

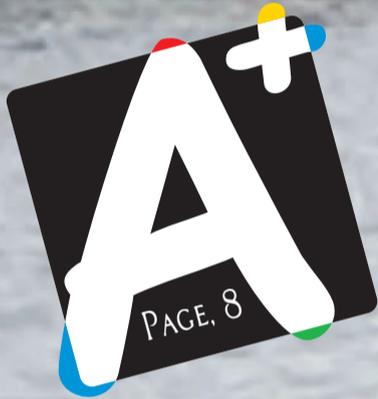
# CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Herndon ♦ <sup>Oak Hill</sup> Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

## Waving Goodbye To Summer

NEWS, PAGE 5

The Tekle family -- Tadd, Kalkidan, and daughter Eliana, 6, and Jonathan, 5 -- on Lake Anne in Reston wave goodbye to summer.



## Real Estate Market: Best Ever

NEWS, PAGE 5

## The Best Shot: Vax Up !

BACK TO SCHOOL, PAGE 3

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## COMMENTARY

# Changing Face of Virginia

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

The results of the 2020 U.S. Census remind us that the world around us changes in more ways than we might consciously detect or understand. That small sliver of the world known as Virginia has undergone many changes before and after receiving its name.

For many, the history of Virginia started with the English landing at Jamestown in 1607. Humans inhabited the land area of what is now known as Virginia for 15,000 to 20,000 years before the English arrived. Its first inhabitants probably crossed the glaciers at the now Bering Straits and made their way along the edges of the glaciers down river valleys and probably entered what is now Virginia in its southwestern area. Archaeological findings support this explanation of the settling of Virginia.

At the time English colonists arrived in the spring of 1607, Virginia was inhabited by the Powhatan Indians, who had a total population of about 13,000 to 14,000 with a rich history of culture and traditions and a government of 30-some tribal groups. With aggressive English expansion throughout the state the number of Indians in Virginia was but a fraction of the number at its highest point and with the Racial Integrity Act of 1924 were eliminated from official statistics. Adding to the original settlers were thousands of enslaved Black persons who were brought here without their consent.

The census report released last week paints a different face for Virginia. The country passed two milestones on its way to becoming a majority-minority

society in the coming decades: For the first time, the portion of white people dipped below 60 percent, slipping from 63.7 percent in 2010 to 57.8 percent in 2020. And the under-18 population is now majority people of color, at 52.7 percent.

Between the 2010 census and the new census, Virginia's population grew by 7.9 percent, slightly higher than the national growth rate of 7.4 percent. Virginia remains the 12th most populous state.

Fairfax County is now the second most racially diverse county in Virginia and is now a majority-minority population following Prince William County. While white residents remain the largest racial or ethnic group in the county, they are no longer the majority, making up 47.1 percent of the overall population with 542,001 residents — a drop of nearly 50,000 people from 2010, when the county's 590,622 white residents constituted 54.6 percent of its population. Compared to the rest of the United States, Fairfax County ranked 42nd out of 3,143 counties in the country on the racial and ethnic diversity index of the 2020 Census.

This new face of Virginia as identified in census results will be redistricted at the federal, state and local levels. Virginia will retain eleven seats in the House of Representatives, but the boundaries of the districts will be redrawn by the General Assembly to reflect shifts in populations. Likewise, House of Delegates and State Senate seats will be drawn by a commission approved by the voters last year to reflect population shifts. That Commission has already been hard at work holding public hearings throughout the state. Local governments will redistrict themselves.

Even before official counts until today we can trace a different face for Virginia.

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## The Best Shot: Vax Up!

County families and educators discuss COVID-19 School Year 2021-22.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

The first day of the much anticipated, in-person return to school for SY2021-22 looms for many families, friends, and educators in Fairfax County's independent, public and home-based education systems. The question of whether to mask up or not is now off the table given State Health Commissioner, M. Norman Oliver, MD, MA pursuant to §§ 32.1-13 and 32.1-20 of the Code of Virginia, issued a mandate in the form of public health order. He cited that the public health emergency due to COVID-19 continued to exist and required all individuals aged two and older to wear masks when indoors at public and private K-12 schools to inhibit the spread of the virus, as recommended and described by the CDC. Exceptions were noted in the Order.

