He argued that the 30-page suit with exhibits seeks to stop the effective date of these policies to enable VDOE, as well as school boards, to have more time to study the effects of policies on transgender students and students “who have no gender dysphoria.”

But Virginia law approved March 4, 2020, requires each school board to adopt policies relating to the treatment of transgender students; policies pursuant to subsection B of § 22.1-23.3, Treatment of transgender students policies, no later than the beginning of the 2021–2022 school year.

Davids urged prudence, saying they were asking the court to send the document back to VDOE. He alleged legal errors and the need to remove constitutional violations of the guidance document. “Sit back; let’s walk through this together...We want to work with the Department and school boards to frankly avoid the injury that accompanies poorly thought out governmental policies.”



Jim Davids, Chief Counsel of the Founding Freedoms Law Center, holds up the 30-page lawsuit.



Kristen Allen represents a group of parents in Arlington called The Arlington Parent Coalition opposed to the recently adopted Model Policies for the Treatment of Transgender Students in Virginia’s Public Schools.

He referenced Japanese Americans’ internment during World War II and that it took thirty years for an apology. Davids claimed in his statement, “Most of these students (transgender) revert to their biological sex anyway before leaving adolescence.”

VDOE developed the document in response to House Bill 145 and Senate Bill 161, enacted by the 2020 Virginia General Assembly last March. Thirty-four stakeholders throughout the Commonwealth provided input and offered expertise.

Local FCPS Pride, a community and network for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Allied employees and families in Fairfax County Public Schools, posted on its Facebook account, it was “appalled.” The group supports the newly released model policies regulating safeguards and treatment of transgender Virginia public school children K-12.

FCPS Pride has fought for years for regulations. In May of 2015, Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) added gender identity to its nondiscrimination policy. In July of 2016, FCPS finalized and made immediately effective regulations on how the school system responded to transgender and gender non-conforming students, choice of names, bathrooms, and other concerns.



Victoria Cobb, president of The Family Foundation of Virginia



Robert Rigby Jr., co-President of FCPS Pride and 22-year veteran teacher in FCPS

Plaintiff Family Foundation of Virginia is a conservative nonprofit, faith-based organization. It lobbies against same-sex marriages, funding of abortions and holds a core principle that “Gender (is), beautifully expressed as either male or female according to God’s immutable design,” as cited on its Family Foundation website.

Victoria Cobb, President of The Family Foundation of Virginia alleged during the March 30 filmed FFLC news conference published to Facebook that the guidelines replace fundamental parental rights and protection of bodily privacy and safety rights for their youngest students.

Cobb said the Constitution of Virginia ensures that it is the fundamental right of parents to raise their children in accord with parent’s beliefs, and those rights do not get erased because Virginia chooses to dismiss them to fulfill its agenda and disregard the process outlined in Virginia law to produce the guidance document. Cobb alleges that the law took it a step further, stating that all schools shall adopt these guidelines as the minimum standards to operate schools.

Sarah Via is the mother of two children in the Hanover school district and was named in the lawsuit against VDOE. Via said she was concerned about what happens when her young daughter reaches middle school and wants to be modest but cannot choose when a biological male sees her body. The

Virginia Law

APPROVED MARCH 4, 2020

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 22.1-23.3 as follows: § 22.1-23.3. Treatment of transgender students; policies.
 - A. The Department of Education shall develop and make available to each school board model policies concerning the treatment of transgender students in public elementary and secondary schools that address common issues regarding transgender students in accordance with evidence-based best practices and include information, guidance, procedures, and standards relating to:
 1. Compliance with applicable nondiscrimination laws;
 2. Maintenance of a safe and supportive learning environment free from discrimination and harassment for all students;
 3. Prevention of and response to bullying and harassment;
 4. Maintenance of student records;
 5. Identification of students;
 6. Protection of student privacy and the confidentiality of sensitive information;
 7. Enforcement of sex-based dress codes; and
 8. Student participation in sex-specific school activities and events and use of school facilities. Activities and events do not include athletics.
 - B. Each school board shall adopt policies that are consistent with but may be more comprehensive than the model policies developed by the Department of Education pursuant to subsection A.
2. That the Department of Education shall develop and make available to each school board model policies pursuant to subsection A of § 22.1-23.3 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act, no later than December 31, 2020.
3. That each school board shall adopt policies pursuant to subsection B of § 22.1-23.3 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act, no later than the beginning of the 2021–2022 school year.

school administration will take that choice away from her.

