

McLean Farmers Market Opens

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May's seasonal strawberries, asparagus, and quick-growing radishes are a hit at the McLean Farmers Market.

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

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Langley High Presents ‘Real Talk’

BY MAX BELMAR
JUSTICE HIGH SCHOOL



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Eli Roberts and Abhaya Tyrka in Langley High performance of ‘Real Talk,’ May 14, 2021.

During moments of contention, people must choose their path. In high school, college, and even as an adult, we are all riddled with overwhelming pressure from ourselves and others to live up to expectations. Langley High School’s earnest original production, “Real Talk,” wonderfully depicts this generational plight.

Piecing together the story of one boy, Leo (Eli Roberts) who is journeying off to college and choosing his major, all while working to please his father. But the concern that Leo’s father has for his future slowly manifests into unrealistic expectations and unnecessary stress. These circumstances prompt Leo to seek out guidance from a therapist (Keya Umesh.) Their conversations serve as a guiding light throughout the play and ultimately provide Leo with much-needed reassurance, recognizing that he is certainly not alone in his struggle to succeed.

The creative team at Langley HS was responsible for writing and directing this ambitious production. These efforts were spearheaded by Gunnar Peacock and Connor Farah,

who used their own experiences to cultivate this poignant narrative. In addition to their leadership on the project, both Peacock and Farah performed in the roles of Mr. Halifax and Mel, respectively, managing to captivate audiences from both on and off-screen.

Eli Roberts did a brilliant job in the role

of Leo, using his mastery of body language and a quivering voice to establish the mental toll these people have taken on his mental health. That nervous energy beautifully juxtaposed the calming nature of his therapist. Keya Umesh created an environment of peace and introspection, even though she

wasn’t in the same room as Roberts. Unlike the other actors who performed their scenes in person, Umesh and Roberts were tasked with developing a relationship on screen. However, their talent and dedication to the craft aided them in constructing an unparalleled performance, building off one another’s facial movements and laying the groundwork for other actors to utilize during their own performances later.

Other notable performances were Connor Farah as Mel and Gunnar Peacock as Mr. Halifax. Farah was hilarious in the role of Mel, serving as comedic relief to the show’s more dramatic moments. Mr. Halifax acted as a parallel to Leo, as they both dealt with paternal pressure at a young age. However, Mr. Halifax was able to rise above and follow his own passions of fashion design. This determination inspires Leo in the final scene to follow his dreams, and not simply choose a major because his father told him to.

“Real Talk” is an inspiring tale about passion, reminding audiences that our parent’s path is not necessarily our own. Through conversations with mentors, friends, and therapists, we can begin traveling down our own path. Always doing what is best for us, and allowing the other pieces to fall into place.

‘Waiting for Trains’ at Madison High

BY KATIE WOOD
CENTREVILLE HIGH SCHOOL



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

From left: Stella Monner, William Bush, Elenora Fiel, Benjamin Eggleston and Ashton Rauch in Madison High production of ‘Waiting on Trains.’

New Year’s Eve, 1999. Everyone on the verge of a new millennium running to escape their past lives in boring towns for a chance of reinvention all lead to one place, a train station. D. M. Larson’s “Waiting on Trains,” performed by James Madison High School, was a humorous one-act filled with irony about what the important things really are in life and unexpected interactions.

Relationships between strangers are arguably one of the most fascinating occurrences to be observed in everyday life. “Waiting on Trains” extensively explores the many results of relationships that can occur when a group of five assorted strangers are thrown together by fate while some are waiting for a train to escape the boring reality of a small town.

Within the total comedy of the show, the main source of bickering came from the polar opposite duo of Verna (Stella Monner) and Sue (Elenora Fiel). Sue, a businesswoman hungry to fulfill her biggest aspirations, and Verna, a ticketing woman whose boredom with her place in life has caused her to develop a carefree attitude, clashed with their differing perspectives. Fiel portrayed Sue in a posh and highly expressive manner where she always got her opinion out, which tag teamed well with Monner’s portrayal of Verna’s easygoing and sarcastic persona.

Throughout the entire production, several characters remained continuously on stage while others travelled on and off stage. Those in the eye of the camera for almost

its entirety, including Ashton Rauch as Kirk and Stella Monner as Verna, never faltered from their character, creating deep identities. William Bush as Jean, a janitor, and Benjamin Eggleston as Rut, a homeless man, paired well in their roles that appeared at the most comedic moments. Even with less stage time than others, they created lasting impressions as onlookers who were connected to the train customers through Verna’s interactions.

With requirements that had to be met from the VHSL one-act competition, the tech elements were simplistic and consistent. Although these requirements presented challenges, the cast and crew dealt with them gracefully. Soft lighting and the choice of a

wide angle encompassing the entire stage made sure all actors were visible and facial expressions were able to be clearly read. Actors projected and articulated their lines

without strain and with an abundance of energy that was infectious. However, those were not the only challenges overcome in this production due to pandemic regulations. An impressive triumph, the cast’s distancing in the show’s blocking never hindered their ability to tell the story, and only enhanced the environment of tension that comes with being strangers at a train station.

