

CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Oak Hill Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

Jessica Gutierrez-Lugo (third from left) is a Community Organizer with Opportunity Neighborhoods. She is with youth at the Berkdale Apartment in the Town Herndon, where in partnership with nonprofit Cornerstones, a Pfizer vaccine and Family Fun Day was held, bringing the immunization to the doorsteps of community members.



Removing Vaccination Barriers

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OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10

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AUGUST 4-10, 2021

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Back to School

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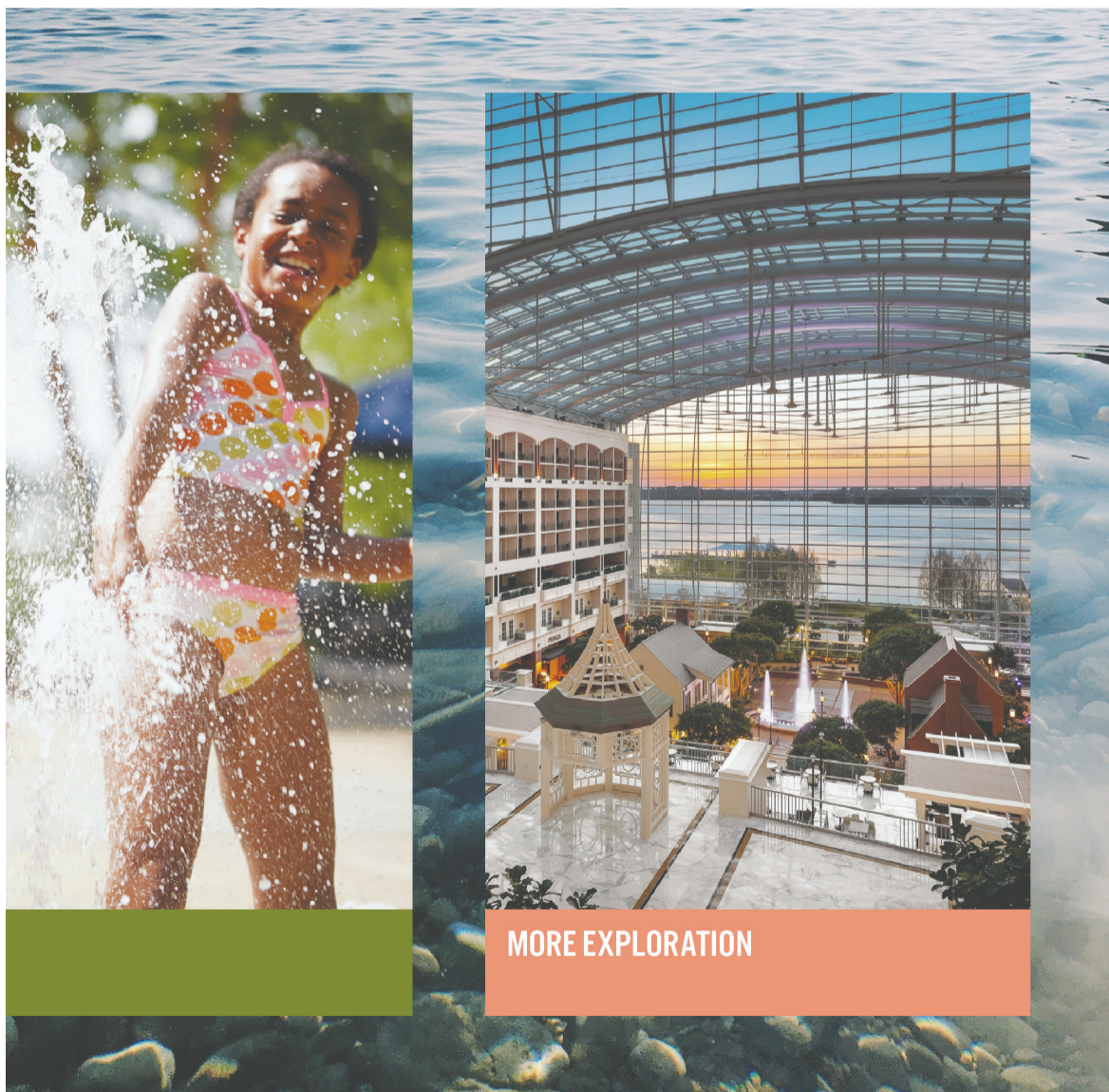
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Food trucks, raffles, and games make getting the COVID vaccine fun and allows people not to travel distances or find child/elderly care.

