

CONNECTION

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Long Branch Project To Protect Stream

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The meandering path of Long Branch is a green oasis in an area of the suburbs. Occasionally there are mini rapids in the stream.

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PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

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Long Branch Project to Reduce Sediment Build-up and Stabilize Edges

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

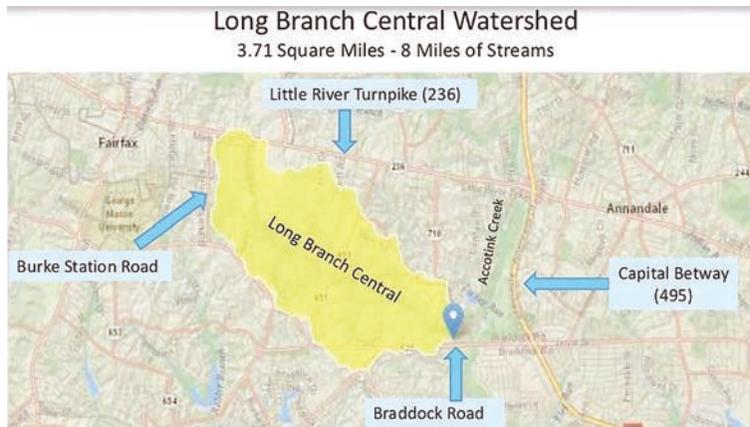
BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

The Long Branch Watershed is eight miles of streams over 3.71 miles in a heavily suburbanized area in mid Fairfax County. It was declared an “impaired water,” by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality due to erosion and sediment input, so Fairfax County is launching the “Long Branch Central Watershed Management Area Project,” to reduce the waste load on the stream, improve water quality within the Long Branch Central watershed and improve habitat and environmental health of this county stream.

The stream goes through the heart of the Braddock District and Supervisor James Walkinshaw was part of the process to get the county to look at it. “Ultimately, this project will decrease the sediment load in Accotink Creek, help protect Lake Accotink and improve water quality by stabilizing destabilized stream banks, enhancing habitat for aquatic life, engaging the floodplain, and improving the vegetation in this part of the watershed,” Walkinshaw said.

Sediments are clogging the stream up in some areas, and bank erosion is taking place

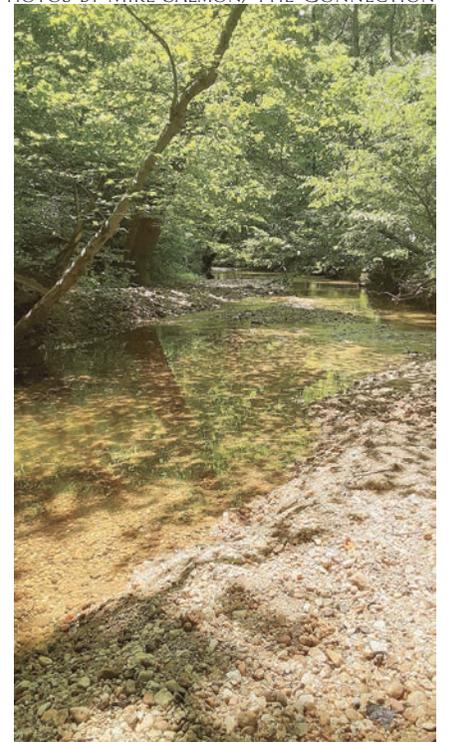
in others, causing trees to topple and the natural process is suffering. Officials are hoping to reduce the sediment eroding from the Long Branch Central Watershed by 2,433 tons per year and improve water quality and habitat. Officials are looking into methods for accomplishing this and are considering doing a lot of planting in different areas and working to reconnect the stream with its floodplain where that is appropriate and to stabilize and repair degraded outfalls where there is a lot of erosion. “One of the most critical aspects is that as we work to develop design solutions for given areas, we will share those proposed methods with the community for their feedback and input to make sure what we do meets the communities’ goals and needs,” said Charles Smith, chief of the Watershed



I-495, Braddock Road, Little River Turnpike and Burke Station Road are loosely the boundaries of the Long Branch watershed.

Division of the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services.

In February, a presentation was shown to the Friends of Accotink Creek on the Long Branch project, and after the presentation, a group walked along Long Branch to see what was happening. Long Branch empties into Accotink Creek near Wakefield Chapel and Braddock Road. The Friends of Accotink Creek were identified as a stakeholder group, along with Earth Sangha, Stone



The meandering path of Long Branch is a green oasis in an area of the suburbs.

Haven Civic Association, Canterbury Woods Civic Association, Red Fox Civic Association and Rutherford Civic Association.

The DEQ is working with Fairfax County to assess the situation this summer, and possibly begin working out a plan this fall and winter. The work is scheduled to start in the summer 2023 and be completed in 2028.

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NEWS

'We Fly Where Other Aircraft Are Restricted'

Police share information about their helicopters and drones.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

In his 29th year with the Fairfax County Police Department, Capt. Mike Shamblin has headed the Helicopter Division for a year. And he recently addressed an online meeting of the Sully District Police Station's Citizens Advisory Committee to discuss the police helicopters and drones.

"We have two Bell 429 helicopters, and we do both police and Medevac missions," he said. "We can also fly in areas where other aircraft are restricted. We're a 24/7, 365-day operation; the only time we can't fly is because of bad weather."

The division started in 1983 when a local businessman donated the helicopters to the Police Department. And Inova flight nurses flew with the police until the 1990s, when the police took over operations completely. Now, it Medevacs victims of car-crashes and traumas to Inova Hospital and burn victims to MedStar Health in Washington, D.C.