Kristen Allen represented a group of parents in Arlington called The Arlington Parent Coalition. She, too, spoke at the news conference on March 30 in opposition to the guidelines. Allen said that parents could no longer protect their children in public schools and were concerned about children who struggle with gender dysphoria. “Current policies lead to damaging outcomes for these students while demanding transgender ideology indoctrination of all children,” Allen said.

“The members of FCPS Pride, including LGBTQIA staff, parents of LGBTQIA+ students, and LGBTQIA+ families in Fairfax County Public Schools, are shocked that these organizations would try to foster such an unfriendly and unwelcoming atmosphere in our schools for Transgender and Gender-Expansive children. But we acknowledge the ongoing work that FCPS is doing to make our schools welcoming and safe. We have every confidence that FCPS will continue its efforts to be inclusive of Trans and Gender-Expansive students at all levels, despite the unveiled threats of The Family Foundation. This smells of politics to us,” said Robert Rigby, Jr., co-President of FCPS Pride and 22-year veteran teacher in FCPS.

SEE LAWSUITS, PAGE 7

'Pretty Much Every Drug on the Street Is Counterfeit'

County Opioid Unit detectives share cold, hard facts.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County has a serious, undeniable, drug problem. And two county police detectives who see it firsthand, every day, recently shared their knowledge during an online meeting of the Sully District Police Station's Citizens Advisory Committee.

Because of the rapid proliferation of opioid-related cases here, the Police Department established an Opioid Unit in 2018. Det. C. Ellis, on the force for almost 23 years, has worked in Patrol and in the Narcotics Division, and has been on this unit for a year.

"In 2017, there were 94 fatal overdoses in Fairfax County – but not all are reported," he said. "In 2018, there were 69; and in 2019, there were 71 – 60 of them based on opioids. In 2020, we had 80 fatal overdoses, and 36 percent were fentanyl-related."

"Fentanyl is 100 times more potent than morphine, and we think that's why we're seeing an increase in overdoses," continued Ellis. "It's also cheap to make; the majority comes from Mexico. And it's so potent that the user doesn't know how much to take, based on his or her tolerance. It shuts down the nervous system, and the person dies if no one's around to monitor them."

He said that three-fourths of the 80 fatal overdoses last year happened in people who'd had previous, nonfatal overdoses. And he stressed that, also in 2020, Fairfax County had 239 nonfatal overdoses – nearly a 51-percent increase from the previous year, due to fentanyl.

"We have four detectives on the Opioid Unit, and it can take eight hours to 300 hours to do an investigation," said Ellis. "We'd love to have more detectives; we're always working. On average, one case takes

one detective 90 hours to complete – not including court time. We're starting to bring charges against the dealers – and if a dealer causes a drug-related death and is convicted of it in the federal system, he could potentially receive 20 years in prison.

"Prosecution can be difficult, but we're always trying to find some resolution for the victims and their families and take drugs out of the community. And we'd never be able to get the perpetrators without the hard work of the Opioid Unit, since it's dedicated to arresting more of the opioid dealers."

REGARDING NON FATAL OVERDOSES, Ellis said the county had 163 in 2017, 144 in 2018, and 158 in 2019. He said FCPD officers saved 20 people last year with Narcan, after they'd overdosed on drugs. "The Fire Department is usually on scene first, and they saved people here 713 times last year."

He also noted that most of the fatalities involve people 26-35 years old and said the large number of fatal overdoses here might possibly be "because Fairfax County people can afford to buy narcotics."