RECEIVED AT LEAST ONE COVID-19 VACCINE DOSE*

757,376

Count

76.1% of people 18 years and older

64.0% of all Fairfax Health District residents

* People vaccinated with one dose of a two-dose vaccine or one dose of a single dose vaccine.

FULLY VACCINATED**

686,784

Count

69.5% of people 18 years and older

58.0% of all Fairfax Health District residents

** People vaccinated with two doses of a two-dose vaccine or one dose of a single dose vaccine.

All vaccination data are from the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) - Virginia Immunization Information System. Numbers differ from the VDH vaccination dashboard, which reports data separately for Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church.

As of Aug. 1, 2021. 64 percent of All Fairfax Health Districts residents received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose and 58 percent of all Fairfax Health District residents are fully vaccinated.

Delta Variant Has Room to Run Rampant

Removing invisible vaccine barriers for communities in Fairfax County.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Jump on a moon bounce, grab an empanada from a food truck and get a Covid vaccine. That's right. The Fairfax County community is scrambling on multiple fronts in a war against Covid's Delta variant as the County recorded 124 new Covid cases Sunday, Aug. 1. The County is doing whatever it takes to increase the number of vaccinated to reach the gold medal of herd immunity. Fairfax Health District reported on Aug. 1, 58 percent of all Fairfax County Health District residents were fully vaccinated; 64 percent received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose.

Some local agencies are easing the way for people to receive on-site vaccinations at places like their apartment complexes and holding vaccine and family fun days. Some individuals are masking up indoors to protect others and themselves. New data released on July 30 in the UVA COVID-19 Model provided by the University of Virginia Biocomplexity Institute and released by the Virginia Department of Health and the CDC's data made public the same day on the spread of the Delta variant are causing concern.

According to the UVA model, the key take-aways are that the Delta variant poses a "significant public health concern" based on the current course of the pandemic. The Delta variant is dominant in Virginia, seeing case growth with 10 of 35 Health Districts experiencing surges. One reason for the surge is

that the Delta variant has room to run primarily among unvaccinated people. Vaccination rates are still below herd immunity levels, and many Virginians are returning to normal.

ON FRIDAY, the CDC released evidence that the Delta variant was easily contagious and those vaccinated less protected than they may think. Vaccinated people infected with the Delta variant carry similar viral loads in their noses and throats as the unvaccinated. While they can spread the disease, they are rarely hospitalized.

Delta is here, though, in Fairfax County. The UVA model reports over 70 percent of all new COVID-19 cases in the Commonwealth as the Delta variant and predicts this figure will reach 90 percent by mid-August.

The Delta variant is considerably more transmissible and causes more severe cases than prior variants. Studies suggest that it may be nearly "twice as likely to cause illness requiring hospitalization compared to earlier variants...Delta is also more likely to cause reinfections in those who have previously had COVID-19 and recovered," according to the UVA COVID-19 Model Weekly update.

Vaccines remain the best defense against the Delta variant to reduce the risk of infection and severe disease. While the Delta variant is "more capable of causing breakthrough infections in fully vaccinated individuals than prior strains... confidence in the efficacy of these vaccines remains high," according to the UVA model. People who do get infected are less likely to experience severe illness requiring hospitalization. "The vaccinated individual may feel few or no symptoms of illness, but still be infectious to others," according to the UVA model.

On July 27, the CDC issued guidance if a person is fully vaccinated, "to reduce the risk of being infected with the Delta variant

and possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission." According to the CDC, new data shows that unlike other Covid variants, people vaccinated and infected with the Delta variant can still get high viral loads and could spread the virus.

"Unlike the Alpha variant that we had back in May, where we didn't believe that

if you were vaccinated, you could transmit further, this is different now with a Delta variant," CDC Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said.

Jessica Gutierrez-Lugo is a Community Organizer with Opportunity Neighborhoods. On Saturday, July 31, Gutierrez-Lugo helped manage a Healthy Family Fun Day with a
SEE BARRIERS, PAGE 5

Fairfax County Holds County-wide Vaccine Equity Clinics

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Bringing the COVID-19 vaccine to the people rather than relying on them to find their way to a site is one option to get people vaccinated and slow the surging Delta variant.

In May 2021, the Fairfax County Health Department began to review vaccination data across the county regularly. "Using land parcel population estimates and vaccination data, our epidemiologists have identified some neighborhoods that are under-vaccinated," said Sharon D. Arndt, Director & ALOFR COVID19 Response High Risk Task Force Leader Community Health Development Division Fairfax County Health Department.