Talissa Uman, a senior at James Madison High School, took the lead in this production as the director. She was innovative in her direction of the actors and crew to create a cohesive and laugh pulling production. Uman will be studying Theatre Education in college, and this show certainly showcased her qualifications and dedication to the craft. Her work alongside stage manager Susan Weinhardt contributed to the final product of a smooth and engaging show.

Finally getting on that train they came for, the cast of James Madison High School’s “Waiting on Trains” concluded their production with a memorable exit into the audience, signifying the characters finally being able to move towards their new lives.

Submissions Sought for MPAartfest 2021

McLean Project for the Arts is currently seeking submissions for their 15th annual MPAartfest. MPAartfest 2021 will consist of a one-day in-person juried fine arts and craft show held in McLean Central Park on Oct. 3, 2021. Accepted Artists will be provided one tent on Oct. 3, as well as a virtual online profile and promotion on the MPAartfest website. MPAartfest was recently recognized by Sunshine Artist as one of the Top 100 Fine Art and Design Shows.

Artists retain 100 percent of in-park sales from MPAartfest. Additional rules and submission instructions are available at: <https://tinyurl.com/mpaartfest2021>. The deadline for submissions is June 15, 2021 at midnight.

Memorial to Suffragist Women Dedicated

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

To educate, inspire, empower present and future generations.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

For more than seven decades, millions of American women sought the right to vote. On May 16, the first monument in the country to commemorate their struggles, to tell the lengthy story of the suffragist movement, and to celebrate suffragists' accomplishment - the passing of the 19th Amendment - was dedicated in Lor-ton. Located on the grounds of Occoquan Regional Park, not far from where suffragists were incarcerated and tortured for peacefully picketing on the sidewalk in front of the White House, the Turning Point Suffragists Memorial was dedicated in a small ceremony, live streamed across the country, in advance of its public opening.

Jane Barker, Vice Chair/CoFounder of the memorial association, shared the early humble vision, first discussed by League of Women Voters with NOVA Parks staff, to tell the local story of the suffragists imprisoned at the nearby Occoquan Workhouse. They discussed "a brick wall with a few picture plaques of the women, ...on a small brick-paved area that would be called the Turning Point Plaza; the projected cost was \$25,000."

They soon realized "telling just part of the 72 year long struggle wasn't enough - we needed to create a national memorial that was befitting their sacrifices and accomplishments." The nearly \$3 million dollar memorial, designed by Robert E. Beach Architects, LLC, is the culmination of that needed recognition.



Re-enactrist Lynne Garvey-Hodges, as Mrs. Robert 'Mimi' Walker who was arrested for picketing and served 60 days at the Workhouse, poses with the statue of Carrie Chapman Catt, a leader in the suffrage movement and founder of the League of Women Voters.

SEVERAL SPEAKERS spoke of the effort that went into making the bigger vision come to completion. The site is seen as an apt location due to its historical setting near where the horrible treatment of suffragists led to the important "turning point" in public opinion, from which the memorial draws its name. Cate Magennis Wyatt, Chair of the NOVA Parks Board, said thousands who stroll by will have the opportunity to learn the story of the right to vote struggle in America which is not taught in history books; to learn



Association members, NOVA Parks Board members, State legislators, and County Supervisor cut the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial ribbon in front of the entrance replicating the White House gates where suffragists maintained their "silent sentinel."



In period dress attending the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial dedication at Occoquan Regional Park, Dave Williams, Debbie Glaser, Julieanne Smith Quinn Jones and Michelle McCall.



Girl Scout Troop 1600 members Hannah Smith, Katelyn Sullivan, Kasey Petrie, and Rory Gilles stand with the statue of Alice Paul, author of the Equal Rights Amendment.

history and "herstory." And through international tourism, "for people world-wide to aspire to suffrage in their own countries."

NOVA Parks will steward the care and up-keep of the memorial on its grounds.

Executive Director/CEO of the memorial association, Pat Wirth, who oversaw completion of the project, spoke of her expectation that the Turning Point Institute to follow will inspire girls to leadership roles and train

young women in the skills of the suffragists: public speaking, political candidacy, social awareness, civil and equal rights.

SEE MEMORIAL, PAGE 8

Relief Is on the Way!

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



COMMENTARY

Relief seems to be on the way for some of the drastic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic with the discovery and manufacturing of several vaccines and the incredible rate at which the vaccines are being administered. There has been some easing of regulations of everyday life, but caution is in order to ensure that we do not ease ourselves back into high rates of incidences. It is safe to be hopeful, but caution is the smarter way to go. Over time with continued public encouragement the hard-core opposition by a small minority to vaccinations will gradually become less. How much evidence is needed as to the dangers inherent in the pandemic and the successes that vaccinations are having to change the minds of the very hard-core remains to be seen.

On the economic front there is very good relief. President Biden signed into law in March the American Rescue Plan from which Virginia will realize nearly seven billion dollars for state and local government. That is a lot of money by

any measure but especially when compared with the \$3.2 billion from the CARES Act funding last year. The American Rescue Plan provides \$4.3 billion to the Commonwealth of Virginia and an additional \$2.7 billion going directly to counties and cities.

While this huge chunk of money coming to Virginia will go a long way to offset some of the economic losses from the pandemic, it also will provide a jump-start to programs that have long been needed but never funded or funded at less than a sufficient level. It will not be necessary to wait for the money as it is being immediately distributed by federal agencies.