Knowing how deadly drugs can be, said Ellis, "We ask people why they do it, and they say, 'Because of the high.' But after getting [their drug supply], the dealers will manipulate it so it's less potent – and the users keep coming back for that high."

Det. K. Reynolds has been a member of the



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE POLICE FORENSIC LAB

This photo illustrates why fentanyl is so deadly. The bottle on the left contains a lethal dose of heroin, about 30 milligrams. The one on the right contains just 3 milligrams of fentanyl – enough to kill an average-sized, adult male.

Opioid Unit since August 2019. At that time, he said, "The heroin was cut with fentanyl, and people would go to [Washington] D.C. and Baltimore to get it. They'd buy gel caps filled with 3/10 of a gram of powder for \$6-\$8 and sell them in Fairfax County for \$30-\$100 per capsule. We had more of a user community then – but now, it's flipped."

"Last summer, we were overwhelmed with counterfeit, prescription medicine ordered through the Dark Web," he continued. "Thirty milligrams of Oxycodone cost \$1-\$10/milligram off the Internet. It's then sold for \$30-\$50 a pill. But pretty much everything [you can buy] on the street – including Xanax, Oxycodone and Percocet – are all counterfeit and are being cut with fentanyl – even heroin and molly [ecstasy]."

And not knowing what's in the drugs they're taking can often lead to tragic consequences for the users. For example, said Reynolds, "A 16-year-old boy from California

recently ordered Xanax online from his home. But it was laced with fentanyl and he died."

Calling the drug-dealing situation here a "dramatic flip," Reynolds said, "It's all localized in the counties, and it's pretty much here to stay. It's also starting at younger levels, with kids 15-16 years old. And lots of parents don't know that their kids know about the Dark Web or are using it or Snapchat to get drugs."

He said Fairfax County and the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board have "bent over backwards to provide rehabilitation services to the community. But drugs are everywhere

in the county."

Reynolds then advised parents to get an "Informed Delivery" app to see what's being delivered to their home. And, he added, "That's the Achilles Heel of the Dark Web, because that's how the drugs are ordered and delivered."

FOR MORE HELP and information, see these resources:

❖ Fairfax County Opioid and Substance Use Task Force -

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services-board/heroin-opioids/country-facts>;

❖ Revive program in Fairfax County - <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services-board/heroin-opioids/revive>;

❖ CDC Opioid Overdose Data and Prevention -

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services-board/heroin-opioids/cdc>.

AREA ROUNDUPS

Stringfellow Road Nighttime Closures

Northbound and southbound Stringfellow Road in Chantilly, approaching I-66, will close nightly, Friday-Monday, April 9-12, due to installation of bridge beams for the new, I-66 East bridge over Stringfellow. Part of the Transform 66 Outside the Beltway Project, this bridge is being widened to accommodate the new, I-66 Express Lanes and provide room for any future mass transit along I-66.

Drivers on Stringfellow will be directed to a detour route and should allow extra time to reach their destinations. Access to I-66 East from south-

bound Stringfellow, and from I-66 West to northbound Stringfellow, will remain open during this time. All work is weather-dependent and will be rescheduled if inclement conditions occur.

Virtual Meeting on Human Trafficking, etc.

The Northern Virginia Business and Professional Women's Club, in partnership with other Northern Virginia organizations, will host a virtual town hall discussion, this Saturday, April 10, from noon-2 p.m. The topics are Child Marriage, Human Traffick-

ing and Female Genital Mutilation. U.S. Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (Texas 18th District) is the keynote speaker. The panelists are: Attorney Casey Swegman, Dr. Natoschia Scruggs, Dr. Wallicia Gill, and Dr. Renee Murrell. The link to join is: https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_fOKw0jRaQ6yItjUwNVSMwg.

How One Man Changed His Life

Former mob boss Michael Franzese will share his story live, this Sunday, April 11, at 8, 9:30 and 11 a.m., at New Life Christian Church, 14550 Lee Road in Chantilly. He'll talk about how he turned from crime and

discovered purpose for his life outside of money, power and prestige. For more information, go to www.newlife.church/spring.