"We're normally based at 4604 West Ox Road [in Fairfax]," said Shamblin. "But we're currently housed at the Manassas Regional Airport until we can get our new, larger hangar built. It's due to open in mid-April 2022. We've been there since July 2020, and it's just a six-minute flight from there to the old hangar."

He said they have a combination of police and civilian pilots. There are 12, full-time paramedics – all sworn police officers, plus six, full-time pilots who are mostly civilians. And their helicopters are the only law-enforcement aircraft in Northern Virginia.

"We fly about 1,500 missions a year," said Shamblin. "About 70 of them are Medevacs – we fly at least one Medevac per week.

MEDEVACS are our number-one priority; police missions are second. We'll leave police events to do Medevacs, and we'll leave events in other jurisdictions to do an event in Fairfax County. Our paramedics have even more training than Fairfax County Fire Department paramedics, so we can provide advanced,



A Fairfax County police helicopter flying above the area.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSH LAITINEN

Capt. Mike Shamblin

lifesaving techniques that they can't."

He said their helicopters are dual-engine aircraft and "are safer that way, in case there's a problem with one of the engines – which happened recently. Our maximum cruise speed is 155 knots, which is about

"Medevacs are our number-one priority; police missions are second."

— Capt. Mike Shamblin



An example of a police drone.

175 mph. They each weigh 7,000 pounds and have a range of 400 miles. We often fly to Roanoke for routine maintenance and to Salem for major repairs. And the camera mounted on the front of the aircraft has video and night vision."

"Our helicopter program is extremely valuable to the county," said Sully District Station Commander, Capt. Jason Allegra. "And it's an important asset in keeping our officers and community safe."

In addition to helicopters, the Police Department began flying UAS (Unmanned Aerial System), or drone, missions in 2019; and by 2020, it had 30 trained UAS pilots. Police have legal authority to fly missions in Virginia as law enforcement. They're also permitted to operate in national airspace in a particular location.

THEY MAY USE DRONES under the following conditions:

With a search warrant; to serve a felony arrest warrant at a wanted subject's primary residence; when in hot pursuit of someone actively sought for an arrest; when there's an amber, senior or blue alert; to investigate a reportable traffic crash; in a location where they have consent to be; for training pilots and evaluating equipment; and to "alleviate an immediate danger to any person," such as a missing, endangered person; suicidal/homicidal person; barricaded/armed suspect; active shooter; explosive ordnance disposal; fleeing suspect considered armed and dangerous; and incidents involving hazardous materials.

"We currently have 12 drones," said Shamblin. "Our SWAT team has six; the Technical Investigation Unit, one; Fugitive & Apprehension, one; Crime Scene Unit, two; and Helicopter Search & Rescue, two. These drones can help clear a building [to make sure it's safe for police to enter]. And some can be used to help find missing persons."

His assistant commander, 2nd Lt. Brian Bowman recommended that people wanting more information go to the FCPD Website and search for UAS. All their drone activity is logged on there, as well as lists of what the drones can and cannot do.

2021 Fairfax County Redistricting Advisory Committee

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors appointed the 2021 Redistricting Advisory Committee at its June 22 meeting. The committee will recommend proposed new elections districts to the Board which will ultimately determine the new districts that will be adopted. The committee will begin meetings in August.

The committee is composed of:
Representatives from each of the nine currently existing Board of Supervisors' districts.
Representatives for the county at-large.
Representatives from African-Ameri-

can, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander communities and Arab-American communities.
Representatives from the Federation of Citizens Associations; League of Women Voters; Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce and Northern Virginia Labor Federation.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Paul Berry, Chairman (At-Large)
Lisa Sales, At-Large
Bill Bouie, At-Large
Prashanth Rajan, Braddock District
Jimmy Bierman, Dranesville District
Richard Chew, Hunter Mill District
Bryon Garner, Lee District
Alis Wang, Mason District

Hon. Gerry Hyland, Mount Vernon District
Hon. Linda Smyth, Providence District
Paul Liberty, Springfield District
Sam Walker, Sully District
Tim Thompson, Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations
Anne Kanter, League of Women Voters
Karen Campblin, African-American Community
Maya Castillo, Hispanic Community
Silvia Patton, Asian/Pacific Islander Community
Saif Rahman, Arab-American Community
Scott Price, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce

George Becerra, Northern Virginia Labor Federation

The Virginia Division of Legislative Services is scheduled to deliver census data to Fairfax County between Aug. 16-20. The Redistricting Committee and the public will draw new proposed electoral boundaries for the Board of Supervisors and School Board. Aug. 30 – Sept. 17. The Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing in November, and is scheduled to approve a redistricting plan on Dec. 7.

Virginia's congressional and state legislative lines will both be drawn in a separate process by a 16-member politician commission, in conversation with the state legislature.

Gun Violence Epidemic

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



COMMENTARY

Three people were shot to death in Herndon last week—a mother and her two children, in an incident the police termed “horrific.” The shootings will not make the list of mass murders as the official definition of a mass murder is four people or more. Over the past several weeks there have been murders of one and two people in Reston in different incidents but not reaching the threshold to be termed a mass murder. Mass or not, it is too many. The number also affects the media coverage. A murder here and there has unfortunately become so commonplace that it makes the back page of print media and barely a mention in broadcast media. The fear is that we are becoming immune to what is happening in our communities, and while we are by no means accepting of what is happening there seems to be less outrage unless a large number of people have been killed or wounded.

A cartoon in last week’s Washington Post

shows two men looking at a chart with a soaring upward line. One says to the other, “I thought we had COVID under control.” The other responded that the upward line to 50 deaths per day represents the deaths by gun violence, not COVID. Just a couple of months ago I wrote a column “Epidemic Surge in Gun Violence” to draw attention to the understandable fact that while we were closely following the COVID pandemic there was a second dramatic increase that I termed a “surge” in gun violence.

