

CONNECTION

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International Model

NEWS, PAGE 3

Worker Eric Hanemann removing Autumn Olive, an invasive species, as part of the City Jobs program.

Old Lee Highway Plan

PAGE 3

A+ Living with Teens

PAGE 14

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NEWS

'Employment Creates Dignity, Self-Worth, Hope for Future'

City Jobs becomes international model against homelessness.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

The Lamb Center's City Jobs program has received accolades since its inception nearly three years ago. And now, it's receiving international recognition as a model for fighting homelessness, thanks to the Voice of America (VOA).

A daytime, drop-in shelter, The Lamb Center in Fairfax City provides food, clothing, showers, laundry services and spiritual guidance for the homeless. But it wanted to do more; and in November 2018, City Jobs – a partnership between this nonprofit and the City of Fairfax – was born.

Since then, this program has provided employment to people desperately needing it and added workers to Fairfax's Parks and Recreation Department maintenance crews, enabling them to improve response time and tackle deferred projects. As a result, they've beautified the City while improving the environment by picking up litter and removing invasive species. Participants also extended leaf-collection and snow-removal efforts, plus planted trees throughout the community.

Recently, City Jobs became the subject of a Voice of America broadcast that aired in Pakistan. VOA reporter Sadia Batool was in a park working on another story when she came across a City Jobs team.

After one of The Lamb Center volunteers explained the program to her, it sparked her interest in doing a broadcast about it, and she then interviewed the workers. Additionally, through Voice of America's social channels, her City Jobs story reached Urdu-speaking audiences in India, Europe and throughout the world.

"Understanding homelessness transcends



From left, City Jobs crew member Anthony with VOA reporter Sadia Batool and cameraman Aziz Ahmad.

boundaries," explained Lamb Center Interim Executive Director Tara Ruskowski. "Sadia knew the story would resonate with local communities in Pakistan. What came as a cool surprise was the interest Lamb Center crew members had in sharing their stories. The team knows it's doing important work and is proud to be an example for other communities."

Batool said it would be interesting for Pakistani viewers to see how cities, counties and nonprofits "come together to help needy and homeless individuals. Probably the main takeaway for them is how homeless people are given a chance to become useful members of society."

Pleased about the recognition this pro-

gram is receiving, Fairfax Mayor David Meyer said, "Local governments can play a key role in addressing the challenges of homelessness. The City Jobs program in the City of Fairfax is an example for communities to follow, not only in the U.S., but around the world."

"Employment creates dignity, self-worth, a sense of purpose and hope for the future for persons experiencing homelessness," he continued. "And communities benefit from the work of the participants. Everyone is a winner."

Indeed, using City Jobs as its own model, Fairfax County eventually partnered with Fairfax City in this venture. It developed Operation Stream Shield, a countywide ini-



PHOTO COURTESY OF TARA RUSZKOWSKI

Worker Eric Hanemann removing Autumn Olive, an invasive species.

tiative funding four teams from three, social-services agencies, including The Lamb Center.

This program is built around the core concept of enhancing communities while building lives. The workers' confidence in themselves and their skills grows, and they're able to earn money, at the same time. Several have gone on to be hired full-time by the county.

"This is a new level of community engagement and partnership," said Fairfax County Public Works spokeswoman Sharon North. "And it's proving to be beneficial for the county, our partners and especially for guests of The Lamb Center and other participating shelters."

No one is happier about City Jobs' success than Lamb Center Executive Director John MacPherson. "We hope our program will inspire other cities around the globe to adopt a similar approach to creating opportunities for self-sufficiency," he said.

"Individuals experiencing homelessness or struggling with substance abuse can find a sense of worth, community and hope for their future through programs like City Jobs. This program is a win for the City, community and workers."

— ANNA HOWELL CONTRIBUTED TO
THIS STORY

Improving Travel for Bicyclists and Pedestrians

Residents comment on Fairfax City's multimodal plan for Old Lee Highway.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax City transportation staff recently shared the revised, preliminary plan for Old Lee Highway's multimodal improvements at an open house at the Sherwood Community Center. It's just one of many significant buildings along this well-traveled road in Fairfax City.

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Residents viewed project designs, discussed ideas with staff and submitted written comments. Three major changes were also unveiled, based on community feedback and Fairfax City Council's guidance. They entailed adding left turns, deleting the proposed roundabout at Country Hill Drive and not impacting St. Leo's Catholic Church.