Coffee with a Cop, Tuesday, April 13

Residents may chat with police officers from the Sully District Station in a casual and relaxed way by participating in a virtual Coffee with a Cop. The next one is slated for Tuesday, April 13, at 10 a.m. No agenda, no speeches – just coffee and conversation. To join, go to <https://bit.ly/cwac0413> and enter the password, coffee.

Town of Herndon Programs and Services at Stake

\$5.3M-plus in proposed budget cuts.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Programs and services are on the line in the Town of Herndon in the Proposed FY 2022 Budget. Town Mayor Sheila Olem and the six Councilmembers want to hear constituents' comments before they vote on the budget. Now through April 27 is the opportunity for Town citizens to provide input at the two public budget hearings on April 13 and April 27. Citizen comments can cause changes to the proposed budget that could result in residents having or not having certain services or programs available to them they believe matter.

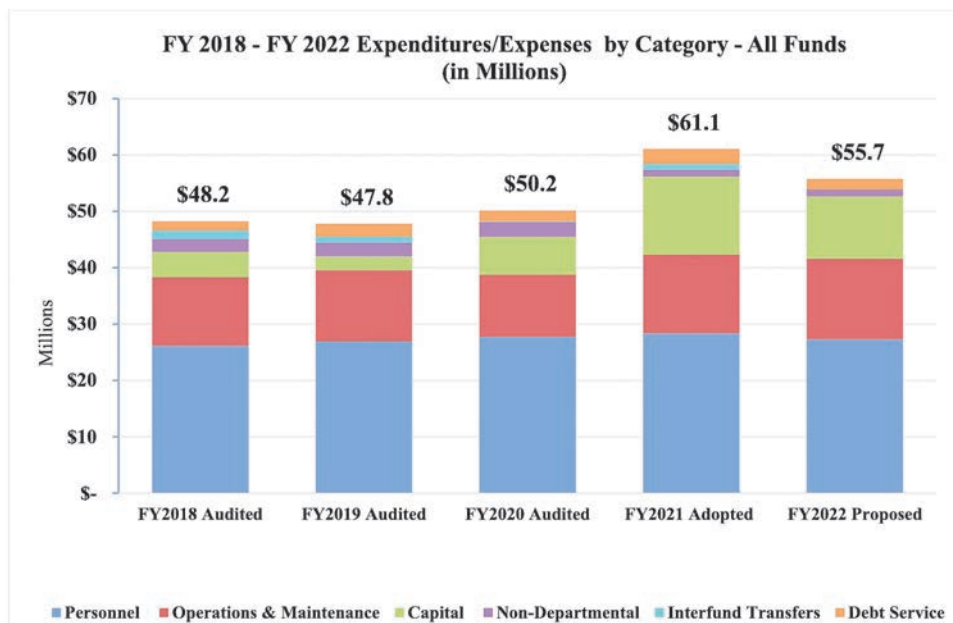
"The fiscal year we are now concluding has been, to put it succinctly, a year like no other," Town Manager William H. Ashton II said in an official Town News Release. "Town services and programs were significantly impacted, as were revenues across the board," Ashton said.

The Town Manager's Proposed FY 2022 Budget of \$55,735,783 reflects a decrease of \$5,324,971, - 8.7 percent from the FY2021 Adopted Budget of \$61,060,754. The decrease will cause some services and programs to be diminished or not available. According to Ashton, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is reflected in the austerity under which the Town must operate.