Educators can now focus on student mental health, learning loss, credit recovery, and achievement gap mitigation, but only if learning does not unhinge due to COVID-19. Virginia Department of Health stated on its website, "Vaccination is the most important public health action to end the pandemic."

The Connection opened a discussion about the vaccine and education to those who walk the front line, educators, families, and alumni, to gain their insights while balancing comments with data and science.

**RETIRE FCPS TEACHER** Ron Goad urged others to get vaccinated. He was "appalled to know" some of his friends were vaccine-hesitant or refused to get it. He hoped that COVID vaccines for students would be the crucial panacea to keep schools open as the virus bears down in a fourth wave forecasted to increase in Fairfax County by the CDC.

Goad recalled the Salk polio vaccine [1955], developed with March of Dimes funding. "I was just a little boy. My parents were very smart; they didn't question science. I remember seeing a sign on the back of a hearse that said, 'Get your shot or choose your plot...'. I think we've been too cordial and polite to allow foolishness to have a voice."

Karen F. (last name withheld upon request) is a retired FCPS teacher too. Like Goad, she recalled the Polio vaccine. "I was a tiny girl when Polio vaccines were required of all. I know my parents were married happier knowing I was not going to get Polio. Our freedoms come with responsibilities as well as rights. Given the threat of this pandemic, I think our responsibility to each other is greater than our individual rights just



Returning Strong and Staying Strong-Fairfax County Public School students. Source: Return to School - Safety | Fairfax County Public Schools.

and we are committed to continuing to do our part to stay safe and help others around us in this pandemic," Kohler said.

QUESTIONS have been raised about actions by wealthier countries, like the U.S. stockpiling vaccines and wondering if they are doing enough globally to vaccinate individuals in poorer countries. Mamta Murthi, World Bank's Vice President for Human Development, said Aug. 3 from her Washington D.C. home in a podcast,

"The situation that we see right now is absolutely unacceptable because a large part of the world remains unvaccinated, and this is a danger for all of us... We could be in a situation where the pandemic is prolonged... We also run the danger of the emergence of mutations as the pandemic is prolonged and

the virus circulates amongst newer populations. And this means that we are all at danger of being victim to a new mutation that actually escapes the immunity that is being provided by vaccines." Source: Mamta Murthi (@MamtaMurthi) / Twitter.

Finally, there is the question about additional FDA-approved and emergency use drugs for those who get COVID, no matter if they were unvaccinated or the virus broke through. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved only one drug treatment for COVID-19, the antiviral drug Veklury (remdesivir) for adults and certain pediatric patients with COVID-19 who are sick enough to need hospitalization. The FDA also issued Emergency Use Authorizations for several monoclonal antibody treatments for COVID-19 to treat mild or moderate COVID-19 in adults and pediatric patients, among them REGEN-COV for adults and pediatrics, according to FDA U.S. Food & Drug Administration.

Abdul Rashid Abdullah of Herndon said that parents should be vaccinated in addition to their children if they wished to send their children to school. "You have to push for the entire household to be vaccinated; otherwise, breakthrough infections can and will occur. We have to get totally ahead of this virus. We either are all out Patriots and love our country, our children, and our communities and are ready to do whatever is necessary to protect them or not," he said. As a U.S. Army Veteran, Abdullah took his oath seriously when he said he would protect against 'All enemies', both foreign and domestic. "And this virus is yet another enemy. Just like the ignorance that we're combating regarding it," he said.

No matter the type of schooling students in Fairfax County attend, public, independent, home-based, and other, at the beginning of SY2021-22 remember: "We are a community connected. Stay strong. This too will pass."

### Vaccinations in Fairfax County, Virginia

How Do I Find a COVID-19 Vaccine?

#### People Vaccinated

Total	662,033	590,435
% of Total Population	57.7%	51.5%
Population ≥ 12 Years of Age	659,097	588,517
% of Population ≥ 12 Years of Age	67.8%	60.5%
Population ≥ 18 Years of Age	600,077	538,771
% of Population ≥ 18 Years of Age	68.1%	61.2%
Population ≥ 65 Years of Age	111,287	100,742
% of Population ≥ 65 Years of Age	69.4%	62.8%

See more information on what these data mean.