"I'm impressed," said resident Betsy Coffey. "This plan looks well-thought-out and

is going to improve the ways for people to get around. I do appreciate how livable this City is."

The project's goal is to provide continuous and consistent, multimodal connections along Old Lee Highway from Old Town to Fairfax Circle. Equally important is making the roadway safer for all users and repurposing excess pavement, while promoting alternative methods of reaching the City's library, Van Dyck Park, Sherwood Center, three schools, places of worship, police department, Historic Blenheim and residential neighborhoods along that corridor. In addition, commercial

activity centers anchor each end.

City Council has already committed to keeping the existing travel and turn lanes, plus adding bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. When completed, Old Lee will have 5-foot-wide sidewalks both sides; curb and gutter on both sides of the road; two-way, 10-foot-wide, separated bike lanes only on the north side; consolidated crossing locations with consistent signage; reduced crossing widths on the side streets; and improved lighting, landscaping and buffering.

SEE OLD LEE HIGHWAY, PAGE 8
BURKE / FAIRFAX / FAIRFAX STATION/CLIFTON/LORTON /
SPRINGFIELD ♦ OCTOBER 21-27, 2021 ♦ 3

Party Positions Tested in House 42nd Race

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

The Virginia House race for delegate in the 42nd District pits two term incumbent Democrat Kathy K.L. Tran against challenger Republican Edward F. McGovern. In her second term, Tran served as part of the 55-45 Democrat majority in the House which passed legislation related to gun safety, criminal justice and voting reform, and LBBTQ+ protections, long sought by Democrats. Republicans say Democrats have gone too far with these measures, and that they are out of step with average Virginians. Voters will find stark contrasts between Tran's and McGovern's positions on prominent issues in this November election.

The candidates discussed their positions on a few of those key issues.

Business and Workforce

Q: What role, if any, should state government have in regulating businesses in Virginia?

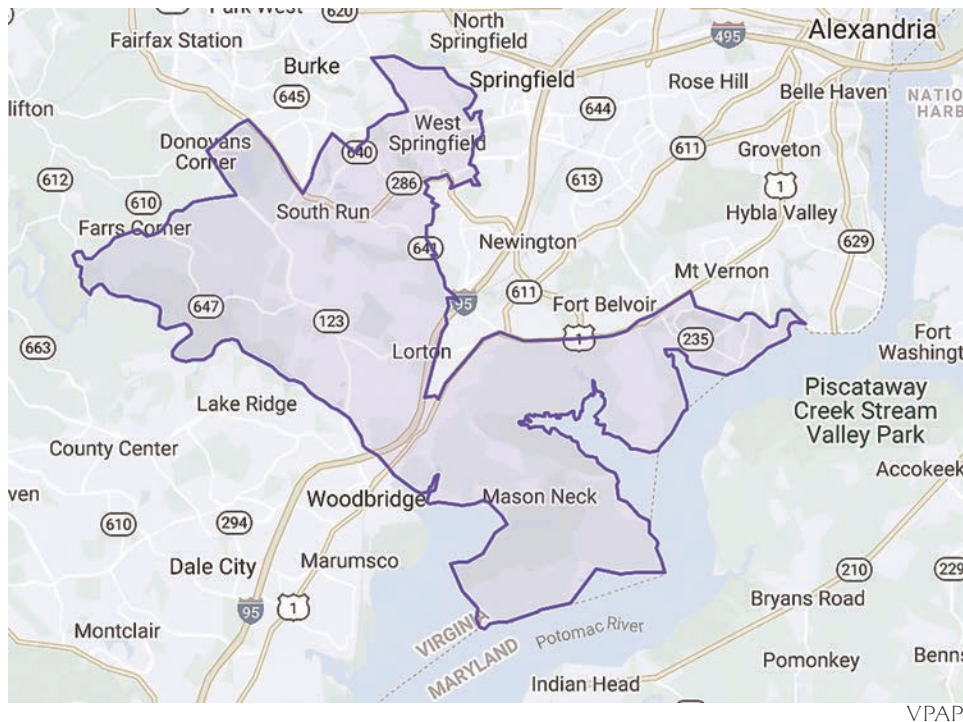
McGovern: "Our businesses thrive when they can operate without fear of government interference." He will "get Richmond out of the way. ... It has become extremely difficult to start a small business in Virginia. We have gone from small business friendly to big corporation buddy. I am a fan of small business. Small businesses lack flexibility; there is a tremendous amount of red tape to work through to start up. It is not clear why. So now no one can start a small business. I have heard from many long time small business owners who say they would not bother now."