"Working with community partners and residential management companies, we have established pop-up clinics in many of these neighborhoods to offer the vaccine and to improve vaccination rates," Arndt said.

"We have recently begun to deploy vaccine navigation teams to neighbor-

hoods to help connect residents to nearby vaccine appointments that can be found on staywellnova.com," she added.

According to Arndt, their Vaccine Equity Clinics began in early February. They held clinics in FCPS schools, community centers, board offices, libraries, retail space, homeless shelters, houses of worship, and residential management companies.

"We work with different anchor vaccinators to deliver the vaccine - such as Safeway, Neighborhood Health FQHC [Federal Qualified Health Center], Mason and Partners Clinic, Healthworks FQHC [Federal Qualified Health Center], and the Health Department's own field vaccination team," said Arndt.

Specific for the in-the residential-neighborhood vaccine events, Arndt said they held neighborhood clinics in the Mt. Vernon area at the Audubon, Creekside, and Lafayette communities; Lincolnian area at Lerner Towers; Springfield area with Springfield Neighborhood Resource Center; Herndon area at Berkdale Apartments; and Chantilly area at Meadows of Chantilly.

TJ Parents Welcome Most Diverse TJ Class in History

... and denounce the anti-CRT division.

We are parents of students and graduates of Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJ), and are greatly concerned about recent events and growing misinformation surrounding the changes to the admissions process and anti-racism discussions at the prestigious school we love and respect.

We, TJ parents, have a wide variety of opinions about the particulars of the TJ admissions policy and procedures; there are likely as many opinions on the “ideal” admissions policy for TJ as there are parents, students, and alumni, but we believe in working together, coming to a compromise, and finding resolution.

Most importantly, while some members of the community have spoken loudly and negatively, we here all agree that the members of the newly announced incoming Class of 2025 fully earned their acceptances to the school, and we look forward to welcoming them all into our community. Although some of us did not agree with how

the admissions changes were handled, we are pleased that this new class is the most diverse class in TJ history, with a majority of Asian American students and a substantial increase in the number of historically underrepresented minorities.

This is about TJ maintaining academic excellence while being more open and inclusive, promoting social emotional learning, and preparing our students for 21st century skills like teamwork and critical thinking. It’s also about including students from low-income families, which will represent 25 percent of the incoming class, as opposed to the usual 2 percent. We wholeheartedly believe that this increased diversity will enrich our school community even more and we welcome the Class of 2025 with open arms.

We also feel strongly that many of the actions and words of members of the “Coalition for TJ” have inflamed, distorted, and confused the issues, often alienating the community. The Coalition has for months now waged a divisive, false, and negative campaign, insisting that any changes are “anti-merit,” “racist,” and specifically designed to “purge Asians,” as one of its most outspoken members declared in a recent Washington Post Op-Ed.

The Coalition leaders’ many appearances in numerous me-

dia outlets have made them the public face of TJ parents—but they absolutely do not represent our community. They have used these platforms to make constant calls for the resignation or firing of the school’s principal and FCPS superintendent, and for the recall of members of the School Board. This spring, the Coalition became synonymous with the campaign against so-called “critical race theory,” and its proponents have even targeted our school’s PTSA and want it to be fully engaged in the “fight against CRT.” False and cruel attacks were launched against the new PTSA president — who notably was the first Chinese-American president of the TJ PTSA — because she wanted the PTSA to focus on its usual student-centered and welcoming activities for students, parents, teachers, and staff — regardless of anyone’s political views — rather than on CRT and admissions changes. Who would have imagined that that would become controversial? These toxic attacks finally led her to resign on July 28.

Why is this fight at TJ relevant to the rest of Fairfax County and perhaps the rest of our region? Because TJ is the proverbial canary in the coal mine. The demonization and manipulative weaponizing of “CRT” by Coalition leaders, conveyed in a manner which does not promote unity, and combined

with their bullying and censoring tactics, are clearly attempts to silence alternative views and crush efforts to promote diversity and belonging. This in turn threatens to tear our school community apart, which is the complete opposite mission of a school PTSA. That same toxic playbook is already happening in Loudoun County, with School Board meetings so contentious police have had to be called in. The attempted hijacking and perversion of an institution that historically has enabled volunteer parents of all political stripes to work together in support of our students and teachers — the PTSA — needs to be contested and reversed. We hope more parents in Northern Virginia will come to recognize and push back on the divisive tactics we are experiencing at TJ, because only together can we demand civility, and ensure the safe, tolerant, inclusive, and welcoming schools all our students deserve.