### Percent of Virginia's fully vaccinated recipients with valid county of residence: 51.3%

States with lower percentages for valid county of residence should be interpreted with caution.

	At Least One Dose	Fully Vaccinated
Total	662,033	590,435
% of Total Population	57.7%	51.5%
Population ≥ 12 Years of Age	659,097	588,517
% of Population ≥ 12 Years of Age	67.8%	60.5%
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Population ≥ 65 Years of Age	111,287	100,742
% of Population ≥ 65 Years of Age	69.4%	62.8%

CDC | Data as of: August 13, 2021 6:00am ET. Posted: Friday, August 13, 2021 4:36 PM ET

CDC has capped the percent of population coverage metrics at 99.9%. These metrics could be greater than 99.9% for multiple reasons, including census denominator data not including all individuals that currently reside in the county (e.g., part time residents) or potential data reporting errors. Estimates may change as new data are made available.

Vaccination rates in Fairfax County as of Aug. 13, 2021. Source: CDC COVID Data Tracker

now."

Karen does not see the vaccine as an option. She has imagined the past two years through teachers' eyes. "As a friend of many FCPS students' parents, I have seen their struggles, too. I think I can get behind the plans for students to be vaccinated as a requirement," she said.

FCPS alumnus K. H. (name withheld upon request) is an uncle to students preschool to high school-aged, across the learning spectrum from homeschool, to private school to public school. K.H. said that he trusted the effectiveness of vaccines, that they would protect him and others against COVID-19 breakthrough as he works in Fairfax County. However, he held concern for his nieces, nephews, and all those students under 12 years of age. "I am concerned about the potential for outbreaks among children too young to get it [the vaccine], and if schools will be able to effectively control the spread while still giving children a worthwhile edu-

cation," he said.

As the Delta and Lambda variants infect quicker and burn through the lungs faster, questions arise about the vaccine effectiveness. A preprint study found that the Pfizer vaccine during the Minnesota Delta variant prevalence in July 2021 showed a "more pronounced reduction in effectiveness" at 42 percent effective in the Mayo Clinic Health System. However, further evaluation in dosing and vaccine composition was warranted, the study said.

One person who responded sees COVID in a brutal light. She is a COVID-19 ground zero case, infected in March 2020. Taralyn Tharp Kohler of Reston, parent of a high school and college student, is "still experiencing long hauler symptoms including no taste and smell for over a year and a half."

"I do not wish on anyone what I've experienced. I want to trust that the vaccines will provide protection against Covid-19 and variants. My family has been vaccinated,



View of Pinecrest and Fox Mill Roads in Herndon before signalization, as seen in VDOT slide presentation March 2021. The intersection is a two-way stop-controlled on Pinecrest approaches.



Injuries and property damage Pinecrest and Fox Mill Roads before signalization. A VDOT Public Information Meeting held March 2021, by Andrew Beacher, PE | VDOT Preliminary Engineering Manager and Chris Barksdale, PE | VDOT, Project Reporter, reported 53 crashes had occurred at the intersection from 2013-2020.

## Dangerous Herndon Intersection Gets Signalization

Welcome news for the community.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

A four-year community effort following interim intersection improvements by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has resulted in the installation of a reported \$5.7M (estimated) temporary traffic signal at the intersection of Fox Mill

Rd. (Route 665) and Pinecrest Rd. in Herndon. Previously the intersection was a two-way stop-controlled on Pinecrest approaches. VDOT announced the new signal as “active” on Aug. 10. Fairfax County funded the project.

“Public involvement is key at every phase of project development and construction,” said Kathleen R. Leonard, MPA, CPM Communications at Virginia Department of Transportation. “Our project team worked with residents within the project limits over the last several years to update the design and implement incremental safety improvements, resulting in the

short-term signal solution while the larger intersection improvement project is developed. More information and background on the project are available online here: traffic alert and the project webpage,” she said.

According to VDOT records, the community was concerned about significant back-ups occurring along Fox Mill Rd. during peak periods due to left-turning vehicles stopped in the through lane waiting for a break in traffic, and during peak period it was difficult for drivers to turn from Pinecrest Rd. onto Fox Mill Rd.