Tran: "When considering business regulations, we should balance the flexibility Virginia businesses need to compete in a global economy while protecting Virginia consumers and workers. We have been able to achieve a good balance in Virginia. That's why CNBC named Virginia the best state for business two years in a row — while Oxfam raised us up 28 spots in their assessment of the best states for workers. These two rankings show that Virginia can do both: support our businesses and our workers."

Schools and Education (Candidates' web sites)

Tran: "To invest in our public school system to lower class sizes and increase teacher pay." She favors "affordable higher education, investment in our community colleges, and work to build strong career pathways from schools to the workforce."

McGovern: "Return educational decisions to local control.... A student's education is decided best by their parents, not career bureaucrats." H favors "expanding access to charter schools, increasing vocational education, and enabling [educational] choice in Virginia..."



Virginia's 42nd House District covering portions of Mount Vernon, Springfield, Lorton, Fairfax Station and Mason Neck



Incumbent Democrat Kathy K.L. Tran

"We have increased prescription drug pricing transparency and we have capped the cost of insulin at \$50/month for eligible Virginians."

— Kathy Tran

Healthcare and Medical Insurance

Do you see a need for state government intervention in insurance cost or drug pricing, or do you favor market based pricing?

McGovern: "Our Health Care/Insurance system is based on WWII. It is time to sell health insurance like car insurance across state lines. Federal employees (I am a retired Fed) basically have that. It provides tremendous choice and pool purchasing power.



Challenger Republican Edward McGovern

"Small businesses lack flexibility; there is a tremendous amount of red tape to work through to start up."

— Edward McGovern

That should be available to everyone. There is a bill languishing in Richmond that would allow the self employed in the 42nd to more easily establish health insurance pools. That needs to happen; but has been blocked by Democrats closeness with big corporations and one size fits mentality with programs like Medicaid. Which only leads to a lower level of service the less well off one is. I favor market based pricing."

Tran: "Prescription drug prices have skyrocketed and decreasing the price of medication can be the difference between life and death for Virginians. We should use all

levers available to Virginia state government to make sure that prescription drugs are affordable. For example, we have increased prescription drug pricing transparency and we have capped the cost of insulin at \$50/month for eligible Virginians."

Legislation

What is the subject of one bill you hope to introduce as chief patron in the next general assembly session?

Tran: "I'm planning a legislative agenda that will continue to expand health care, ensure our economic recovery leaves no one behind, and continue to make the Commonwealth more welcoming and inclusive. For example, I am excited to be working with constituents on bills and budget requests to improve services to students in special education, support health care for individuals with disabilities and honor military families."

McGovern: "I want a law to protect teenage girls from sexual assault in school. I also want the self employed pool insurance bill moved."

Candidate experience

Tran, now seeking her third term, has sponsored 29 successful bills during her time in office related to workers' rights, green energy, voter access, and veteran and immigrant protections; as well as championing improvements for Mason Neck State Park, located within the 42nd district. For 12 years, she worked with the Department of Labor as director of policy, legislation, and regulations; was a former Presidential Management Fellow; and holds a Masters in social work from the University of Michigan, completing her undergraduate work at Duke University. She is married with five children. For more on the Tran campaign, see kathy-fordelegate.com

McGovern, retired from the Federal government and Department of Army employment, has been a Virginia resident since 1993. During his working career he managed resources, funding and staffing for Army commands, including assignments in Japan and Panama. In retirement he has served on his community HOA board and coached youth sports. He holds a Masters in public and international affairs from the University of Pittsburgh, completing his undergraduate work at Shippensburg University. He is married with two adult children. Find more on the McGovern campaign at edmcgovernva.org.

Candidate financial reports through the filing period Sept. 30, shows a significant gap between the candidates, who both came to the ballot without spending in primaries. To date, Tran contributions totaled \$427,985 from 1,805 donors, compared to McGovern's contributions of \$37,570 from 266 donors. SOURCE: <https://www.vpap.org/> For more information on all campaigns and voting, see elections.virginia.gov.

OBITUARY

The Unofficial Mayor of Springfield Dies at 96

Jerry Corbin wore many hats in his career including barber and pizza restaurateur.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Springfield resident Jerry Corbin was known for many things over the last 70 years including a business entrepreneur, barber, unofficial mayor, and Jeopardy trivia whiz, but if you were going in his shop for a haircut, he let you know that he was also king of the checkerboard before the haircut. At age 96, Jerry Corbin died last month and left behind a legacy in Springfield.