Brian Anderson, Caiyi Li, Justine Byun, Natalie Lorenz Anderson, Kate Carey, Elaine Maag, Steve Chang, Chaya Thyagaraja Merrill, Dana Cibulski, Sujatha Narayan, Julie Cox, Parvathi Rachakonda, Penny Dunlop, Yvette Soliz Rivers, Susan Essman, Dorian Rivers, Michelle Gilles, Chris Rodriguez, Brian Heller, Sanjita Sethi, Stacey Heller, Mae Ybanez-Uy, Khurram Khan and Yan Yuan.

COVID Relief

BY KENNETH R. “KENN” PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)



Plum

The General Assembly is meeting this week and possibly a few days next week to appropriate the federal COVID-Relief fund made available through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). It is somewhat ironic that these funds are being appropriated at the same time there is a surge in infections mainly from the Delta variant and almost totally among eligible persons who have refused to be vaccinated.

ARPA made \$9.0 billion in federal funds available to Virginia and similar amounts to other states based on the guidelines that accompanied the monies. Although these are federal monies they must be appropriated by the General

Assembly in a budget bill passed by a majority in both houses and signed by the governor. HB7001 as the budget bill is designated is available for review at lis.virginia.gov. You should know in advance that it is some heavy going that might be best as bedside reading.

Included in ARPA are monies for State and Local Fiscal Relief Funds (SLFR) that total \$4.3 billion for Virginia. Other federal funds that are provided for specific programs include Child Care Development, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Block Grants and federal unemployment benefits. There are no state general funds that are included in this budget bill as the General Assembly will meet again in five months at its regular session when surplus monies from state revenues will be appropriated. The budget bill is a consensus document worked on over many weeks among legislators and staff

and executive branch staff and is not likely to be amended.

Highlights of the budget bill, many of which have already been announced by the governor, include \$716 billion for broadband expansion. The pandemic demonstrated conclusively that broadband is essential to everyone in commerce and in education when children have to learn at home. Schools will receive \$250 million for ventilation improvements that became obvious during the pandemic.

Public health initiatives total \$120 million, and programs of public safety to reduce community violence will receive \$114.5 million. Mental health and substance abuse programs are proposed to receive \$238 million. The unemployment compensation program will be replenished with \$862 million eliminating the need to raise unemployment fund tax rates among employers. An additional \$73.6 is being provided to the Virginia Employment Commission to update their technology and increase their staff size as major

deficiencies were identified and citizens were poorly served during the pandemic.

Food access programs will receive \$25.6 million to ensure that Virginians do not go hungry during these challenging times. Small businesses including the tourism industry will be able to apply for relief from a fund totaling \$76.5 million. New data from the U.S. Treasury shows that Virginia leads all other states on the distribution of rent relief monies, and that program will continue.

While these new monies from the federal government will provide relief to many citizens and to many programs that respond to community needs, the ultimate in COVID relief rests with the broader community. I do not expect that the legislature will mandate vaccinations or the wearing of masks. Both, however, may be the best way to realize relief from the ravages of pandemic. Let’s work in our community to ensure that all know the importance of getting vaccinated and wearing masks in crowds.

Let’s work in our community to ensure that all know the importance of getting vaccinated and wearing masks in crowds.



NWFCU Foundation Back to School Drive In-Progress for 2021

Powerful change force for local at-promise students.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Northwest Federal Credit Union (NWFCU) Foundation is heading into the final weeks of their Back to School Drive 2021. It runs through Aug. 15. The Foundation, the philanthropic arm of NWFCU set a stretch collection goal of 43,000 items. “Before, we’d expect 4,000 to 6,000 school supply items,” said Mary Kaye “Kaycee” Childress, the Foundation’s Executive Director. She said during the early need days of COVID, the Foundation found, when they took their drives to Amazon and started reaching out to people, the number of items donated to their drives “exploded.”

“The number one focus of our drive is Dogwood Elementary School in Reston,” said Childress. “We have a long-standing relationship working with them...[We] said, tell us what you need.”

Dogwood is a Title I funded school based on the percent of low-income students. According to Fairfax County Public Schools, “the elementary schools with the highest level of poverty receive funding that is used for positions and resources to meet the needs of their students.”