Last week Governor Ralph Northam and leadership of the House of Delegates and the State Senate announced "shared priorities for American Rescue Plan Funding" that will be considered in a special legislative session this summer to formally allocate the funds. Those priorities read like a wish list for those familiar with the operation of the Virginia government

but now with the understanding that funding will be available to meet these priorities.

The priorities include upgrading state and local health services that were shown to be inadequate during the pandemic. Funding will be provided in addition to that appropriated in the last legislative session to help people with the cost of housing and utilities. The new money will help to fully fund the "Rebuild Virginia" small business recovery plan and provide relief dollars for the hardest-hit industries.

The Unemployment Trust Fund will be replenished after the historically high demand for relief by unemployed workers. Technology and staffing in the Virginia Employment Commission will be upgraded to better meet employment demands.

The pandemic made us aware of the need to rehabilitate and upgrade existing public school facilities to make them healthier, safer, and more conducive to learning. The additional money coming to the state will permit the acceleration of the ten-year plan to bring broadband to all of the cities and rural areas in the Commonwealth.

If you hear a big sigh of relief coming from the direction of the State Capitol in Richmond it is because relief is on the way!

MCC Appoints New Executive Director

Singh outlines the Center's 180-day plan.

The McLean Community Center (MCC) Governing Board has appointed Daniel Phoenix Singh as the center's new executive director. Singh is replacing George Sachs, who retired on Friday, May 7, after 11 years of service. MCC is located at 1234 Ingleside Ave.

In his previous position as Division Chief of Tourism and Cultural Arts for Baltimore County, Singh led countywide initiatives in coordination with the Tourism Commission and the Arts and Sciences Commission. Singh is also Artistic and Executive Director of Dakshina/Daniel Phoenix Singh Dance Company, which he founded in 2003. The multi-genre dance company has won national acclaim and was lauded by DC critics as one of the top three local dance companies in 2012. Singh has earned two master's degrees in subjects that are highly relevant to his new position: a master's degree in Business Administration from Georgetown University and a master's degree in Fine Arts from the University of Maryland.

MCC Board Chair Suzanne LeMenestrel said of Singh, "On behalf of the Governing Board, we are thrilled that Daniel will be leading the MCC. His expertise in the arts, technology and recreation and his commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion will serve our community exceptionally well. We are looking forward to working with Daniel as the MCC welcomes community members back to the center."

SINGH is working with community members, board members and staff to launch several new programs in the next 180 days. He will be working closely with Le Menestrel to conduct in-depth McLean listening sessions on community

needs, interests and ideas. From the foundation of the community input, the Board and staff will be launching a Strategic Planning process to bring the community, staff and board vision to fruition. "As soon as spacing restrictions are lifted, we will be holding an event to celebrate the life and contributions of Mr. Robert Alden in our theater," said Singh. "The staff and board are incredibly talented, and the community is very passionate about the mission and have already presented wonderful ideas for us to continue George Sach's legacy."

Michael Fisher and Christian Hayes are announcing Seniors in Action, a diverse range of programming focused on bringing seniors back to MCC for a series of events centered on their wellness and to build a robust community and cultural support system for them. Programming includes open coffee talks, craft sessions, book clubs, Bridge, Mah-Jongg, yoga, Bingo and pot-lucks. MCC Community Events is working on ways to safely get back to offering in-person events after celebrating their successes with virtual programming.

Singh and Performing Arts Director Sarah Schallern Treff are launching a series of arts initiatives such as a poetry event celebrating AAPI month in May, community partnerships in honor of LGBTQ Pride in June and weaving in visiting artists with camp participants. The staff will be unveiling an artist-in-residence series to highlight the rich array of regional, national and international artists. Schallern Treff will also be leading projects for cre-



COURTESY OF MCC
Daniel Phoenix Singh

ative placemaking to include murals, outdoor art installations and pop-up events in downtown McLean.

REIMAGINING all departments of MCC as an active community service and programming opportunity, Singh and Director of Communications Sabrina Anwah will be launching a community-focused blog and a robust social media presence. Alden Technical Director Jennifer Garrett is exploring

how design elements can become a larger focus in and around the center's building with seasonal or event specific lighting installations and exciting projection mapping projects to re-envision familiar spaces with new ideas as a fresh canvas. Facilities Manager Joe McGovern is considering how outdoor spaces can be activated to keep safety at the forefront while welcoming community members back home to MCC. Andrew Carter, the general manager of The Old Firehouse is excited to launch in-person summer programming and is also kicking off a series of Block Parties to celebrate our teens.

"I am incredibly lucky to be inheriting this strong staff that George has so carefully cultivated," said Singh. "MCC is uniquely positioned to address the pressing issues and ramifications of re-entry into the world after COVID-19; the racial climate and equity needs surfacing in the U.S.; or considering how we can affect change locally for global problems such as climate justice. We want to be 'The Center of It All' for both McLean community members and the issues that are of importance to them."

For more information, visit www.mcleancenter.org or call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711.

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Celebrating Asian-American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Importance emphasized in context of recent discrimination and hate crimes.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Educational videos and on-line trivia questions, organized by the school's Asian-Pacific Islander Heritage Committee, are giving Montgomery College students an opportunity for reflection, while food, music and film offer students at Marymount University in Arlington a glimpse of a different culture. These experiences are in observance of Asian/Pacific Islander American Heritage Month, celebrated each May.