Fox Mill Rd. averages 13,000

vehicles a day, and Pinecrest Rd. averages up to 2,500, based on 2019 data according to VDOT. The temporary signalization will remain until VDOT adds permanent signalization and improvements scheduled to begin fall of 2024. Those improvements include “installing a permanent signal, adding new left-turn lanes on northbound and southbound Fox Mill Road, adding four crosswalks, reconstructing sidewalks and curb ramps, constructing an eight-foot-wide walkway, and curb ramp at the southeast corner of the intersection, and other improvements,” according to VDOT.

## Centreville Scouts Complete a Project for the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum

Ryan Park and other members of Scout Troop 577 in Centreville recently completed a land conservation project for the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum in fulfillment of Ryan’s Eagle Scout requirements.

Troop members cleared a dedicated natural area of invasive species and restored natural water drainage in order to help retain the natural setting around the Museum and the immediate neighborhood.

Multiple Eagle Scout projects have been carried out over the last year at the Museum. Scouts have managed the complex projects while complying with COVID-19 protocols to assure the health and safety of all participants.

Ryan Park (center) and members of Troop 577 help preserve a natural set-off at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Ryan Park (sixth from right) and members of Troop 577, Centreville.

## CONNECTION

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# Real Estate Market: Best Ever

First half 2021 compared to same period during 2020 and 2011 in Reston real estate.

By JENNY McCLINTOCK



Jenny McClintock.

Reston residential real estate experienced a strong first half of 2021, topping its healthy performance in 2020 and recording double digit growth of a whopping 30 percent over last year measured by the number of closed sales. Clearly the best year ever!

After the 2020 real estate market experienced a slowdown mid-March to mid-June due to the pandemic and stay at home orders, sales bounced back in the later part of last year, finishing with 3 percent growth in total sales over 2019. But sales during the first half of 2021 exceeded all expectations with an unprecedented increase in the total number of Reston homes sold in all price brackets combined. The jump is attributed to many of the now familiar factors that emerged last year during the pandemic: an influx of first-time homebuyers to the market, exodus from cities, the need for more indoor and outdoor personal space, the ability to choose home

as a work location, and families moving in together seeking larger homes.

Add to that unusually low inventory and the effect is that homes for sale are snapped up quickly. A balanced market is one where there is a six months' supply of home inventory in the pipeline. The term "months' supply" refers to the number of months it would take for the current inventory of homes on the market to sell, given the current sales pace. Historically, six months of supply is associated with moderate price appreciation, and where sellers and buyers are perceived to have equal leverage in the home sale transaction. Lower levels of "months' supply," as is currently the case, tend to push prices up more rapidly. According to Realtor.com, housing supply of inventory sits at 2.5 months nationally as of the end of May. In Reston, that number is currently 1.1 months' supply, creating a hyper seller's market.

**IN 2021 FIRST HALF**, the most significant impact in home sales as a percentage occurred in the \$750,000-\$999,999 price range. Whereas a total of 28 homes sold in this bracket in 2011, 51 sold in 2020 and 117 in 2021, an increase

of 127 percent over the first half of 2020. These numbers indicate that home prices are appreciating which is good news for Reston homeowners. This increase is in part fueled by continued historically low interest rates but more so the unprecedented "bidding wars" that drove sold prices up 5 percent to 15 percent over list price!

Reator.com notes that mortgage rates are expected to fluctuate near historic lows through the summer before beginning to climb this fall. Those who haven't yet taken advantage of low rates to buy a home or refinance still have the opportunity to do so this summer. With prices high, affordability is tied even more strongly to mortgage rates, so potential buyers starting to hunt for a home should consider what changes in mortgage rates mean for their home shopping budget.