(From left) Executive Director of the NWFCU Foundation, Mary Kaye “Kaycee” Childress, Program/Fundraising Coordinator of the NWFCU Foundation, Karen Foust, and Program/Fundraising Coordinator of the NWFCU Foundation Jordan Fleger.

Childress said that the Foundation is striving first to fill the vital need of all school supplies for students at Dogwood. Items left over will go to other schools. “We try to focus our different programs on different schools to spread the wealth,” said Childress. One hundred percent of the Foundation’s donations go directly to support the drive, she added.

People can donate items for the many local “at-promise” children in two ways. They can stop in the NWFCU branch locations or donate items through the Foundation’s online Back to School Supply Drive Wish List available through Amazon. People can also make financial donations securely processed by the Foundation’s non-profit partner, Network for Good at NWFCU Foundation - Donate.

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Masks are the norm.

BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Removing Vaccination Barriers

FROM PAGE 3

moon bounce, games, food trucks, and raffles at the Berkdale Apartments in the Town of Herndon. However, the event’s purpose was an enticement, an intentional outreach to the community enabling adults and children 12 years and older with parental permission to get vaccinated. No barriers, no travel, no child care needed.

“We are providing the Pfizer vaccine. This is a collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health, Fairfax County Health Department, and Health Works for Northern Virginia,” Gutierrez-Lugo said. “In this area of Herndon, the numbers for adults to be vaccinated are very low. So, we are trying a more intentional outreach in these communities.”

According to Gutierrez-Lugo, what they did before didn’t work, registering people to send them to sites on a particular day and time. Many of the people in this part of town worked two jobs while balancing childcare, eldercare, food-sourcing, and life. If something happened, that became their priority, not the vaccine.

“It’s just not our culture. We are in survival mode,” Gutierrez-Lugo said.

In her role with Opportunity Neighborhood, Gutierrez-Lugo recalled that she had asked people if they were vaccinated in June. For most, the answer was no, but they were thinking about it. “I asked them if the vaccine was available to them at their apartment complex would they get it, their answer changed to yes,” Gutierrez-Lugo said. “That’s when we decided something had to change... This is what we have to do so that we can get out of this pandemic.”

GUTIERREZ-LUGO said that the day before, a twelve-year-old agreed to get the vaccine. On Saturday, she stood in line, without her mother, paper in

hand, excited to get immunized because she was going to middle school. However, when told she needed her mother there for permission, she felt overwhelmed and ran back to Gutierrez-Lugo, saying, “It’s too much. I can’t do it. Mom needs to be with Grandma.” Gutierrez-Lugo arranged for one of the Opportunity Neighborhood ambassadors to stay with the grandmother. The mother arrived, and the young girl received her vaccination.

“It’s barriers like that for our people, even little barriers. It’s just overwhelming, and she’s twelve. Maybe for you, maybe for me, we can overcome the barriers. But not for these people who have been through trauma more than once in their lives, and they are survivors. Little things like that, it’s just overwhelming,” Gutierrez-Lopez said. “We have to carry these communities until they are self-sufficient until they are empowered. Just a little push, that’s all they need.”

On the day after the event, Gutierrez-Lopez said, “Only 42 people vaccinated. We ran out of vaccines, sadly. At least 20 people didn’t get the vaccine; they were referred to CVS.”

Town of Herndon Vice Mayor Cesar del Aguila stopped by the Berkdale Apartments. According to del Aguila, the event’s intentional outreach to a community primarily under-served and struggling appeared a success. “Vaccinations are critical, and this population is at greater risk and therefore in much need of these services. Schools open in three weeks, and we must vaccinate as many residents as possible,” del Aguila said. “We need to bridge the cultural, economic, and income divide in our town,” he said.

A little over a mile in the sought-after historic district of the Town of Herndon, vehicles lined up throughout the morning, waiting for COVID-19 testing.

Raising the Money ‘for Kids Who Don’t Have Homes’

To the Editor:

I’d like to inform you of a phenomenal little girl named Thia, 4 years old, who asked her mother to make lemonade to raise money “for kids who do not have homes.” Her mother, Katie Brown, reached out to me and asked whether my children, Solomon (5) and Bella (4), would like to join her. We were able to get our communities involved in lending us materials and equipment to pull off this last minute lemonade and cookie stand on Sunday, July 11, from the Reston’s Buy Nothing Group to The Wharf neighborhood.