In Ashton's April 1 Transmittal Letter to the Mayor and Councilmembers, he wrote that departments were asked to submit budget requests at 5 percent and 10 percent reduction levels. "It (the proposed budget) focuses on core services – public works, public safety – as well as pandemic-related relief

All Funds – Expenditures/Expenses by Category

Category	FY2020 Adopted	FY2021 Adopted	FY2022 Proposed	% Change FY21 Adopted to FY20 Adopted	% Change FY22 Proposed to FY21 Adopted
Personnel	28,062,880	28,397,315	27,290,131	1.2%	-3.9%
Operations & Maintenance	12,725,986	13,972,523	14,294,594	9.8%	2.3%
Capital	8,084,800	13,812,672	11,043,775	70.8%	-20.0%
Non-Departmental	1,160,394	1,230,245	1,249,894	6.0%	1.6%
Interfund Transfers	975,490	1,022,490	20,000	4.8%	-98.0%
Debt Service	2,723,141	2,625,509	1,837,388	-3.6%	-30.0%
Total	53,732,691	61,060,754	55,735,783	13.6%	-8.7%



All Fund /Expenditures/Expenses by Category and History

that is in the town's jurisdiction to provide," said Ashton.

If the mayor and councilmembers vote to adopt the proposed budget as written, it includes an average of a 3 percent pay-for-performance increase for town staff and a pay scale advance by 5 percent.

Citizens may register to provide comments to the council in various ways: [www.](http://www.herndon-va.gov/meetings)

www.herndon-va.gov/meetings or via Facebook Live at [Facebook.com/Herndongov](https://www.facebook.com/Herndongov). Citizens may also submit comments about the budget online at www.herndon-va.gov/budget or send an email to budget@herndon-va.gov.

Highlights of the proposed FY 2022 Budget include:

- Maintenance of all town taxes at their cur-



MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Herndon Town Manager William H. Ashton II

rent levels, with no increases, recommended;

- Selective allocation of federal and state grant-funded resources to capital projects, including construction of bus bays near the Metro stop, storm drainage improvements, and Sugarland Run stream restoration;

- Allocation of resources to fund Town Council priorities, as outlined in their recent discussion of future initiatives; and

- No personnel layoffs and inclusion of an average pay-for-performance increase of three percent, following a year in which no salary increases were issued.

The proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) calls for funding of longer-term projects such as alignment of Center Street, Elden, and Monroe Street intersection improvements, vehicular and pedestrian access to Metro, and Van Buren Street improvements.

Computers Arrive at Herndon Harbor House

Seniors can now access telemedicine and more.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority affordable senior community, Herndon Harbor House, recently moved into the digital age. New shared computers and free internet access arrived. They are a boom for the older adults who live in the 120 apartments, especially individuals with screenless flip phones who cannot access telemedicine.

"I am beyond thrilled that Herndon Harbor House now has internet service and computers available for residents in the 1st-floor communal area of each building," said Dranesville District Su-

pervisor John Foust (D). "I'd like to thank Quantum Management for providing this and Fairfax County Housing and Community Development for approving this. What a wonderful improvement to our (Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority) FCRHA senior housing property. It was a very successful group effort."

On April 1, five residents -- Janice Watson, Jean Osterling, Alex Burke, Mohamed Youssef, and Jack Shirley -- gathered in one of the four parlors with a new computer. According to Watson, when the pandemic dragged on, the adjacent senior center remained closed. The residents at Herndon Harbor House lost access to the center's computers, and those without the appropriate personal technology could not log on to

telehealth visits.

"That medical part was important for seniors," Watson said. The computers offer the means. The parlors, with their closed doors, provide privacy.

Jack Shirley cautioned they now needed a 'hook' beyond health care management to entice some of the older adults to consider more fully embracing the technology. Computer use could connect them visually in real-time with loved ones, provide technology to pursue learning, entertainment, and more. Shirley suggested a straightforward idea. "We ask them, 'Do you want to talk to your granddaughter and see her face? She wants to talk to you.' We will show you how," he said.

"Knowledge is power. 'Everybody has their level, but we can work with that,'" Youssef said.



MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

(From left) Janice Watson, Mohamed Youssef, Alex Burke, Jean Osterling, and Jack Shirley give a show of support for the free internet service and new computers with desks, available for residents at Herndon Harbor House, a Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority affordable senior community.