"It's a time to reflect and celebrate the contributions of the Asian Pacific American community who shaped and influenced the history and culture of the United States," said Tait Brooks, Associate Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Deputy Title IX Coordinator at Marymount University.

The importance of this year's observances, in emphasized by growing evidence of discrimination and hate crimes targeting Asian Americans. Educators are using the month to address and work toward solutions to some of these current issues.

"The recent violent actions are steeped in xenophobia. Education and learning their history and its

significance to American history is the solution," said Brooks. "Once we know more Asian history, we will understand their plight."

"Schools and universities can pursue inclusive curriculum that fully integrates the experiences and contributions of Asian Americans," added Dae Young Kim, Ph.D., associate professor of Sociology and Anthropology at George Mason University. His message: "Educate on Asian American history and experience and show support to the Asian American community by standing against racism."

For Kim O'Connell, author of "Echoes of Little Saigon," a booklet on the Vietnamese immigration to Arlington, May is a monthlong opportunity to use education as a vehicle for reconciling some of the wounds incurred through recent racial turmoil.

"I hope that people will realize that Asian Americans are as diverse as any other group," she said. "They can't be characterized in one simple way and they definitely should not be subject to the racism that we've seen in recent months."

For some in the Asian-American and Pacific Islander



COURTESY OF MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Marymount University's first Cultural Graduation Reception acknowledges the accomplishments of first-generation college graduates from underrepresented groups in an intimate and inclusive environment. Graduate Anna Moon, center, receives her Cultural Graduation certificate alongside Dean Brooke Berry, right, and Associate Director Tait Brooks.



Dae Young Kim

"Educate on Asian American history and experience and show support to the Asian American community by standing against racism."

— Dae Young Kim, Ph.D.,
George Mason University

community, celebrations this year's observances are accompanied with fear.

"It is clear that many Asian Americans are feeling that they are not immune to acts of violence and bias and social media is helping to increase awareness of such incidents, which is prompting more conversation and action," said Kim. "We are feeling fearful of violence directed against us. This is what makes this month different from previous years."

In recent weeks, Kim has engaged in dialogue and outreach aimed at helping others understand the experience of Asian Americans now. "I've participated in a roundtable conversation with Governor [Ralph] Northam and Asian American community leaders about hate crimes against Asian Americans," he said. "I was on a panel organized by Inova ... to talk about the Asian American experience."

"Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have contributed to American culture, society and history in immeasurable ways and I encourage everyone to learn more about these contributions," said O'Connell.

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Leafy greens and strawberries cover the tables at the McLean Farmers Market.



"This is our 37th year here at the McLean Market," said Iman Sharkawi. "We've been here since the market started."

McLean Farmers Market Opens

Flavorful, nutrient-dense fruits, veggies, produce, and more.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The McLean Farmers Market at Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road opened for the second day of its weekly spring to late fall season on Friday, May 15, from 8 a.m. to noon. Operated by Fairfax County Park Authority, co-market manager Bill Smith said the McLean Market has one of the longest run histories in the county. "We have some vendors that have been here all along," Smith said, referencing Sharkawi Farm in Fauquier County.

The farm grows 40 chemical-free varieties of potted herb, fig, and guava plants, flowering perennials, pansies, and dried lavender. They also manufacture 56 teas, spices, and spice mixes with all products Virginia Finest Certified and chemical-free.

Upon entering the market, one of the first stalls is home-based business Meredith Fermentalist. They take fresh vegetables, and through the fermentation process, transform them into side dishes to be eaten alone or added to other dishes to enhance the flavors. Shopper Anna Steel and her son, Emmett, 3, looked over the containers of kimchi, pickled daikon, and bean sprouts, enjoying the sun, the people, and the market's vibe.

One of the market's newest vendors is Cannabreeze CBD Hemp Farm of Loudoun County. They are a local Seed-to-Sale CBD hemp farm and produce premium-grade CBD hemp products from plant germination through harvesting, oil extractions, and into



Market-goers Anna Steel and her son, Emmett, 3, stop at the McLean Farmers Market to pick up some fresh local items.



May's seasonal strawberries, asparagus, and quick-growing radishes are a hit at the McLean Farmers Market.

the products. Another new market vendor is Mimis Company, sweet & salty pastry. Offerings include chorizo paella, Peruvian Arroz Co Pollo and Apple Strudel.

Smith said he would be bringing home a couple of items from the market, lettuce, a borek, and maybe some other dessert-type things. He described a borek as a savory pie with layers of phyllo dough. Vendor Ozfeka Catering in Arlington County stocks them at the market.

Co-manager Fred Wagner said he would be taking home fresh asparagus. "And the strawberries, they are amazing. And the greens, the kale. Incredible. The rain sun combo has been great for leafy greens this

"The rain sun combo has been great for leafy greens this year."
— Co-manager Fred Wagner

year," Wagner said.