It was amazing to see so many people come out and support Thia’s wishes to raise funds for her cause. Her father even put on a squid suit in 90 degrees temperature to draw more attention at the intersection of Glade and Timberhead. The love from the Reston communities and surrounding areas is astounding. The children were able to raise \$533.10 and donations are still coming in as we speak. All proceeds to benefit Cornerstones.

Esther Fausett
Reston



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NEWS

Memorial Ride Highlights Need to Improve Safety

Cars need to share the roads with walkers and bikers.

By MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Bicyclists in Centreville are getting together next weekend to remember Raymond Gerard Buza, who was killed by a driver while riding his bike at Hidden Canyon Rd and Blueridge View Dr on May 21, in the Centreville section of Fairfax County. Buza's death is among a number of bicyclists and pedestrians killed in Fairfax County recently, signaling a need for additional infrastructure improvements and speed enforcement to make it safer throughout Fairfax County.

In Buza's case, the cyclist had the right of way and the driver should have seen the approaching cyclist, said Bruce Wright, of FABB. The speed limit on that road is 25 mph and traffic volume is low, and the Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling noted that there's a lot of bike traffic in that area. "Most people would feel very safe riding there. I can only assume that the motorist was either distracted, or speeding, or both," Wright said, suggesting that police enforcing the speed limits would help.

Weeks following the fatal collision, the driver, Teresa Young, 55, of Centreville, was charged with "infliction of injury on vulnerable road user" on June 3, the police said.

Following that crash, there were two more traffic fatalities in Tysons and in Lorton. On Sunday, July 25 at 11:05 p.m. on Chain Bridge Road at the intersection of International Drive in Tysons, detectives determined Jose Matias Monjaras, 61, of Falls Church, was crossing Chain Bridge Road at the intersection of International Drive without the right of way. The driver of a 2015 Toyota Corolla was traveling north on Chain Bridge Road through a green light and struck Monjaras in the intersection. The driver remained at the scene. After life saving efforts, Monjaras succumbed to his injuries. Preliminarily, speed and alcohol do not appear to be

Memorial Ride for Raymond Gerard Buza

The Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling is hosting a memorial ride on Saturday Aug. 7 at 10 a.m. in honor of Raymond Gerard Buza, who was killed by a driver while riding his bike at Hidden Canyon Rd and Blueridge View Dr on May 21, in Centreville. Riders will gather at Virginia Run Elementary School located at 15450 Martins Hundred Dr, ride approximately a mile to the site of the crash for a moment of remembrance and hear from speakers.



The Raymond Gerard Buza ghost bike is a reminder to all that pass the site to be wary of bicyclists.

factors for the driver, police said.

In Lorton, the Crash Reconstruction Unit continues to investigate a fatal crash that occurred Friday, July 30 at 9:15 p.m. in the 8100 block of Lorton Road. Preliminarily, detectives determined Marco Antonio Galeas Sr., 55, of Alexandria, was crossing mid-block on Lorton Road near the I-95 overpass, outside of a crosswalk. The driver of a 2010 Nissan Altima was traveling east on Lorton Road in the center lane and struck Galeas Sr. The driver remained at the scene. Galeas Sr. was taken to the hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

Infrastructure Changes Coming

Teresa Young was charged for the Buza death under a bill that FABB and Senator Scott Surovell (D-36) put on the books titled "§ 46.2-816.1. Careless driving and infliction of injury on vulnerable road users;" which makes it a Class 1 misdemeanor to operate a motor vehicle in a careless or distracted manner such that the careless or distracted operation is the proximate cause of serious bodily injury as defined in § 18.2-51.4.

FABB is hoping the county and VDOT will work with police to investigate where bike crashes occur and develop ways to make the locations safer. They may be in luck this time due to the concentration on safety for the latest infrastructure bill the U.S. Senate and House in early August.

Surovell is introducing legislation this session to create a dedicated fund to pay for bike and pedestrian projects that are not connected to road widenings, he said. "We also need to continue to modernize our laws, invest in transit and transit oriented development, and raise awareness and continue to fight distracted driving," Surovell added. "Many drivers continue to have a sense of entitlement and active hostility to sharing the road with the vulnerable."