There are many excuses that can be given for the surge in gun violence at this time that center around the isolation and depression arising from the pandemic. Certainly they are factors, but the fact remains that the overwhelming presence of guns in our society leads to their misuse in domestic disputes, getting even with others, accidents, and suicides among other causes. Recent news accounts indicate that there has been an unprecedented surge in gun

sales. In 2020 people purchased more than 23 million guns, a 66 percent increase over 2019. There were 2.5 million guns purchased this past January for the third highest total ever.

The effects of the COVID pandemic are being felt around the world, but the gun violence epidemic is unique to the United States. According to a study by the United Nations, there are 29.7 homicides by firearms per one million people in the United States compared to 1.4 in Australia, 1.9 in Germany, and 5.1 in Canada.

Tragically the number of young children being the victims of gun violence has seen a surge as well. Seldom is there a week or a day without getting the news that a child, sometimes even an infant, and too many teenagers have become the victims of gun violence. Beyond the children who are actually killed are the brothers and sisters of those who have been murdered or the children of adult victims who are traumatized by what has happened in their lives. They are victims as well.

I participate in monthly vigils at the NRA along with many loyal advocates who carry the message that we must take legislative action at the federal level as we have in Virginia to end gun violence. Join me in continuing to press for a response to this epidemic!

Woodson Students Farm Vegetables for Fairfax Families In Need

PHOTO COURTESY OF FCPS

Tucked between Woodson High School tennis courts and the school’s science lab wing, junior Victoria Caswell leans over a garden bed and plucks mixed greens from the ground that will wind up on the dinner plates of a local family.

Caswell is one of dozens of Fairfax County Public School (FCPS) students who jumped into action when local food pantries reported a 400 percent increase in demand at the start of the pandemic.

At Woodson High in Fairfax, students in the Environmental Club and their faculty advisers saw a chance to use school garden plots for the first time to help struggling local families eager to serve fresh vegetables at meals. Students prepared, designed and planted the garden in March, and have already harvested and donated six pounds of spinach, rainbow chard, and lettuce. Future Woodson bounties from the eight beds at the school will include squash, cucumber, tomatoes, eggplant, peppers and beans.

Caswell said the slowdown in typical school-year activities during the pandemic became the perfect opportunity to hone her gardening skills, and put them to

use for community service.

“I thought it was a good chance for me to get outside and do something to help,” Caswell said.

WOODSON is one of four FCPS schools that had a partnership this year with the Fairfax Food Council. Three elementary schools -- Stratford Landing in Alexandria, Belvedere in Falls Church, and Lynbrook in Springfield, also participated, Fairfax Food Council’s Urban Ag Group co-chair and Belvedere Elementary’s staff environmental educator Stacey Evers said.

Both Belvedere and Woodson donate their produce to Food for Others, a Fairfax-based organization that helps connect families in need with food.

The spike in demand for food at the onset of the pandemic led Food for Others, an Ignite Partner of FCPS, and the Fairfax Food Council to begin thinking of different ways to spur contributions to food banks.

Food for Others is currently serving 3,500 to 4,000 families a week in Northern Virginia, up from roughly 1,800 families a week prior to the pandemic, according to executive director Annie Turner.

“Many partners weren’t able to bring food anymore. Restaurants



Master Gardener Tony Makara and Woodson Environmental Club adviser Lauren Kinne guide students as they weed and harvest.

were closed, farmers were struggling,” Fairfax Food Council’s Evers said. “I think we have almost 100 schools with a garden – so we said let’s see if we can boost production at some of them.

At Woodson, master gardener Tony Makara taught the students how to assess the soil, identify weeds, plan and design what to plant, and then properly maintain the beds.

THE CONTRIBUTIONS from school gardens have made “such a difference,” Food for Others’ Turner said, noting that they’ve served to boost available produce for families and raise awareness in the region about food scarcity issues.

Woodson High science department chairwoman and Environmental Club adviser Lauren Kinne said farming for food banks met a variety of goals she had for students during the pandemic year.

“The link between improved mental health and being in nature is real,” Kinne, who teaches biology at Woodson and oversaw the school’s garden project, said. “They were also able to safely work on a group activity during the pandemic: they could socially distance by tending to separate garden beds, being outdoors, wearing masks and give back to the community at the same time.”

Kimberly Austin, also a Woodson junior, says those goals were met.

“I learned about soil, the best time to plant things and weeding and watering techniques,” Austin said. “And then you get to watch everything grow. It is so rewarding to see things through, knowing it will eventually benefit people in our area that need help.”

— FCPS OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS



Community Group Hears Rail Plans

Area to gain new rail bridges and tracks.

The South County Federation, a coalition of area homeowners associations and individual residents, sponsored a virtual May 11 presentation on the status of area rail transportation projects, including those in Franconia/Springfield/Occoquan. Organized by member Peter Weyland, the information session included presentations from the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), Virginia Railway Express (VRE), and Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT).

❖ VA to D.C. Long Bridge improvements: Additional tracks will provide a pathway for separation of freight and passenger rail in Virginia, and new rail bridges will eliminate the current rail traffic bottleneck at the single point of rail entry to the District of Columbia. Katherine Youngbluth, Manager, Northern Virginia Rail Projects, DRPT, presented the “Long Bridge Project” (LBP), a plan to build multiple new bridges for trains to move passengers and freight from Virginia into the District. Three two-track bridges will allow travel over George Washington Memorial Parkway, the Potomac River, and I-395. Additionally, three four-track bridges will be constructed over Ohio Drive SW, the Washington Channel, and Maine Avenue SW. A seventh bridge relocates the Maine Avenue pedestrian bridge.