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Announcements

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Legals

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Sushi Toro Restaurant LLC trading as Sushi Toro, 4088 Airline Pkwy, Chantilly, Fairfax County, Virginia 20151-3979. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) for a Wine and Beer On Premises, Mixed Beverage Restaurant license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Min Jeon, Member. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

Employment

Esvee Technologies, Inc., has multiple openings in Chantilly, VA, Software Developer: Analyze, develop, involve, maintain, support, guide, and work in agile environment to identify backlogs, spikes and improve the performance process. Position requires travel/relocation to various unanticipated client locations throughout the U.S with the expenses paid by the employer. To apply mail resume & position to Director, Esvee Technologies, Inc., 14101 Sullyfield Circle, Suite 400 D, Chantilly, VA-20151.

CALENDAR

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CALENDAR

NOW THRU APRIL 17

The 2021 Vienna Photo Show will be on display at the Vienna Community Center now through April 17. The exhibit will be open 8 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Friday and 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Saturdays. The entrance fee is \$5. Ribbons will be awarded in seven categories: animals, architecture, nature, pictorial, photojournalism, portraiture, and scenic. Visit viennava.gov/photo.

NOW THRU APRIL 18

Blossoms Galore at Mosaic Gallery. A new exhibit at the Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic gallery in Fairfax offers its own interpretation of the beauty of nature in a show titled "Art Blossoms 2021", featuring artists from the Torpedo Factory Artists' Association. Additionally, there's a special cherry-blossom themed gift for purchasers spending \$200 or more. The Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic is a satellite gallery sponsored by the Torpedo Factory Artists' Association, and is located at 2905 District Avenue, #105, Fairfax.

APRIL 9-10

Drive-Thru Play "Midnight Mystery." At BASIS Independent McLean, 8000 Jones Branch Dr., McLean. Audience members will view the performance from their cars as they drive from scene to scene in the parking lot. Midsummer Mystery follows a community theater's matinee of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" that loses its magic when a wealthy donor's car becomes drama central, and the potent potions within it fly away. Can a clever stage manager connect the clues in time to call the cues for the evening show? This theater's future depends on it!

SATURDAY/APRIL 10

Cherry Blossom Community Market & Workshops. Starts at 11 a.m. At the Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. Spend the day browsing the cherry blossom-themed Workhouse Arts Center Community Market and participate in several workshops, including origami making, haiku contests, and Japanese drumming. Enjoy art work inspired by the spring blooms in all of the Workhouse galleries, snap photos with the beautiful LOVEworks sign, and admire the property's own cherry trees. Admission is always free. (<http://www.workhousearts.org>; 703-584-2900)

SATURDAY/APRIL 10

Nature Photography. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Lake Fairfax Park, 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston. Work on developing your photography skills with the "Nature Photography for Beginners" class at Lake Fairfax Park. Explore a trail

and learn how to use a DSLR and tripod to capture images of the hidden wonders in the natural world. Try out a variety of techniques to compose creative images of animals and landscapes. Learn how to upload, enhance and print images, too. For beginning photographers age 16 to adult. Be sure to bring your own DSLR camera. Cost is \$24 per person. Call 703-471-5414.

SUNDAY/APRIL 11

Kayak Fishing. 1:30-5:30 p.m. At Royal Lake Park, 5344 Gainsborough Drive., Fairfax. Spend a Sunday afternoon aboard a kayak in search of that perfect catch. Learn about the fish in local lakes and pick up tips on how to catch them safely and efficiently from a kayak. Kayaks and fishing gear will be provided. The "Kayak Fishing (12-Adult) by Vendor" program at Royal Lake Park runs from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m. The cost is \$114 per person. Call 703-569-3464.

SUNDAY/APRIL 11

Atomic Spy's Son. 2-3:30 p.m. Online. At The Cold War Museum, 1734 Farm Station Road, Warrenton. What's life like in a Cold War U.S. family when Dad is an atomic spy for the Soviets? Cost: \$20. Visit the website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/atomic-spys-son-discovering-the-reality-of-your-fathers-secret-life-tickets-137043377431>

MONDAY/APRIL 12

Science Enrichment Program. At Hidden Pond Nature Ceter, 8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield. Hidden Pond Nature Center is offering you a chance to supplement your child's online science education with hands-on outdoor programs that are tailored to their age group. Science Enrichment programs run weekly each Monday beginning on April 12, 2021. Space is still available for grades 2, 4, 5 and 6. The cost is \$6 per participant for a 45-minute program. Parents must register and attend with any children under age 8. Call 703-451-9588.