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Sill Bedridden in Burtonsville



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Though not nearly so much as last week. Improving for sure, but "slowly and painfully," as the Emergency Room doctor predicted. "Weeks, not months," she replied in response to our "How long?" question. Now back to Gate A17 in Houston:

"Would you mind if I said a healing prayer for you?" I looked over at Dina, and we both said "No, not at all." The lady, Solange was her name, motioned for a male companion standing a few feet away to come over to where she and I were sitting. She explained to him the reason and within a few seconds, they both began praying for me. Though their words were not identical, they both invoked "God, Jesus Christ, the father, his children, died on the cross" and so forth for about 15 seconds in a sincere attempt to heal my burns. After her companion walked away, I looked back over to her and said: "Actually, my feet are not the worst problem I have. I have cancer." Which prompted her, this time alone, to invoke similarly powerful references on my behalf. When she completed her healing, we both thanked her. She asked if we lived in Houston and told us of her church where healing, as I witnessed today, is a regular element and she assured me that some of her fellow parishioners have been healed. Who am I to question the power of God? Nobody, that's who. Praise the Lord and pass the perocet.

Now I'm sort of looking forward to my next recurring quarterly scan scheduled for mid-September to see what happens. My last few scans have been characterized as "stable." Shrinkage would be a change and a welcome one at that. However, after being given a terminal, stage IV non small cell lung cancer diagnosis in Feb. 2009 with a "13 month to two year" prognosis, 12 and one half years later, I have learned to embrace "stable." It may not cure, but neither will it kill. Nor is it ideal, but it's a living for which I'm extremely grateful.

Anyway, back to real-time. It's now a bit more than two weeks since "the burning." I am sort of ambulatory but only by using a "walker," and infrequently as possible. The more I stay off my feet, the less damage I will do to the skin as it heals from the inside out; the main reason the recovery is so slow and arduous. But I am able to "walker" now to my in-home office from my den where I've been laid up, literally, approximately 30 feet, where I can access my desktop computer and type this column, email and on-line bank, et cetera; a distance which would have been too painful to 'walker' even a few days ago. So yes, progress indeed.

In an odd confluence of circumstances, ever since I burned my two soles, I haven't really thought much about my underlying, overriding condition: cancer. "The burning" seems to have taken over my subconscious. Rather than compound the daily grind of living with cancer, the burns and subsequent at-home care have done just the opposite: they replaced whatever medical preoccupation I had/have about my cancer with the difficulties and challenges caused by these second degree burns. In a weird way, it's been an easier last few weeks, emotionally, as so much of my focus and treatment has been on this new/ temporary problem instead of the existing permanent one: stage IV, papillary thyroid cancer. I wouldn't say it's been a relief and certainly not a reprieve, but it's definitely been a break in the action, if you know what I mean? Nevertheless, I'll be happy when I'm back to abnormal and can walk again without any assistance. And the next time I'm at the beach, I'll be the one wearing sneakers and socks all day. You can be sure I won't walk barefoot ever again.

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



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Cover, "Hooray for Herndon" by Charles Mauro/2022 Town of Herndon Calendar Competition Winner.

2022 Town of Herndon Calendar Winners Revealed

View photos 24/7, Arts Herndon Window Gallery & online.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The 13 Winners of the 11th Annual Town of Herndon Calendar Competition, produced by the town's Communications Office with acknowledgment to Arts Herndon, are announced. Judged by established photography expert, artist, and curator Oscar Vigano the winning photographs capture the small town's character and people in everyday life. Vigano selected photos that demonstrated the highest quality and composition while telling the town's story.

"Hooray for Herndon" by Charles Mauro wins Cover for the 2022 Calendar and Town Service Guide. Mauro captured the image of a young girl performing a split leap off a park bench with the town's iconic Red Caboose in the background.

Judge Vigano, who hails from Argentina, is an acclaimed New York comic illustrator and founder and president of Artcofair, Artists Coalition of Fairfax. The images Vigano chose as winners depict the breadth of photography taken within the town limits. They are perspectives of everyday life seen through camera lens-, presented in interesting points of view, as the winning shot, "The Arc of W&OD" by Devanshu Saxena.

"I was walking on the Sugarland Run Trail when I saw this amazing photo opportunity. The reflection of the bridge in the water looked perfect and could be seen clearly," said Saxena.

Winner Stephanie Frye saw

several firefighters out one day at Herndon, Station 4, cleaning a fire truck. She wanted to get a photo of them with her dog Chief, to thank the firefighters for their hard work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and recognize them in the Town Calendar. "I can't imagine the stress first responders had on top of it just being a stressful year," she said.

"Over 60 excellent photographs were submitted to the competition this year..., held virtually for a second time due to conditions caused by the pandemic," said Jo Ormesher, President and CEO of Arts Herndon.