On March 30, Governor Northam and U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg, announced a definitive agreement to fund the \$3.7 billion project in agreements with Amtrak, CSX, and VRE, for expansion of infrastructure and use of the existing CSX right-of-ways. The agreements support building a \$1.9 billion dollar bridge over the Potomac River dedicated to passenger rail and improvements to L’Enfant Station. The monumentally complex project, on the scale of the Springfield Mixing Bowl, has a projected completion in 2030.

❖ Franconia/Springfield to Lorton rail improvements: DRPT and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) also identified passenger rail service improvement options along a 123-mile corridor for the Southeast High Speed Rail (DC2RVA) project, running from Washington to Richmond. Several impact the Franconia/Springfield/Lorton area.

Phase one, with completion in 2025, will add a third track between Franconia/Springfield and Lorton VRE Stations and replace the Newington Bridge over Newington Road and Route 1 (near Fair Winds Brewery), with construction beginning in 2023, at a cost of \$208 million dollars. The second phase adds a third track between Woodbridge and Rippon.

The Franconia Bypass project, starting



PROVIDED BY DRPT

Graphic shows planned new bridges and track to improve rail service from VA to D.C.



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Old Colchester Bridge, a steel bridge, previously repaired with reinforcing timbers, victim to corrosive effects of water/air/salt, is beyond further repair and will be replaced; first by a temporary bridge to open the roadway, then by a permanent replacement when funded.

just south of Franconia/Springfield Station, allows passenger trains to cross over to serve VRE stations. This \$298 million dollar segment will begin construction in 2023 with planned completion in 2026.

Improvements to the Franconia/Springfield VRE station, outlined by VRE Chief Engineer, Dallas Richards, will extend the east and west platform with construction beginning on June 2; for completion Sept. 2, 2023. The changes will allow the network to add five trains on the line.

VDOT manager Gary Runco, updated the status of work on the Old Colchester Road Bridge, which was closed on March 19 due to safety concerns. An 80 by 24 foot temporary bridge over Pohick Creek will be put in place to allow the road reopening. Foundation work for a temporary bridge due to begin was placed on a short postponement due to the recent gas shortage and pipeline restart. The temporary bridge placement will be completed in two to three months. Delegate Kathy Tran and State Senator Scott Surovell are working to assure the permanent project receives priority on the federal infrastructure list for the bridge which is on the National Bridge inventory.

❖ Future improvements evaluated: Finally, DRPT’s Todd Horsley shared potential rail improvement options included in a feasibility study currently underway; the study report due to the Virginia General Assembly by Dec.1, 2021. The study will evaluate the pros and cons of a range of alternatives, without providing a final recommendation. Possibilities include: extension of the Metro Blue line from Springfield to Quantico, with a crossing to Ft Belvoir and Potomac Mills; extension of the Metro Yellow line from Huntington to Quantico, though Ft Belvoir; bus rapid transit from Ft Belvoir to Quantico; VRE realignment and service enhancement; and an express bus alternative.

Teacher Appreciation Week Luncheon at Fairfax High

Fairfax High Leadership Class students led the school’s Cinco de Mayo luncheon catered by Baja Fresh for Teacher Appreciation Week. (From left) are sophomore Leadership students Grace Cooke, Grace Bowersox and Yesmine Harrache, plus event organizer Mikayla Vargas.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIN MOLEK

'Exceptional Teachers in the City of Fairfax'

Rotary Club honors 2020 and 2021 educators of the year.

By BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Each year, the Rotary Club of Fairfax recognizes two Fairfax City Schools Teachers of the Year. But since the pandemic cancelled the 2020 awards ceremony, those two teachers were also honored, May 15, along with the 2021 winners.

The outdoor ceremony was held in front of the School Board Office. Honored for 2021 were Wendy Forstall, first-grade teacher, Daniels Run Elementary, and Rob Hornfeck, seventh-grade math teacher, Lanier Middle. The 2020 teachers recognized were Alan Borhauer, Advanced Academics resource teacher, Providence Elementary, and Anna Weaver, Social Studies teacher, Fairfax High.

Education and literacy are at the forefront of the Rotary Club's mission, and its Teacher of the Year Committee carefully reviewed all the nominations submitted by school principals. Each winner received a plaque, plus a cash award, to honor their stellar accomplishments.

"All the teachers nominated were so good that it was really a challenge to choose them," said committee member Glenn Surabian. "Fairfax City is lucky to have such phenomenal teachers."

Agreeing, Schools Superintendent Phyllis Pajardo said, "It's a pleasure to recognize these wonderful teachers today. Each epitomizes the exceptional teachers we have here in the City of Fairfax."

Alan Borhauer

Providence Elementary Principal Dan Phillips presented Borhauer's award. "Alan's such a wonderful force for good and is connected to everything going on in school," said Phillips. "He's always doing things to help other people, and he even turned our courtyard into a wonderful, outdoor classroom."

Borhauer's role is identifying students needing differentiated instruction and teaching and encouraging them to use critical- and creative-thinking strategies. In his nomination letter, Phillips said Borhauer's keen observations enable him to open opportunities to a student new to this country, or one living in poverty, who may qualify for the Providence Young Scholars program.

"He sees each student as a capable, important learner," wrote Phillips. "He also works closely with students identified as gifted learners and who might need an additional challenge to supplement rigorous work in the classroom. He develops creative programs [ranging] from science experiments to strategic games."

Borhauer was instrumental in implementing a program allowing many of the brightest, most creative students who might opt to go to an Advanced Academic Center school to receive the same services at Providence Elementary. He also helps develop and run the annual STEAM night and is lead instructor and planner of Providence's



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION
(From left) are Alan Borhauer and Dan Phillips.