"He was a shark," said daughter Joyce Corbin of his checker skills and later backgammon.

"He was just 'Dad,' never ostentatious," she said.

Corbin was involved in local lit-

tle league, the Springfield Days celebrations, the Central Springfield Area Revitalization Council (CSPARC), the Lions Club and the lives of many who came to him for advice. "People would go to him all the time, he loved it," Joyce said.

In 1945, he and his new wife moved to Northern Virginia from Timberville, Va. which is a small town outside New Market. He opened his first barbershop, called Jerry's Barbershop, in the Jefferson Manor area of Alexandria, and set up a checkerboard in the front window inviting any challengers. In 1960, he opened a second barbershop in Springfield Plaza, and then opened "Plaza Pizza," which would later be turned into Malek's Pizza, a current staple for locals in the Springfield area.

In 1995, he was named the Fairfax County Citizen of the Year, Joyce said, and was also the president of the merchants association in Springfield Plaza.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Jerry Corbin was a shark at the checkerboard.

SEE OBITUARY, PAGE 9

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Which Way Virginia?

DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM



From reading previous columns that I have written or having heard me speak over the last year as well as hearing my message reinforced by others, you are aware that as an historian as well as an elected official I believe that the last two years in Virginia have been the most transformative in the Commonwealth's history. I spend considerable time reading, writing, and teaching about our state's history. It is a subject that obviously is of great importance and interest to me.

I could not be more pleased and excited than I am about being a part of the transformation that has occurred. No longer does present-day Virginia fit into a category of Old South or socially regressive. Consider what has happened in the General Assembly over the last two sessions as I have enumerated in previous columns.

Virginia became the 38th state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment after decades of struggles to do so. We lifted barriers to abor-

tion and asserted a woman's right to choose. Jim Crow era laws that were among the most discriminatory in the South were repealed, and the Virginia Values Act prohibiting discrimination in housing and employment was passed. Important steps were taken to reduce the school to prison pipeline. Gun safety legislation was signed into law including my universal background checks bill.

Criminal justice reform continued to ensure that our laws were not racially discriminatory. We increased pay and training for our police to ensure that they can do their jobs fairly. The death penalty was abolished, and criminal defendants and civil litigants were granted an automatic right to appeal that exists in every other state. My bill that ended excessive fines and prison time for petit larceny passed. Criminal records for many nonviolent offenses will be expunged under a new law. And more. Details for both sessions are at <https://lis.virginia.gov/>.

None of these bills passed easily. Some passed by a single vote. Many bills that passed

the House of Delegates did so with a 55 to 45 vote reflecting the partisan membership of the House. Gov. Ralph Northam signed the bills into law as he had campaigned among legislators to get the bills passed. Although most of these bills had been debated for decades over their merit and political implications, it was the outcome of the 2019 elections that put progressive Democrats in control of the General Assembly to work with Governor Northam who had come into office in 2018 that brought about this transformation.

In many regards the election that is taking place now with early voting and election day on Nov. 2 will decide if Virginia continues a common-sense approach to governing or slips back into a state where the rich get richer and the poor and minorities are subject to unfair discrimination. Election fraud or the "big lie" is not an issue. The choice is clear for Virginia voters for there are candidates for governor and the House of Delegates who would turn back our progress in their first year in office. Virginia has come too far to turn back now, but Virginia voters will make that determination at the ballot box!

Signs of Fall, Redistricting in Trouble

BY JOHN LOVAAS



INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE

It's starting to seem like fall is really here. Nighttime temps are starting to dip into the 50s, even upper 49s. (Never mind that it's already snowing in Colorado.) And, with drier air and fewer hours of sunlight, I think I'm seeing trees with leaves exchanging their greens for browns, yellows and even a few reds.

In the Reston Farmers Market, recently recognized once again for being best in Northern Virginia, pumpkins, gourds, apples, grapes, peppers and broccoli have replaced the corn, peaches, plums and berries of summer. Shoppers are rising a little later. They're wearing long pants, even an occasional sweater, instead of shorts! That means the Market is just weeks from wrapping up our 24th season. It's been a terrific year, transitioning to normalcy following a full season under rigorous Covid 19 precautions while the community was locked down. That was a year we'll never forget. Somehow, with amazing community support, Fran, Keith, Anne and I managed to serve 64,000+ customers, providing an outlet for farmers with few alternatives and with not a hint of illness. A peek ahead to the 2022 season -- we expect to open what will be my 25th year on/about April 23.