Looking back, there is historical precedence for high home sales in the three Reston zip codes, where the five year period beginning in 2001 exceeded 2021 sales annually, peaking in 2005 at 938 homes sold. The sales cycle returned to more normal levels in 2006 and 2007 with 696 and 708 in sales, respectively. The financial and real estate markets corrected significantly with lower sales of 473 in 2008 and 526 in 2009. The 589 sales in 2010 marked the beginning of the turn toward recovery in the market, and the number of total sales has been on the rise ever since. Notably, 2021 numbers have topped annual sales every

Reston First Half 2021 Market Analysis  
Home Sales - Based on Final Closed Price  
Comparing First Half of 2021 to 2020 and 2011:

2021 First Half Total Sales: 784					
Zip Code	\$1M and over	\$750K-\$999	\$500K-\$749K	\$Under \$500K	Total # Sales
20190	6	19	80	181	286
20191	11	57	84	172	324
20194	10	40	55	69	174
<b>Total:</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>784</b>

2020 First Half Total Sales: 604					
Zip Code	\$1M and over	\$750K-\$999	\$500K-\$749K	\$Under \$500K	Total # Sales
20190	3	8	60	146	217
20191	5	26	69	170	270
20194	9	17	32	59	117
<b>Total:</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>604</b>

2011 First Half Total Sales: 498					
Zip Code	\$1M and over	\$750K-\$999	\$500K-\$749K	\$Under \$500K	Total # Sales
20190	1	4	30	115	150
20191	0	9	49	163	221
20194	5	15	30	77	127
<b>Total:</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>498</b>

year since 2006.

**LOOKING FORWARD**, there is still considerable demand for buyers throughout all of Reston. Properties selling quickly at or above asking price is enticing for sellers who are considering a move now or in the future. The good news for buyers is those low interest rates, and additional appreciation if the market continues to rise as expected. With such a strong market showing in the first half of 2021,

all indications point to an equally robust second half of the year. Stay tuned!

Jenny McClintock and Sue Bender are with HBC Group at Keller Williams and are active and experienced Realtors® living in Reston. Jenny, alongside her business partners Karen Briscoe and Lizzy Conroy, work with sellers, buyers, investors and builders throughout Northern Virginia in all price ranges. [www.HBCGroupKW.com](http://www.HBCGroupKW.com), 703-731-2412, [jenny@hbcgroupkw.com](mailto:jenny@hbcgroupkw.com)

A floating patchwork quilt of boats cruising across Lake Anne.

## Pedaling and Paddling the Reservoir Savoring the last unofficial days of summer on Lake Anne in Reston.



By MERCIA HOBSON  
CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Water lovers made their way to docks at Lake Anne Plaza in Reston for one more summer Sunday, paddling and pedaling on the tree-lined reservoir. The Tekle family Tadd, Kalkidan, and daughter Eliana, 6, and Jonathan,

5, cruised in the comfort of a four-person pedal boat. They merrily floated here and there, dropped their hands in the water, then explored a bit more on the quiet lake. No motors or speed demons here. They waved to passersby looking very content with enough space for four to stretch out and lounge.

Asked why this, why today, Tadd called out, "For the enjoyment. And before school starts."



The Tekle family on Lake Anne in Reston wave goodbye to summer.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

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Amazon Data Services, Inc. seeks candidates for the following (multiple positions available) in Herndon, VA:

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# CALENDAR

## NOW THRU AUG. 29

At Water's Edge. 12-5 p.m. At Reston Art Gallery and Studios, 11400 Washington Plaza W at Lake Anne, Reston. Sandra Dovberg's show of paintings and Cnidarian wall sculptures is a unique focus on where land meets water. Open on weekends through August 29. The show is open on weekends through August 14-15, 21-22, and 28-29. Meet the artist. She'll be in the gallery from 2 - 4 p.m. on August 21 and 29. Visit the website: [www.restonartgallery.com](http://www.restonartgallery.com).

## AUG. 18-22

Tysons Library Booksale. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Tysons Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church. Large selection of books and media for all ages and interests. Proceeds benefit the Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library and related activities. Visit the website: <https://booksalefinder.com/VA.html#X2291>

## WOLF TRAP PERFORMANCES

At Wolf Trap Farm Park, McLean.  
August 19 - Train with special guest Vertical Horizon  
August 20 - Harry Connick Jr. and his Band  
August 22 - Yacht Rock Revue

<cal1> Thursday/Aug. 19

<cal2> Bull Dog Barbecue. 4-8:30 p.m. At Westfield High School in Chantilly. To welcome Westfield High School students and their families back to school, they are hosting the annual Bull Dog Barbecue and Back to School Night. Back to School will start the event followed by live performances, sign up for clubs, learn more about activities, food trucks and food vendors and much more. Teacher and administrative staff will be available to answer your questions. This event is only for Westfield High School students and their families. Contact Luann Hoyseth at 703-488-3895.