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION
(From left) are Chris Smith and Wendy Forstall.



Anna Weaver

summer-school program.

"He also took a large, unused, outdoor area in the center of the building and turned



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION
(From left) are Rob Hornfeck and Kevin Deans.

it into a center of collaboration and enjoyment for the Providence students, staff and families," wrote Phillips. "The courtyard has become an outdoor classroom, pavilion, garden and learning center."

Anna Weaver

Anna Weaver couldn't attend the awards ceremony, but received high praise from students, teachers and colleagues at Fairfax High. One student said, "Mrs. Weaver allows the students to creatively think about what we're learning. She inspires us to reach new levels and achieve the grades we work for in class." Other students described how she helps them learn from their mistakes and understands their stress during high school.

Another social studies teacher called Weaver a "phenomenal teacher [who] challenges her students within the subject in many ways. She has her students view history through many different lenses and emphasizes life skills and being culturally aware historians." This teacher also com-

for all teachers in the building and helps them improve their practices to benefit all students. She promotes effective teaching and high, student achievement and has become a resource for certain students faced with obstacles.

"Anna's love for learning transcends every relationship she establishes at Fairfax High," said a supervisor. "She creates an environment in which students believe they can achieve greatness in academics. She identifies and balance the needs of diverse learners with high levels of success and challenges every social studies teacher to go deeper. And she fosters school spirit and pride in the school's newest students."

Rob Hornfeck

Teacher John McCaughan called Rob Hornfeck "an amazing teacher who uses music and fun to explain – and get kids to learn and remember – deeper math concepts. He plays bongo drums to connect the rhythmic counts of music to the number patterns of square roots, so students are hooked and love math."

"Unlike many who petition to work with honors students or teach advanced classes, Rob vies for those students who struggle the most," said Principal Tammy Hanna. "It's become his professional mission to help every student become more confident in math and learn to connect with math using music."

Even before the pandemic, she said, Hornfeck invested countless hours producing YouTube videos on every math topic his students encounter. "Rob knows how to connect with all pupils," said Hanna. "He volunteers to assist students in other classes if he thinks his methods will help them deepen their understanding. And he finds time to mentor our new teachers to build their capacity and confidence."

At the ceremony, math teacher Kevin Deans said Hornfeck has the three essential qualities of a great leader – passion, courage and humility. "He engages his students in math," said Deans. "He asked how I got the results I did with my students and committed to changing his own teaching habits."

"And when I lost my brother and father-in-law to COVID, he let me know he was there for me. He taught me how to be a wonderful human being. He's secured high esteem among peers and colleagues and has distinguished himself as a master teacher."

Wendy Forstall

Daniels Run Principal Chris Smith called Wendy Forstall "an absolute rock to our first-grade team, with unbelievable professionalism – especially during the pandemic – advocating for her students' needs. We had an absence in our PE. department so, for six weeks, she did that job virtually, and did it well. And she even attended a student's baseball game. She's been at Daniels Run, 20 years, and we're lucky to have her."

In nominating Forstall, Smith said she "demonstrates unwavering dedication to

"It's a pleasure to recognize these wonderful teachers today. Each epitomizes the exceptional teachers we have here in the City of Fairfax."

— Fairfax City Schools Superintendent
Phyllis Pajardo

mended Weaver's leadership skills as Social Studies department chair.

Another colleague said Weaver advocates

SEE TEACHERS, PAGE 7

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Rotary Club members, teachers, principals and Fairfax City Schools Superintendent Phyllis Pajardo (front row, in skirt) pose together after the awards ceremony.



BONNIE HOBBS/
THE CONNECTION



PHOTO COURTESY OF SARA CHAE

Student Shows Lion Pride during Class

Before school ended, this Fairfax High student diligently worked during her concurrent ESOL class taught by Fairfax Academy ESOL Resource Teacher Sara Chae. This girl's hoodie also reflects the name of the school's new mascot, the Lions.

Teachers of the Year

FROM PAGE 5

her students, ensuring they have the resources and encouragement to reach their full potential. Wendy learns about her students, knows their interests, and brings learning to life for each of them. She uses a child's interests to spark learning across the curriculum."

A parent said Forstall praises her students each day and lets each one be heard. She's also the first-grade

team leader and mentors a student-teacher candidate. She leads the Daniels Run Reading Under the Stars program and assists the Latina Science Girls Club.

Smith said Forstall understands each student's individual needs, encourages their talents and fosters their self-esteem. "She ensures that each child's needs are met, academically, socially and emotionally," he wrote. "She spends countless hours, both inside and outside the classroom, making sure her students receive the best possible educational experience."

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95 and Counting

Seniors who are 95 and older reflect on life and offer advice to younger people.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

95-year-old Howard Eisenberg says he was carded recently and asked to provide proof of his age as he boarded a train on his way to visit his 80-year-old girlfriend.

“Three different conductors carded me. I said, ‘Look, isn’t my gray hair enough?’ The conductor said, ‘Nope, that could have started at 40.’ They insisted on seeing my driver’s license and boy, was I proud.”

What’s the secret to a long life? Three local seniors reflect on their lives and share their accomplishments and their advice to younger generations.

Born in Manhattan, Eisenberg, who now lives in Alexandria, began his lifelong career as a writer while doing a stint in the military.

“I started writing at 18. WWII had just ended and my captain learned that I’d had a couple of years of college. He said, ‘PFC Eisenberg, the Nazis who were in this barracks left a mimeograph machine and a typewriter here. Write me a newspaper to improve morale.’ You don’t say no to your company commander, so I wrote ‘The Rifleman.’”