The thirteen winning images, the cover photo, and the twelve-monthly images compete in the People's Choice Award. Anyone can vote for the award online at www.artsherndon.org. The Town of Herndon 2022 Calendar and Town Services Guide is distributed in December to almost 25,000 residences and businesses in Herndon.

According to Ormesher, the exhibit for the 2022 Town of Herndon Calendar Photography Show Winners is displayed at the Arts Herndon Window Gallery, viewable outdoors at 725 Center Street, Herndon Aug. 1-Aug. 31. The exhibit for the 2022 Winners and Finalists is on display at a virtual gallery viewable at www.ArtsHerndon.org.

In another pandemic change, the Mayor of the Town of Herndon and Councilmembers will host the 2022 Calendar Launch Celebration in December.

Winners, the People's Choice Awardee, finalists, individuals fea-

tured in the photographs, and their families and friends are invited. Watch for invitations closer to December. For further details on the 2022 Herndon Calendar Winners and Finalists, visit Arts Herndon at ArtHerndon.org or call 703 956-6590.

Winners

"Hooray for Herndon" by Charles Mauro/2022 Town of Herndon Calendar Competition Winner, Cover

"A Snowy Walk in Runnymede" by Mike Madigan/2022 Town of Herndon Calendar Competition Winner, January

"A Hometown Welcome" by Richard Sharkey/ 2022 Town of Herndon Calendar Competition Winner, February

"Edwardstone Paint Out" by Elizabeth Mathews/2022 Town of Herndon Calendar Competition Winner, March

"Good Bread Buddies" by Coco Buck/2022 Town of Herndon Calendar Competition Winner, April

"Twelfth Night on The Lawn" by Namir Tubia/2022 Town of Herndon Calendar Competition Winner, May

"We've done it ... Graduation!" by Julia Evans/2022 Town of Herndon Calendar Competition Winner, June

"Summer Cerulean Skies" by KT Lambert /2022 Town of Herndon Calendar Competition Winner, July

"Night Out" by Jay Choi /2022 Town of Herndon Calendar Competition Winner, August

"A Rocking Storytime Evening" by Mercia Hobson /2022 Town of Herndon Calendar Competition Winner, September

"Herndon's Heroes" by Stephanie Frye/2022 Town of Herndon Calendar Competition Winner, October

"The Arc of W&OD" by Devanshu Saxena/ Winner, November

"Wreaths Across America" by Jack Ledgerwood/ Winner, December



PHOTOS BY KENT PANKRATZ

Back row Scouts from left: Josiah Park, Glen Pankratz, Andrew Ewell, Chase Marvin, Eshan Hussain, Alex Trent, Jimmy Bonta-Reavis, Ty Kirkwood, Aiden Hoffmeier, and Joshua Bonta-Reavis. Adults from left are Kent Pankratz, Kevin Trent, Jenae Grader, Jeff Reavis, and Dan Marvin.

Centreville Scouts Win Troop of the Week Award

Under the leadership of Senior Patrol Leader Eshan Hussain, ten Scouts from Troop 30 of Centreville attended Goshen Scout Reservation's Camp Olmsted from 11-17 July 2021 and earned Troop of the Week Award among the seven troops that attended. The award was based on demonstrating outstanding scout spirit in camp-wide competitions and earning points during daily campsite inspections. The scouts earned a total of 39 merit badges and completed a service project to help maintain camp cleanliness of the area near the pit used for a game called Gaga Ball. Scouts, Eshan Hussain and Ty Kirkwood stayed at Camp Olmsted as Counselors-in-Training, and one scout, Dominik Ohnstad, is spending his entire summer running the Shotgun Merit

Badge range in nearby Camp Marriott. Scouts Eshan Hussain and Glen Pankratz both participated in a high-adventure ATV program and earned safety certifications.

Five adults also attended all week to provide general guidance and to ensure health and safety for the boys. Scouts in Troop 30 attend Centreville and Bull Run Elementary Schools, Stone and Liberty Middle Schools, Centreville and Westfield High Schools, and several are home-schooled. Troop 30 is known for its small-town community feel and is chartered by Centreville Presbyterian Church. Come check out Troop 30, which has been shaping boys into men of character and self-sufficiency since 1999. <https://www.troopwebhost.org/Troop30Centreville/Index.htm>



From left: Eshan Hussain, Dominik Ohnstad, and Glen Pankratz.