According to vendor Travis Urda of Mt. Olympus Berry Farm in Caroline County, shoppers should be able to smell fresh strawberries. "After they've been picked for a couple of days, the smell goes away," he said. That's because nutrients in fruits and veggies start to deplete once they are harvested.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON / THE CONNECTION

Days of storage and transport time, temperatures, and exposure all affect nutrient loss and flavor. Supermarket fruits, produce, and veggies can not outshine those picked that morning at local farms or backyard gardens.

Like all other Fairfax County Park Authority Markets, "By providing access to locally grown foods, [the FCPA] farmers market program strives to improve the health of Fairfax County citizens, support local food producers, and protect the environment," according to the County website. Market-goers can, if they choose, pre-order items by visiting the County website for the McLean Market. Shoppers pre-pay online and pick up at the market.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON /THE CONNECTION

The first group of cyclists heads off on the Tour de Hunter Mill organized by the Hunter Mill District, Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling (FABB), and Reston Bike Club (RBC).



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Linda Colbert, Mayor of the Town of Vienna prepares to meet the Tour de Hunter Mill cyclists and welcome them to discover the cultural and environmental treasures of the town.

A Perfect Day for the Pedal-Happy

Two-wheeling' Unity in our Community' at the Inaugural Tour de Hunter Mill.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Cyclists of all abilities gathered early Saturday morning, May 15, at Reston Community Center for the inaugural Tour de Hunter Mill. Organized by the Hunter Mill District, Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling (FABB), and Reston Bike Club (RBC), the event showcased "Unity in our Community."

Gulu Gambhir and Rhonda Van Diest of Vienna readied themselves for the ride and appeared delighted to be there. "I'm super excited to join everyone on this beautiful day for this bike ride through the Hunter Mill area," said Gambhir.

"We think this is a great way to celebrate the end of the pandemic lockdown. Today's our day to go out and play and enjoy being with other people...This is the first time we've ever done this. We've never done organized riding ever together," added Van Diest.

Supervisor Walter L. Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill District) welcomed riders, including Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon District) and Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Jeffrey C. McKay (D-At-Large) to the "first-ever Tour de Hunter Mill."

"Some of you may know that every year there is a Tour de Mount Vernon. "Okay, so we borrowed the idea. This is not completely an original thought," said Alcorn. "Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Jeff McKay is also here. I have to say that actually before there was a tour to Mount Vernon, there was a Tour de Lee District when he [McKay] was the district supervisor. So, thank you for starting the tradition."

According to McKay, in 2014, as the Lee District Supervisor, he brought a Board



MERCIA HOBSON /THE CONNECTION

Shyamali Hauth, Hunter Mill District Staff, holds up one of the route marker signs sited on paths and trails throughout Vienna and Reston, cueing cyclists where to turn on the Tour de Hunter Mill.



MERCIA HOBSON /THE CONNECTION

Ride Marshal Jeff Gauger of Alexandria is Vice President of Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling and served during the Tour de Hunter Mill, ready to respond to emergencies and incidents and help make the event a positive and fun experience for cyclists.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Cyclists Fairfax County Supervisor Walter C. Alcorn (D) and his wife, Kristen board the Metrorail as part of the 15-mile route option of the Tour de Hunter Mill, held Saturday, May 15.



MERCIA HOBSON /THE CONNECTION

Shyamali Hauth, Hunter Mill District Staff, hands volunteer Bob Evans, senior W&OD Trail patroller and Tour de Hunter Mill ride marshal a colorful pair of 'Unity in Our Community' cycling socks, sure to step up the style of his cycling game.

Matter before the Supervisors to create the first-ever Bicycle Master Plan for all of Fairfax County. He said, "This is exactly the reason why we needed that because what frustrated me is that most people in the County didn't know all the awesome biking opportunities that existed in Fairfax County. And because they didn't know them, they weren't trying [them out]."

McKay added that the County wasn't learning where trail extensions were needed to complete a bicycling network." We're making progress on that...making Fairfax County a much more safe, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly community," he said.

Jeff Gauger of Alexandria is Vice President of Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling (FABB). Gauger said he would serve as one of the many ride marshals. "I just want to make sure that everything's okay on the ride if anyone's pulled over with a flat tire or something," he said.

Cyclists set off together on mapped adventures of 5-, 15-, and 20-mile routes, discovering or revisiting the many hidden treasures, cultural and environmental resources in the Reston-Vienna areas in the Hunter Mill District of Fairfax County. In the Town of Vienna, Mayor Linda J. Colbert prepared to greet riders on the W&OD Trail. "I love the collaboration between Vienna and Supervisor Walter Alcorn's office. The Vienna Bicycle Advisory Committee and I will welcome the riders with water and refreshments as they enter Vienna. I hope they will want to come back and enjoy more of our town," she said.

Alcorn and his wife Kristen chose the 15-mile tour route with a partial Metrorail option. They avoided 475 feet of climbing over six miles and experienced how to bring a bike on Metrorail.

Food, fun, and prizes awaited cyclists at Reston Community Center. "The Tour de Hunter Mill was a tour de force. Great job by Kelley Westenhoff [Reston Bike Club] and Supervisor Alcorn," said Roberta Gosling of Reston. "The route was well thought out, well-marked, and easy to follow. Best of all, we discovered many new routes and paths to and through Tyson's Corner," she said.



Dr. Thelma Daley, Past President, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, poses with a statue of Mary Church Terrell, an honorary member of the sorority and co-founder of the NAACP. The Sorority contributed \$100,000 to the Memorial's \$2.7 million dollar funding.