Eisenberg, who recently completed the script for a musical, says he’s been a writer ever since. “I’ve written for radio and television. I’ve written magazine articles, he said. “I shared magazine and book bylines with my amazing late wife, Arlene.

To him, age is just a number and he says he has no intention of retiring. “There is so much to write about that I don’t plan to quit until my fingers break off in the computer keys,” he said. “And then I’ll try dictating.”

He has three children, six grandchildren and three great grandchildren. “I have to do a bit of math to keep track of progeny,” he jokes.

Eisenberg doesn’t attribute his longevity to genetics. “My mom only reached 62 and my dad his mid-70s,” he said. “But those were meat-and-potato days. You ate what tasted best, not what was good for you.”

Instead, he attributes his good health to prioritizing nutrition and taking vitamins. A healthy diet and regular exercise are two habits that Eisenberg attributes to hitting the 95+ mark. “Down with sugar and white flour,” he said. “The more colorful the food the better.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIRIAM HALPRIN

103-year-old Miriam Halprin enjoys a deli sandwich during her first outing since the coronavirus pandemic began says that she credits her long life to positive mental outlook, good genes, a good laugh and an extremely high degree of vanity.

“Always keep a positive attitude and a sense of humor.”

— Miriam Halprin



SMITH DAVIS PHOTOGRAPHY

Howard Eisenberg

Broccoli, spinach, asparagus, yams and low-fat, sugar-free ice cream are among the foods that he enjoys. “Of course, this is common sense, not prescription,” he said.

Inquisitiveness is a trait that Eisenberg advises younger generations to acquire. One of his regrets is not being bold enough to ask questions when he didn’t understand something in his youth.

“I joined my outfit as an infantry replacement and they gave me a bazooka, which I’d

only fired twice and that was in basic training, he said. “I didn’t remember how to shoot it but was sadly too embarrassed to ask guidance from one of the Battle of the Bulge seasoned veterans. Big mistake.”

“So when a machine gun nest stopped us and the captain shouted, ‘Bazooka up front,’ I was momentarily frozen in place,” continued Eisenberg. “The GI carrying bazooka rockets saved me. He turned and ran to the rear with the ammo and I had to chase and tackle him. By the time I got back with the ammo the machine gun was kaput.”

This experience taught him the value of seeking as much information as needed to gain the understanding necessary to complete a task.

“You may not carry a bazooka, but there will be many times at different stages in your life when you won’t know how to do something. Don’t be a shy guy or gal. Ask questions, ask questions, ask questions. Ask until you’re sure you understand. Then do it.”



PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Contractors prepare concrete forms over existing fair weather foot pads.

Trail Improvement at Pohick Stream Valley

A fair weather crossing improvement appeared in the Pohick Stream Valley near the Pohick maintenance road last month, installed by contractors for the Fairfax County Park Authority. No more like it are immediately planned as the County assesses the improvement’s safety and longevity, according to spokesperson Judith Pedersen.

— SUSAN LAUME



Stefie Pratt-Greene, sales representative, Springfield, and her 3 month old pup Levi give the newly completed crossing a paws up.

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.

HISTORY’S HAND: INVENTOR’S MIND

Designed for today’s inventors, innovators, and entrepreneurs, as well as history buffs and the intellectually curious, this interactive webinar series features several installments moderated by USPTO Historian Adam Bisno. He’s assembled a group of historians with great stories to tell about specific inventors, their patents, and the crucial role of invention in economic progress. The creative endeavor of inventing has existed since humankind first populated the earth. As individuals and teams, we have pursued innovation

as a means of addressing life’s challenges, big and small. This rich history of problem solving reveals some truly fascinating patterns and concepts that can delight and inform inventors of the modern day. Register now for one, several, or all of the sessions. The programs take place from 3 to 4 p.m. each Wednesday in June. You can see the schedule and register for the sessions here: <https://www.uspto.gov/about-us/events/historys-hand-inventors-mind>

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

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'Konjur' Jams for Community, Brotherhood

Springfield band headlines benefit for Moe's Peyton Place in July.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Moe's Peyton Place in Springfield has found itself suffering from an obscure location and a lessened crowd due to the pandemic, but in steps a local garage band called "Konjur," and things are looking up for both of them. Konjur is putting on shows at Moe's to bring in business, and band members eat there a few times a week, so it works for both of them - Moe's is providing the band a local venue for the jams too, so everyone is happy.

Moe, of Moe's, died a few months ago and his wife Mima is barely keeping the doors open, so Konjur stepped in a few times, including a show last Halloween.

"We really want to give back to the community," said singer/songwriter Joseph Mark Fields, who lives in Franconia right down the street where the band practices.

"When Covid hit, she was spiraling down," Fields added, noting they raised over \$2,000 on Halloween. "We had to play outside, we still had a big crowd," he said. That night in October, another friend chipped in and got the band a limousine to ride to the show in, so the band had their moment of fame, showing up in the limo like big name rock stars. "We had this grand entrance on the party bus, it was so cool, we thought we were rock stars," he added.

The five-member band is made up of "Shade," aka Anthony Rappaport, on guitar and songwriting, Matt Royfe on the drums, "Skully," aka Tyler DeButts, on the bass guitar, Joseph Mark Fields the singer, Christopher Dokken on guitar, and Jalen the band manager. They put out covers and originals in a jazz-funk-heavy metal motif. "Everyone has a hand in the song writing," added Jalen.