THURSDAY/APRIL 15

Virtual '80s Music Drag Bingo (Virtual). 7 p.m. Sponsored by The Alden Theater, McLean with Miss Fluffy Soufflé. Fluffy Soufflé takes you back to the '80s! Part bingo, part drag show, your music bingo card is made up of songs, and instead of calling out numbers, Fluffy plays music clips! Singing along and '80s-themed costumes encouraged. \$10/\$5 MCC tax district residents. One ticket per bingo card. Zoom link and bingo cards will be emailed separately.

Two Lawsuits Threaten Virginia Public Schools

FROM PAGE 3

ACCORDING TO FCPS PRIDE, The Family Foundation of Virginia sent a letter to all school boards and superintendents in the state to back off whatever they were doing. "It can't hurt for us to email our school board members and superintendents (in Fairfax, Dr. Scott Brabrand at ssbrabrand@fcps.edu) with "support for trans and gender expansive children, and a plea not to back off of what it is doing," FCPS Pride posted.

"These guidelines are long overdue and will save lives. If we are truly committed to fostering a caring and inclusive culture in our schools, transgender and gender-expansive students must be treated with the same dignity and respect as everyone else. They need to know they are safe and accepted," said Karl Frisch, Providence District Representative on the Fairfax County School Board. "These lawsuits are little more than a mean-spirited attempt to turn the clock back on equality in Virginia. Our students deserve better than bigotry and hate."

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Being Driven Only Slightly Crazy



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

So this is what it's like to be out of the house and driving around: mask on, surgical gloves in the console, hand sanitizer in the glove box; not so different than before my than before my two covid-19 vaccinations. Today, Sunday, April 4, is my "day of liberation," as I've heard it called, the day two weeks after your final shot when the vaccine is supposed to reach its peak effectiveness. Not that I anticipate acting/living any differently than I have for the past 12 months, nevertheless; the shackles feel like they're off a little bit. I can now go out and about and be less fearful for my life.

Still, I'm not going to throw caution to the wind. Considering I'm a 66-year-old man with cancer, the definition of "comorbidity," which places a covid-19 target squarely on my back, front actually given the location of my chest/lungs, I am unlikely to ever unmask. And underlying that "comorbidity," is that my oncologist thinks that I have non small cell lung cancer, stage IV, and my endocrinologist thinks I have papillary thyroid cancer, stage IV; two for the price of one, you might say. As a result of this dual diagnosis, I tend to envision my future with lingering trepidation. Ergo, I don't see myself footloose and fancy free anytime soon. Presumably, my doctors talk with each other about my "unique" two-cancer status, but I wouldn't know, would I? As the Brits often question the end of their sentences.

I know that I can email them anytime I want though, but the covid-19 norm is that we see each other on video, not in person. And not that I'm overly concerned, but a face-to-face appointment, one that occurs while we're in the same examining room, might one day save my life. In addition, one other day, I'd love to have a Team Loure meeting with both my doctors present in the same examining room at the same time which would allow me to be my own judge and jury to determine a prudent way forward.

Though this kind of meeting would alter my "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" philosophy (since in the 12-plus years since my diagnosis, we've never had a group-think like this) still; to quote my late father, the idea has merit." And even though my father died in early December, 2006, I still hear his parental advisories and invoke them at most every turn, especially when I recycle his jokes. Most notably: "You're very seldom wrong, but this time, you're right." If I heard that once in my life, I've heard it a thousand times, maybe literally.