Jane Barker, Vice Chair/Co-Founder of the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Association, extended an invitation to all to "come here and learn this history and enjoy our beautiful memorial in this gorgeous park."

Memorial

FROM PAGE 3

The Turning Point Suffragist Memorial uses a significant number of stations, 19, to tell the suffrage movement story from 1848 to 1920. Its cost was funded through contributions of thousands of donors from 45 states and the District of Columbia, Fairfax County, the Virginia Commonwealth, foundations, corporations, the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, women's associations, and non-profit organizations. Three life-sized bronze statues, donated by the National Suffrage Centennial Commission, reflect the images of Alice Paul, co-founder of the National Women's Party; Mary Church Terrell, co-founder of the NAACP and an organizer and honorary member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority; and Carrie Chapman Catt, President of the National Woman Suffrage Association.



Contractor Terry Dubeau, Culpeper, works on completing columns last week for the memorial's central rotunda in preparation for the dedication.



Peri and Page Schiavone sit taking in the memorial's grounds and 19 history information stations with other visitors

Also included in the memorial is an actual section of the White House fence, on loan from the National Park Service; the first section to be given.

THE FENCE was a backdrop for the quiet picketing the suffragists carried on in front of the White House, the first ever to protest there, to gain President Wilson's attention, earning them the name, "Silent Sentinels".

The Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibits the United States and individual states from denying the right to vote to citizens on the basis of sex. The first women's suffrage amendment was introduced in Congress in 1878, but not passed until 1919; it was ratified by the required 36 states and was certified on Aug. 26, 1920.

To learn more about the memorial and the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Association, see www.suffragistmemorial.org

BULLETIN BOARD

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

FRIDAY/MAY 21

McLean Art Society Meeting. 10 a.m. Virtual. David Daniels, a distinguished watercolor artist known for his Botanical Illustrations, will be the featured presenter at the Friday, May 21 Meeting of the McLean Art Society. The General Meeting will begin at 10 a.m. with the art demonstration to follow from 11a.m.-noon. Mr. Daniels teaches under the aegis of the Smithsonian and develops very colorful exacting works. This program is available to interested guests. It will be presented on Zoom. To be connected, contact M.A.S. President Ray Goodrow at raymgoodrow@aol.com

FRIDAY/MAY 21

Bike to Work Day. 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Throughout the metropolitan area. Join thousands of area commuters for the 20th annual free celebration of bicycling as a fun, low-cost, healthy and environmentally-friendly way to get to work. Riders can find work day pit stops around the metropolitan region in D.C., Maryland and Virginia. The first 15,000 to register and attend one of the pit stops will receive a free Bike to Work Day T-shirt. Pit Stop information is available at www.biketoworkmetrodc.org. Visit the website: <http://www.biketoworkmetrodc.org/>

MAY 20 - JUNE 10, 2021

Adventures in Learning Mini Semester - a Program of the Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia. Thursday Virtual via Zoom. Shepherd's Center is launching a new mini version of their Adventures in Learning Spring semester. Cost for this 4-week semester is \$30. Upcoming topics include How to Successfully Age in Place, Screening for Diseases, Hiking in Switzerland, Retirement Wellness Checkup, The Unraveling of Syria, and Balancing Federal Labor Relations and Efficient Government. To learn more, please visit <https://www.scnova.org/ail>. Or, call 703-281-0601 to register and provide credit card information.

WEDNESDAY/MAY 26

Holy Happy Hour. 6 p.m. Virtual at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. This concert will feature LeeLee Hunter on classical guitar. Currently in doctoral studies at the University of Arizona, Ms. Hunter holds degrees from the Peabody Conservatory. She has participated in several international competitions and in masterclasses with distinguished artists. She will perform music of South American composers. A recommended wine pairing for the post concert reception is an Argentinian Malbec which can be purchased at any local wine store. If you wish to be added to this list, send an email to LPCCommunication1724@gmail.com.

MAY 3-21

Soccer Tryouts. Coaches from Spain return to Villarreal Virginia Academy for soccer tryouts in May. The soccer academy based in Northern Virginia will be hosting tryouts from May 3-21, 2021. The tryouts will take place at Mason District Park, Pine Ridge Park, Ossian Hall Park and Thomas Jefferson High School. Leading coaches from Villarreal CF, the Spanish club that works alongside VIVA, intend to be there in person for the first time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, after previously offering support online throughout the pandemic. Visit www.villarrealva.org.

Perseverance & Hope

By C.J. GRECO
THE CONNECTION

As the school year wanes and a long-awaited summer approaches, the graduating seniors of Oakton and James Madison prepare for much more.

Well over a year has passed since Virginia and the rest of the nation took isolating action against the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, for these graduating seniors the pandemic was likely just a backdrop for the memories they'll hold in their hearts when, for the first time since 2019, they will be able to graduate with their classmates in person.

"Our Senior year hasn't been what we expected," said Madison SGA President and graduating senior Braden Holt, "but I think we've made the most of it."

"We were ready to put on a graduation with 1000 people attending," Holt continued, "We had a plan for everything."