## FRIDAY/AUG. 20

Friday Night Live. 6:30 p.m. At Herndon Town Green, Herndon. Popular free outdoor concert series returns to regular performances. This will be the 27th season for the concert series which is produced by the Herndon Chamber of Commerce.

### Schedule

Aug 20 -- JunkFood;  
Aug 27 -- All-Star Band;  
Sept 3 -- Shake the Room;  
Sept 10 -- Keaton + 8 Track Jones;  
Sept 17 -- The Reflex;  
Sept 24 -- Screaming Mönkeys.

## AUG. 20-SEPT. 5

"An Act of God." At NextStop Theatre Company in Herndon, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. The season opens with "An Act of God," a funny comedy in which God, along with his two "wingmen," answer some of the most pressing questions that have plagued mankind since Creation. By David Javerbaum and directed by Tuyet Pham. Season subscriptions are available by calling the NextStop Box Office at 703-481-5930x0 or by visiting [www.nextstoptheatre.org](http://www.nextstoptheatre.org).

## AUG. 21-29

"Making Opera Soup." At Boro Park at The Boro Tysons, 8350 Broad Street, Tysons. Presented by 1st Stage of Tysons. Opera singer Mirabal invokes the excitement and magic of opera in a performance for children and families. Dates: August 21 at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., August 22 at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., August 28 at 3 p.m., August 29 at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Visit [www.1ststage.org](http://www.1ststage.org).

## SATURDAY/AUG. 21

Tinner Music Festival. 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. At Cherry Hill Park, 300 Park Ave., Falls Church. Tinner Hill Music Festival will have great music, fun activities, food, and beverages. Headliners: BB King Blues Band, Bonerama and The Legendary Wailers featuring Julian "Junior" Marvin. Cost: \$35.



Harry Connick Jr. will appear at Wolf Trap on Aug. 20, 2021.

## SUNDAY/AUG. 22

Concert on the Green. 6-8 p.m. At the Village Centre Green, behind the Old Brogue, Great Falls. Featuring Diamond Alley. Sponsored by AOG Wealth Management.

## WEDNESDAY/AUG. 25

Vienna Volunteer Fire Department Fundraiser. 4-8 p.m. At Chipotle Mexican Grill, 213 Maple Ave. E, Vienna. The Vienna Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary is having a fundraiser at Chipotle Mexican Grill. Show the press release, flyer, or smartphone release, or tell the cashier that you're supporting the cause to make sure that 33% of the proceeds will be donated to the Vienna Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary. If you order online, use code HNMXP8 before checkout in "promo" field. Funds raised go towards purchasing lifesaving equipment for the fire department.

## AUG. 27-28

"Charmed Life." 8 p.m. At Boro Park at The Boro Tysons, 8350 Broad Street, Tysons. Presented by 1st Stage. This autobiographical solo performance tells not only Lori Brown Mirabal's own story, but also pays homage to famous entertainers including Oprah, Cab Calloway and Luciano Pavarotti who had a hand in her rise, and she salutes the Black women opera singers who paved the way. Visit [www.1ststage.org](http://www.1ststage.org).

## SATURDAY/AUG. 28

Eddie From Ohio. 7:30 to 9 p.m. At Arrowbrook Centre Park, 2351 Field Point Road, Herndon. Too energetic to be labeled just "folk," and not angry enough to be pegged "alternative," Eddie from Ohio continues to defy description with a unique blend of vocals and acoustic instrumentation. Call 703-324-SHOW (7469) for any inclement weather updates.

## AUG. 28-29

VietFest. At Tysons Corner Center, Bloomingdale's Parking Lot. Saturday, August 28, 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.; Sunday, August 29 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. Dive into Vietnamese culture, music, and activities for the whole family. Enjoy food, fun, and entertainment, including the Annual VietFest's Got Talent, Miss VietFest United States Pageant, Mr. VietFest Competition, and competitive eating contests. Visit [www.vietfest.com](http://www.vietfest.com).