One of their hits, "Without Lines," can be described as a song with night-sweat terror



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

At one of the practices in Franconia, the five-member band is made up of "Skully," and "Shade," on left, Matt Royfe on the drums, and Joseph Mark Fields the singer. Christopher Dokken is also on guitar but he wasn't there for the practice.

vibes and a world of chaos, said Fields, while another song "Oh No," has a 1980s feel, and "Draft," is "more of a freestyle," Fields said. In fact, so free that the song name hasn't stuck yet. "We keep renaming it," Fields said. They also play some covers like "Rock You Like a Hurricane," by the Scorpions. There's an album in the works too.

"Any new songs, we shoot the breeze on the thoughts," Skully added.

The Scorpions' tune is categorized as '80s heavy metal, but they also do lighter covers], like "Pretty Woman," by Roy Orbison from the 1960s. "We don't shy away from lighter music," Fields said.

Band's Formation

Konjur got its start over the last couple of years

When & Where

Saturday, July 10, 6-9 p.m.
Konjur in Concert, benefit show for Moe's Peyton Place
6516 Backlick Road
Springfield

when the musicians just kind of stumbled into one another in an unofficial manner, and started jamming together. Now they are comfortable jamming into the rec room of their house in Franconia, shoving aside the collection of patch cords and used audio equipment, and coming up with music they will take on the road. "There's a brotherhood, a lot more than just a family, it doesn't stop with the band," Fields said

They all went to school around the Franconia area, and have jobs close by too. Fields works with the teenagers at Key

Middle School, the Browne Academy in Alexandria and Bush Hill Presbyterian Church. Shade teaches music and is involved with the Berklee College of Music, while Skully works off and on with Amazon, Royfe is a GMU student, and Dokken is a bartender.

They are in the process of doing a music video too, with a professional videographer. Band members have done all kinds of remote shots, and the producer will edit it so they end up on stage together for the last lick. "He has a whole vision," said Shade.

Later in June, they are doing another benefit for those locally impacted by the pandemic, and then they plan to travel, taking their show on the road. One place they mentioned was a place called "Hillbilly Heaven," in West Virginia.



Konjur and friends

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Legals

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PUBLIC NOTICE
 AT&T proposes to erect a new 20.4' metal light pole and install a top-mounted antenna at 26' near 13203 Custom House Ct, Fairfax, VA (20210641). Interested parties may contact Scott Horn (856-809-1202) (1012 Industrial Dr., West Berlin, NJ 08091) with comments regarding potential effects on historic properties.

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CALENDAR

OUR SPECIAL HARBOR OPENS

The Fairfax County Park Authority's Special Harbor spray park is now opened. This fully accessible Chesapeake-Bay-themed sprayground has water features such as a spraying osprey nest, Chessie the sea serpent, misting sunflowers and a lighthouse. The beach area allows for quieter play with softer bubblers and interactive water tables while the computerized water maze and dumping crab basket provide more lively activity. Located at Lee District Park at 6601 Telegraph Road, Franconia. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/recenter/lee-district/family-recreation-area>.

GOLF CAMPS

Join the nationwide resurgence of the lifelong game of golf. Laurel Hill Golf Club and Twin Lakes Golf Course are offering weeklong summer camps taught by professionals from The Eisman Golf Academy. Junior golfers ages 8-14 will learn and improve on golf fundamentals in a fun environment. Class sizes are limited for personalized instruction and camp includes on-course play. Also included are swag bags, hat, games and prizes. Camps will take place at Laurel Hill July 12-16, 2021; and at Twin Lakes on July 19-23, and Aug. 9-13, 2021. All camps run from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. To register, visit the Junior Golf Fairfax website.

Laurel Hill Golf Club is located at 8701 Laurel Hill Crest Drive in Lorton. Twin Lakes Golf Course is located at 6201 Union Mill Road in Clifton.

NOW THRU JULY 4

Paintings by Rich Moore. At the Loft Gallery, 33 Mill Street, Second Floor, Occoquan. "The skies proclaim the work of His hands." Psalm 19:1 showcases the artistry of versatile landscape oil painter, Rich Moore as he endeavors to reveal a unique glimpse into the magnificence and wonder of the "handiwork of God." Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Sunday, Noon-5 p.m. Online Facebook Live Artist's Reception: Friday, June 11, 2021 7:00 pm <https://www.facebook.com/loftgalleryoccoquan>.

JUNE 9-JULY 18

"Renewal." At The Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic, a satellite gallery sponsored by the Torpedo Factory Artists' Association, located

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 8

UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE 30, 2021 - VIRTUAL. History's Hand: Inventor's Mind

"Invention as a team effort: Nikola Tesla, his backer, his lawyer, and his boyfriend" will feature W. Bernard Carlson, Joseph L. Vaughan Professor of Humanities, Chair of the Engineering and Society Department, Professor of History, and Director of the Engineering Business Programs, University of Virginia.

SATURDAY/JUNE 26

Caregiver Support Group Discussion. 10-11 a.m. At The Providence, 9490 Sprague Ave., Fairfax. Need a time and place to connect with others caring for aging loved ones? Sandy Steeves, a Certified Dementia Practitioner at The Providence, will host a regular Caregiver Support Group Discussion every fourth Saturday from 10-11 a.m. This is a safe space to discuss issues, get advice and hear from others supporting seniors. To RSVP, contact Amanda Max at 571-396-0500 or email amax@watermarkcommunities.com.

FRIDAY/JULY 2

Fireworks at Workhouse. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. 5-10 p.m. (VIP) and 6 p.m. - 10 p.m. (Tail Gate Drive Through). The much beloved community event will be re-imagined and redesigned to better serve the community. The Fireworks will illuminate the surrounding landscape in an expertly choreographed display of dazzling pyrotechnic light and thunder.

SATURDAY/JULY 10

Konjur in Concert. 6-9 p.m. At Moe's Peyton

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in the Mosaic District shopping area at 2905 District Avenue, #105, Fairfax. Open Wednesday thru Sunday 11 - 7.