Fortunately, the official plans for both Madison and Oakton's graduations include well over 1000 total attendees and a certain well-known concert venue.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Madison SGA President and graduating senior Braden Holt

"Our Senior year hasn't been what we expected, but I think we've made the most of it.."

— Braden Holt, Madison High SGA President

A trying school year ends with familiar brightness on the horizon for Oakton, Madison graduates.

"Every student, that I've talked to at least, has expressed so much gratitude that we're having one," said Holt, "and we're having it at Jiffy Lube, like, that's where all my friends go to concerts to see their favorite artists – now we're gonna be walking on that stage?!"

Even with such an exciting solution, the impacts and challenges of and leading up to this grand event are hardly lost on students, staff, and parents alike.

"Basically, we went from a school: a vibrant community with tons of spirit walking through our halls," said Madison Principal Greg Hood, "A school isn't a building, a school is a community of teachers and students all coming together at the same time, and in a single day – almost overnight – that was just kind of taken away."

"We've personally been fortunate to not be out of a job and not be out of a place to live," said Madison PTSA president Christopher Lande, "but this very social, formative time of their life has not had [...], it's that lack of social interaction, which for the teenagers I think is a bigger deal than for the parents." Constant and

diligent work was needed from all involved in the planning. More often than not, the challenge for the day was having to deal with the recent changes and looming uncertainties when it came to health precautions.

"Any graduation takes a significant amount of time to plan," said Oakton Principal Jamie Lane, "but just, the unknown of what the conditions we'll be the month the week the day of graduation [...] that just makes the planning of it...interesting!"

Despite all the changes and challenges, the mindset of those charged with "making the best of it" has focused on two words. "Perseverance, you just gotta always persevere" said Braden Holt, "I know that's kinda general, but if this pandemic has taught anybody anything it's just that you gotta work with what you got."

"I think we're all just living in constant hope," said Principal Hood.

Perseverance and hope against the inexorably unknown: the students, staff, and parents that make up the community surrounding this year's graduating seniors have a lot to be proud of.

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News

**Detectives Seek
Witnesses After
Pedestrian Dies
in Hit and Run
Crash**

A 43-year-old man has died following a hit and run crash that occurred Sunday morning, May 16, near the intersection of Leesburg Pike and Redberry Court in Great Falls. Officers responded around 5:21 a.m. for the report of a person who was hit by several cars. Officers found Allen Romero, of McLean, lying in the center eastbound lane of Leesburg Pike. Rescue personnel pronounced him deceased at the scene -- reports FCPD Public Affairs Bureau.

Detectives from Crash Reconstruction Unit have preliminarily determined Romero was crossing eastbound Leesburg Pike just prior to the intersection when he was hit by a 2011-2015 Ford Fusion. As a result of the crash, Romero landed in the eastbound lanes and was subsequently struck by other vehicles, one of which remained at the scene. The initial striking car did not stop, but detectives were able to preliminarily identify the make and model of the vehicle as a driver's side mirror was recovered at the scene. Detectives continue to investigate to determine if speed or alcohol were factors in this crash.

If you have any information or believe you may have been involved in this crash, contact Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. 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 - Click HERE. Download Mobile tip411 App "Fairfax Co Crime Solvers". Anonymous tipsters are eligible for cash rewards of \$100 to \$1000 dollars if their information leads to an arrest. Please leave contact information if you wish for a detective to contact you.

This is the 5th pedestrian fatality in the county to date in 2021.

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NOW THRU JUNE 26

Ken Britz, Artist of the Year. At VAS Gallery in the Village Green, 513 Maple Ave. W, Vienna. The Vienna Arts Society is thrilled to present a collection of "Favored Subjects", artworks by Artist of the Year Ken Britz. The exhibition is open April 12 through June 26, Mon. - Sat., 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Discover more about Ken on the website: www.ViennaArtsSociety.org

NOW THRU MAY 31

Dinosaur Drive-Thru Experience. The Dinosaurs are ready to return from extinction. The drive-thru dinosaur exhibit is the first of its kind at the Bull Run Events Center in Centreville. The Museum quality exhibit, with more than 75+ animatronic and static dinosaurs, runs May 14 through May 31. Tours are available Wednesday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily. Visit www.drivethrudinos.com or call 800-830-3976.

SATURDAY/MAY 22

Art Walk on Main. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Main Street, Fairfax. A hyper-casual event on Main Street to reclaim our sense of community post-pandemic. Artists demos and installation art on view. This is a no sale/no fee event meaning visitors will not be charged admission and artists will not have works for sale. We hope everyone will support our local shops instead by enjoying the various foods, beverages and items they have to offer. Please support our local shops instead. Visit the website: www.debrawright-studio.com

SATURDAY/MAY 22

The Quander Family. 1:30-3 p.m. Rohulamin Quander speaks about the Quanders of Fairfax County, one of the oldest and most notable African-American families in the country. This Burke Historical Society sponsored talk will be presented online by Pohick Regional Library. Registration required. Visit the website: <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/777952>

SUNDAY/MAY 23

Life After Breath. 2-4 p.m. Online. At the age of three, Jacob contracted a dangerous disease which caused him to suffocate and leave his body. Jacob will shed light on his experienced from the other side and share lessons learned during his NDE. Cost is \$10. Visit the website: <https://www.meetup.com/IANDS-Northern-Virginia/events/278022887/>

SUNDAY/MAY 23

Milling Class. 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. At Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. The "Run of the Mill Class" at Colvin Run Mill is anything but run of the mill. This unique class offers family groups a firsthand look at the old-fashioned process of milling grain from beginning to end. Colvin Run's hands-on program teaches you how grain is sifted using antique equipment and what it takes to clean the mill. You even get to take home a sample of the grain that is ground during the program. Classes run from 11 a.m. to noon and from 3 to 4 p.m. The cost is \$60 per family group of up to nine people, age 6 to adult. Call 703-759-2771.