Thankfully I, along with my brother Richard, inherited our father's sense of humor and positive attitude. Whenever I've contemplated a change in my treatment, whether because of a blip on my radar, or an anomaly in one of my diagnostic scans, generally speaking, I've viewed it all as just another cancer-treatment step that has to be taken. No big deal. And diagnosis to date, fortunately, I've taken more steps forward than backward even with my primary cancer being changed recently to thyroid from lung. For clarity in the midst of this turnaround (which I'm not exactly sure is fair play), I remember asking my oncologist what type of cancer I had now, after being diagnosed originally with non small cell lung cancer in Feb., 2009. He said I still have lung cancer, but I also have thyroid cancer (lucky me). When I followed up by asking him which is better to have, he unequivocally said thyroid cancer which is the only cancer for which I am currently being treated. The immunotherapy that I had been taking to fight the lung cancer has been stopped for almost a year. As far as my current treatment indicates, I have thyroid cancer (though both cancers are stage IV and are considered "termina

In a "Three Stooges" episode entitled "Restless Knights," Curly was asked how he wanted to die: "to be burned at the stake or have his head chopped off." Curly replied: "I'd rather be burned at the stake." His explanation: "a hot steak is better than a cold chop." All cancers/protocols considered, I'd rather be diagnosed with thyroid cancer, so long as there are no covid-19 complications.

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

'Egg-stravaganza' Walk Held in Reston

Families hike and read at Walker Nature Center.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

One hundred children and adults strolled the temporary storybook path at Walker Nature Center in Reston on April 1, part of Reston Association's inaugural Egg-stravaganza. Posted signs along the woodland walk depicted the beautiful and informative pages of the picture book, "An Egg is Quiet." Illustrated by award-winning artist Sylvia Long who teamed up with author Dianna Aston, parents read the enlarged pages to their children, teaching them countless facts about eggs.

Erika Koval of Herndon paused before approaching the next marker, social distancing from the group ahead. "I'm always looking for safe activities for Mathew," she said. When it was their turn, Koval got down low to the placard and, pointing, read the page to Mathew, 2.

The story walk, an egg search in the woods, and a naturalist at a bird and nest station who explained the different styles of nests and birds that live in Reston kept the children engaged. "You know, we are all about education at Walker Nature Center," said Manager Katie Shaw of Reston Association. "Some of the children will be surprised to learn that birds are not the only creatures that lay eggs."

At the pond, another naturalist schooled the children on the lifecycle of frogs. The amphibians had laid eggs in the water that the children could see, according to Shaw. The Pyle family of Reston, Simon, 7, Thia, 4, and mom, Katie, with baby Cleo, made their way around the forested route. "We come to nearly every program here," she said.

Near the end of the route, Walker the Woodpecker, the Center's mascot and human-sized pileated woodpecker, greeted the children. Heather Wessel of Reston brought her daughter, Norah, 2. "Nature Center is always a winner," she said.



(From left) Mathew Koval, 2, of Herndon, listens as mom Erika reads him one of the many storyboards about eggs set out along the paths of Walker Nature Center. The Pyle family of Reston, Simon, 7, Thia, 4, and mom Katie with baby Cleo, 1, wait their turn during Reston Association's inaugural Egg-stravaganza held April 1.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



During Reston Association's inaugural Egg-stravaganza held April 1, 2021, children and parents are ready to hit the paths safely around Walker Nature Center and discover the many kinds of eggs different birds and creatures can lay.

PHOTOS BY WILL PALENSCAR/THE CONNECTION



The Chantilly Chargers charge onto the field for their game with Westfield.

Chantilly Chargers Beat Westfield Bulldogs, Face South Lakes Next

The Westfield Bulldogs (3-2) (2-1) faced the Chantilly Chargers (4-1) (2-1), in a game with big playoff implications in the final regular season game for both: Chantilly won, 19-14. With the win Chantilly will face South Lakes in Reston in the Region 6 Semifinals, while Westfield's season has been completed.



Tro Davenport #7, of Chantilly, scored on this fumble recovery.



Adam Jefferson #41 brings down Chantilly QB Jack Griese #5.



Alex Richards pulls down Chantilly QB Jack Griese #5.