## RCC WELCOMES BACK PATRONS

Reston Community Center announces that several of its most popular Lifelong Learning programs will return to the schedule this fall. Registration and reservations are now open for both Reston and Non-Reston patrons to attend:

Bridge - Intermediate and advanced players are invited to play Mondays at RCC Hunters Woods (10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.) and Tuesdays at RCC Lake Anne (10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.) Free, but registration is required.

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## Hopping and Hoping



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As I approach my four-week anniversary of "the burning," I do so with cautious optimism that one day soon, I'll be walking upright once again and doing so without the assistance of my walker. No more leaning over at the waist to grab the walker's waist-high grab bars. No more pulling/pushing myself up as I try to gain leverage in order to balance my weight so as not to fall backwards or to the side. And finally, once standing, no more hopping on my right foot as I favor the left; the location where the podiatrist pointed to and said at our last appointment: "You can see where that is ground zero;" meaning, the worst of the burn. And four weeks later, 'ground zero' is still ultra sensitive and not bearing too much weight. The emergency room doctor had said the healing will "likely take weeks, not months." And four-plus weeks into my recovery, I would say her assessment/prediction was spot on. But I'm not there yet. I'm somewhat better than I have been, but I'm still not ready to solo. Although I did drive for the first time yesterday. It was no problem (my driving foot is my right foot so pressing on the pedals was not the least bit painful. However, if there had been a clutch involved, I wouldn't have been up to driving). Still, success, and a feeling of independence once again.

Fortunately, the clown shoes that the local emergency room provided finally are proving to be useful. The strappy, cushiony, black, open-toe sandals with the thick white soles I'm now wearing all day were designed to give the foot breathing room along with some support. However, in the early weeks following "the burning," when I placed my foot in the sandal, the insole felt rough as if it were tearing up the bottoms of my feet, exactly where the second degree burns had occurred. Since it seemed like it was hindering my recovery, I rarely wore them and instead put on thick socks (over the bandages lined with medication) and walked around on the heels of my feet while attempting to keep the balls of my feet (where the burns were) elevated and off the floor. It enabled me to mostly get around, but now, being able to wear the sandals, I'm much more ambulatory.

And so it finally feels as if the worm has turned, as they say. The sole on my right foot is exhibiting all the proper signs of new skin having formed and is a few days away, according to my nurse-wife, Dina (who has been bandaging my feet up to three times daily since "the burning") of returning to its pre-burned status. As such, I am nearly able to put all my weight on my right foot as necessary as I continue to favor the "ground-zero" left foot. However, if I ever inadvertently place my full weight on my left foot, I am transported emotionally back to July 17 when I first stepped on that hot pavement. I don't exactly see stars, but I certainly feel pain until I lift up that left foot and start to hop on my right. Oh, what a relief that is, as I attempt to retrieve my bearings and find some place to sit, immediately.

That being said, I am most definitely on the mend. Getting on my feet, still with the aid of my walker, doesn't conjure the same fear and loathing and pain as it once did. Urges to visit the bathroom are no longer delayed as much as possible. Nor are they fraught with anxiety and exasperation concerning the effort required to make the short walk to water the closet, especially in the middle of the night when the house is dark. But today, I can just about see the future (and a return to normal/independence) which may include a visit to close friends who live in Ocean City, Maryland, a k a the beach. And when I do, I'll certainly be upright and walking normally, but I won't ever be barefoot, inside or out. I can't take any chances. As slow as my recovery has been, I don't suppose its pace has anything to do with my underlying medical condition: thyroid cancer. Nevertheless, I don't see any benefit to stressing my immune system anymore than is absolutely necessary. It already has more than enough to do attempting to keep the cancer in check.

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



PHOTO COURTESY OF ECOACTION ARLINGTON

As part of the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges' Heat Watch project, EcoAction Arlington volunteers (from left) Marissa O'Neill and Aisha Husain joined Executive Director Elenor Hodges, holding sensor devices that measure ground level heat.