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

The First Cicada Find at Laurel Hill Park

Laurel Hill Park volunteers Lauren Struble and Tom Wrzywicki had different reactions to finding their first cicada during invasive daylily removal.

MONDAY/MAY 24

Artifacts of the Past. At E.C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. This program is one of the Park Authority's new "Field Trips for All" that is geared toward specific age levels. Artifacts of the Past takes prekindergarten children and their parents on a trip back in time. It offers parents a unique opportunity to supplement their child's learning with real world experiences. The program at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park runs from 10 to 11 a.m., and the cost is \$6 per person. All attendees, parents and children, must register to control group size. Call 703-631-0013.

MONDAY/MAY 24

Field Trip for All. At Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Bring history to life for your elementary school students with a private "Field Trip for All" to Sully Historic Site. The Park Authority's Field Trips for All offers parents a chance to supplement their child's school lessons with real experiences and the application of concepts in the Virginia Standards of Learning. Sully Historic Site joins in with programs on "Life in Historic Virginia" four Mondays in May. On Monday, May 24, the field trip topic will be Textiles in 1794. The 45-minute programs at Sully Historic Site run at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. The cost is \$40 per family. Call 703-437-1794.

WEDNESDAY/MAY 26

Partial Lunar Eclipse. 4-6 a.m. At Burke Lake Park, 7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station. Join the park's astronomical naturalist at 4 a.m. to view the partial lunar eclipse before the moon sets. Enjoy a late-night/early-morning view of the stars and constellations, too. A limited number of telescopes will be available to use, but it's also a good idea to bring binoculars along to get the most out of this viewing experience.

This event is designed for participants age 16 to adult. The cost is \$10 per person. Call 703-323-6600.

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A True Sense of Insecurity



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

From the moment you hear the word cancer spoken in your direction - from your new best friend, an oncologist with whom you've had zero previous interaction, you are transported to a new reality. A reality that a few of those moments before, was nowhere on your radar. Whatever innocence, expectation of normalcy and/or predictability you anticipated experiencing in your life, is now completely gone. Not only are you not in Kansas anymore, you are nowhere to be found, emotionally. All your hopes, dreams and presumptions about your life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are back-burnered by your life-changing diagnosis. A diagnosis which will require some kind of treatment, side effects notwithstanding, which will likely dampen your enthusiasm for living and affect all your decisions. Figuratively speaking, there's a new sheriff in town and if you're not compliant and attentive to your doctor's orders, you'll become a prisoner to your disease.

Even if you are compliant, a cancer diagnosis, however curable, is the kind of news that sticks with you no matter how long into your remission you are or how encouraging your diagnostic scans appear to be. Since I've not experienced being cancer free - after having received an initial diagnosis/prognosis, I can't imagine the relief and rebirth one might feel after learning their cancer has been beaten into submission. It's really too much to even contemplate when you've been given a sort of death sentence. Practically speaking, how does one go from being constantly under threat of a worsening outcome to one which is completely free from the emotional and physical tentacles of a cancer diagnosis?

You can't really unring the bell, to coin a phrase. Moreover, hearing "You have cancer" sticks with you like Gorilla Glue. It's hard to even imagine ever hearing anything worse. Then one day, hearing your oncologist say "no sign of cancer" to you. To quote my late mother: "It's too much for anybody's nerves." And it's almost too much to ever consider. Your reality is that you have a very serious medical condition/disease, and once again, to quote my late mother: "No one gets out of this life alive." Thinking, even contemplating a miracle cure is a tease most unhelpful, to invoke the syntax of Hercule Poirot. Somehow one must learn to live with their disease or else you'll die having been unable to lock it away in your vault, so to speak. Somehow having cancer can't be the predominant consideration in your life. Yet, when every waking moment is nearly consumed by your less-than-ideal circumstances, it's an emotional battle, most royal. If you win your share of skirmishes, you'll likely be rewarded with more life to live. However, nothing is guaranteed, except you know what: death and taxes.

"Any way you slice it, it's still ham," as my father used to say. Meaning that cancer is a serious business and no amount of joking or obfuscation is going to change that fact. Nevertheless, if one doesn't try and gives in to the disease psychologically, the internal damage may be compounded. Not that I've denied my diagnosis or ever taken it lightly, but I have tried to embrace it and become friends with it; not wanting to be controlled by it anymore than I already am. Given that I'll likely never be free of my cancer, either I learn to live with it or die trying. And I'd rather go down fighting than go down quietly. My situation has not changed or gotten worse. Still my disease is a major part of me and integrating into my program is the best way I know to try and make a molehill out of a mountain. I have been there and have done that. Hopefully, I'm not done being there.

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



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