JUNE 24-JULY 2

Dante's Inferno. 8-10 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. The Workhouse Arts Center announces a walk-through performing arts experience inspired by Dante's Inferno presented in collaboration with the Next Reflect Dance Collective. This limited engagement event will be one of the first opportunities for audiences to experience the joy of performing arts in person in a safe outdoor environment. Tickets are \$25 each and will be sold at 15 minute intervals to ensure social distancing. Tickets will not be sold at the door and can be purchased in advance at www.workhousearts.org

FRIDAY/JULY 2

Fourth of July at Workhouse Arts Center. Get your early bird tickets until June 15th. Join them on Friday, July 2 for the Annual Workhouse Fireworks Event. The community event is re-imagined and redesigned to better serve the community. VIP Entertainment will feature the U.S. Navy Band and DJ Nose. Arrive early for other surprises between 5 and 6 p.m. Drive In Tail Gate Entertainment will include a visit from Uncle Sam, Julia the Balloon Twister, art demos and a performance by the famous Great Zucchini.

FAIRFAX STATION RAILROAD MUSEUM REOPENS

The Fairfax Station Railroad Museum is re-opening on Sunday, July 11, 2021, with a "Welcome Back" event from noon - 3 p.m. with free admission, tours and refreshments. Docents will provide tours featuring new exhibits. Young visitors can enjoy puzzles and other attractions. Museum members will discuss volunteer opportunities for those interested. For more information on volunteer opportunities, visit volunteers@fairfax-station.org or 703-425-9225. For questions about the Museum, visit information@fairfax-station.org. The Museum is located at 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Visit www.fairfax-station.org; 703-425-9225.

Place. Benefit Show at 6516 Backlick Road, Springfield.

FAIRFAX COUNTY ACTIVATES CORONAVIRUS INFO CENTER

Fairfax County activated a Joint Information Center in response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) on March 13.

Fairfax County Health Department COVID-19 webpage - www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/novel-coronavirus

Emergency Information Blog (you can subscribe by email or follow by RSS) - www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Call Center - The community may call 703-267-3511 with questions. The call center is open from 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends.

Residents may also text FFXCOVID to 888777 to receive updates from Fairfax County about COVID-19.

Twitter - @fairfaxcounty and @fairfaxhealth
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ONGOING

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

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Wait. What?



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

After each individual appointment with my oncologist, either virtual or in person; all my prescription needs and my next round of appointments are scheduled while I wait. Typically, my oncologist will ask me which days and times are convenient. Our cycle for such responses is every three months, after my quarterly scans. Since it's a regular routine, we've come to know our schedules three months in advance so we can make suitable and available arrangements - both medically and socially so as to not upset any previously scheduled apple carts. It's not that often that any non-cancer activities might conflict with a Wednesday morning in Gaithersburg. Nevertheless, scheduling is preferable to rescheduling. And since time is a wastin', there's no time like the present to smooth out any potential blips on the calendar.

When we were scheduling this week's on-site day at the facility back in March, we knew we were going to Montana this month. The original Wednesday, June 16, when I should have been scheduled for my scans, was not totally inconvenient but it was the day before we were leaving town. No problem. My health comes first so I was ready to okay the 16th. Then my doctor suggested that I wait a week, until the 23rd, the day after I will have arrived home, because he said "Nobody wants to get bad news before a vacation." It seemed the lesser of two evils so I decided on the 23rd. Then it hit me: "What bad news?" Not that I have been particularly symptomatic of late or have emailed my oncologist every step of the way. Hardly. But I can't believe my oncologist's suggestion was totally innocent. Though he most definitely meant well (he's always talking about quality of life), it unfortunately ruffled my feathers and got me thinking about results and consequences - and of course, life expectancy. And since bad news travels fast, I didn't see a point in speeding it up. Whatever will be will be and there's nothing I can do about any of it before my vacation which somehow affects my results after. If I've learned anything during these 12-plus years in the cancer world, it is that there's no need to hurry things along. Cancer works at its own pace and being flexible in the face of such imminent danger is the only way to roll.

But that's the dilemma us seriously ill/diagnosed patients experience. Do we delay the inevitable or do we naively hope for the best. I mean, how much respect do we give cancer? Somehow, we have to live our lives and occasionally "damn the torpedoes." And if we're not able to find a break in this very serious action, I imagine our wherewithal living forward might be adversely affected. Cancer has a way of getting under your skin (no pun intended) and then seeping into your subconscious. Before you know it, "the cancer" as "Forrest, Forrest, Gump" said will likely make you a very dull boy or a "dismal Jimmy" as the Brits say.

I chose to throw caution to the wind and live my life with the usual weight and not compound an already heavy burden by having my scan results emailed to me while I'm on vacation. I'm pretty good at compartmentalizing but I saw/see no reason to test my credentials. As a cancer patient, if I'm being honest/realistic, something bad could happen to me. I don't see any advantage to making matters worse, potentially, by forcing the issue.

I think why I'm focusing - and possibly over-reacting, to this presumptive unpleasantness, is that it hadn't ever been suggested to me before by my oncologist in quite this context. Oh sure, he's talked about my health and various percentages of survival but this last meeting, its directness caught me off guard. Sure we all laughed, but for a moment it raised the stakes and reminded me how fragile our existence is. I'm a very positive person so I can usually fend off most emotional trauma. In fact, the title of one of my earlier columns was "Positive About the Negative." And though I've been quite able to keep my "terminal" diagnosis in perspective, hearing "nobody wants to get bad news before a vacation" may be considerate to suggest, but some things are better left unsaid, especially to a cancer patient.

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

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