# Universities Measure Heat Disparities in Virginia

**Marymount professor and student join 'Heat Watch' effort to measure heat disparities in Virginia.**

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
THE CONNECTION

Enduring dangerously high temperatures, Marymount University student Bader Hakami and biology professor Susan Agolini spent a day working as community scientists. The collected data that will help locate northern Virginia's heat islands, urban areas that experience higher temperatures than suburban neighborhoods.

Volunteers from Northern Virginia, including students, faculty and representatives from EcoAction Arlington and the Virginia Department of Forestry, recorded air temperatures and humidity using handheld thermal sensors. Their work was part of the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges' (VFIC) Heat Watch project.

"The information that we gather can better inform policymakers and urban planners as they allocate funding for green spaces and invest in urban designs that can minimize the heat islands," said Susan Agolini, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Biology, Marymount University.

More than 20 students, faculty and volunteers from northern Virginia joined the project as part

**"Information that we gather can better inform policymakers and urban planners as they allocate funding for green spaces and invest in urban designs that can minimize the heat islands."**

— Susan Agolini, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Biology, Marymount University

of their commitment to protecting the environment.

"I participated in 'Heat Watch' because I wanted to give back to the community," said Bader Hakami, a nursing student at Marymount. "I learned how the heat-mapping process is conducted and most importantly how the information might be put to good use for the environment."

July 2021 was the world's hottest month ever recorded, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Centers for Environmental Information. 'Heat Watch' was conducted on July 15.

Previous VFIC collections have revealed temperature differences

as significant as 16 degrees between the coolest and hottest areas. Heat islands are often found in low-income communities, says Agolini.

Poor housing conditions including lack of air conditioning and small living spaces put these communities in danger of heat-related illnesses and deaths.

"Being aware of these heat islands can also help health care providers and advocates know which areas, and therefore populations, are going to be most susceptible to heat-related health issues," she said.

Angelino estimates that the group will be able to identify heat island within the next eight weeks.



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

(From left) Lien Tran, Diem Tran, honoree Marina Garcia, and Pat Rhoads, store manager.

## Marina Garcia Marks 25 Years with The Closet

**Invested, she mentors others as The Closet invests in her.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Once again, the Board of Directors of The Closet of the Greater Herndon Area, Inc. experienced the distinct opportunity to extend its heartfelt congratulations to another employee marking a significant twenty-fifth work anniversary with the non-profit thrift shop. On Tuesday, June 15, 2021, the Closet hosted a celebration for Marina Garcia of Herndon.

Garcia began her career as a merchandise associate in 1996. She learned and grew with The Closet, becoming invested in its mission, operation, and connecting with co-workers. This was a day to celebrate successes, Garcia's contributions, friendships, and belonging - all the reasons why she chose to invest 25 years and personal trust with the company.

Gene Wiley, President of the Board of Directors for The Closet, and Pat Rhoads, Store Manager, joined Garcia and her co-workers for a recognition luncheon and framed certificate presentation at The Closet.

"She is a jack-of-all-trades who sets an example for other employees on how to become as cross-trained as she is. Her experience has shown others how to get the job done in the best way possible," said Wiley.

"Marina is very dedicated, a hard worker," added Patricia Rhoads, Store Manager. She described how Garcia is com-

mitted to The Closet's success, willing to go the extra mile, even when the work is hard. In addition, Rhoads said that Garcia shares valuable institutional knowledge with other employees and volunteers. According to Wiley, Garcia mastered every element of the store's processing operation, from accepting donations, pricing them, and getting the items to the retail floor.

"We can always count on Marina to be there when there's work to be done. She's very reliable. As a Spanish-speaker, she is an important liaison to The Closet's Latino clientele," Wiley said.

Looking around the store, Garcia described how The Closet changed over the years. She expressed pride in the store's reimaged floor plan, product qualities, and displays, many elements that held her fingerprint. "Everything has changed... It is beautiful inside." Asked about her happiest day at work, Garcia smiled and said that day. "I thank God. I thank everybody."

Garcia is the third Closet employee, along with Lien Tran and Diem Tran, to reach the twenty-fifth milestone work anniversary. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics on Employee Tenure, "The median number of years that wage and salary workers had been with their current employer was 4.1 years in January 2020." The Closet is proud to have Marina Garcia as a valued member of The Closet Team," said Wiley.