But, I digress!

Changing weather and different farmers market fruits and veggies are not the only indicators of fall's arrival. This is Virginia, so we know that if in fact it's fall, there must be election campaigns in the air. Indeed there are.

The big headliner this year is the race for governor between Former Guv. Terry McAuliffe and newcomer Donald Trump wannabe Glenn

Youngkin. The two of them are everywhere, including on the airwaves. The TV is chockablock with increasingly sharp-edged ads. Statewide there are Lt. Governor and Attorney General races, too. All 100 Delegate seats are up also.

Please don't forget to VOTE.

Staying with Virginia politics, there is disappointing news from the Redistricting Commission created as a result of the Constitutional Amendment approved by voters just last year. This is the reform which is supposed to end the practice of gerrymandering that was the norm for redrawing district boundaries following a decennial population census. The Commission is being hijacked by both political parties sabotaging the Commission's work.

According to a respected, terribly senior State Delegate who, like myself, backed the reform effort, both parties appointed party stalwarts who were enemies of reform to represent them on the Commission. Early on in the Commission's deliberations, I happened to watch a hearing and was treated to a NoVA Democrat (Sen. Barker) scolding fellow commissioners and reminding how important it was for them not to break up districts of incumbents such as himself. Yep, he wanted to continue to select his partisans rather than follow the principles set forth in the constitutional amendment, i.e., compact, communities of interest, etc. And, Republicans have blocked opportunities for compromise on the Commission. Make no mistake about it, there has been bad behavior on the part of both parties here. They have combined to block agreement on maps for state legisla-

tive districts. In fact, the commission has given up and moved on to see if they might be able to reach agreement on redrawing U.S. congressional districts. Time is running out and I don't know that we can expect any better outcome on congressional districts. Next step?

Responsibility for drawing state legislative districts now goes to the Virginia State Supreme Court, whose judges were all selected by Republicans. With those bloodlines, many expect predictable outcomes, i.e., maps decidedly favoring Republicans. I hear from folks with more experience than I that that isn't necessarily the case. But, having been fooled once apparently, pending results in drawing new congressional districts I'm thinking it may be time to cast my lot with the critics/cynics of this so-called reform process. Still I can't quite let hold of hope that this more open process that so many worked so hard to achieve still might yield some improvement to the evils of gerrymandering. Stay tuned.

JOHN LOVAAS IS A COMMUNITY ACTIVIST AND FOUNDER OF RESTON FARMERS MARKET

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LETTERS

Abolish the Filibuster for Voting Rights

To the Editor:

In 2006, 192 House Republicans voted to renew the Voting Rights Act. Now, we can't get a single Republican senator to come out and unequivocally support protecting the freedom to vote for the American people.

That tells you everything you need to know about our hopes for passing voting rights legislation without abolishing the filibuster.

It's time for President Biden to recognize this reality and use the power of his office to demand the Senate abolish the filibuster. Supporting voting rights legislation alone is simply not enough.

Please, President Biden, we need a strategy. Put the freedom to vote of the American people ahead of any reservations you have about abolishing the filibuster. The stakes are too high to lack your leadership.

Sara Gann
Fairfax

To the Editor:

We understand President Biden is busy. Between foreign policy crises, infrastructure, and the COVID-19 pandemic, he has a lot on his hands.

But I can't help thinking about how his support for abolishing the filibuster in the Senate could help him enact his agenda on all fronts. Most importantly, it could help Biden protect Americans' freedom to vote in the face of relentless attacks on our democracy.

We need Congress to pass comprehensive voting rights reform and we need Biden to step up and put pressure on the Senate to do so by publicly supporting an end to the filibuster. Biden's stated support for voting rights reform simply isn't enough.

President Biden, for the sake of my right to vote and the progressive agenda we elected you to enact, urge the Senate to abolish the filibuster.

Naomi Rose
Fairfax

To the Editor:

Since the 2020 presidential election, state Republicans have passed 33 voter suppression laws in 19 states across the country. And there will be more coming out of GOP-held state legislatures before the end of the year unless Congress acts swiftly to protect our voting rights.

So far, I have seen more talk than action in the way President Biden

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 9

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(SUN GAZETTE, 03/02/21)

County Raises Taxes on Used Cars for Some Residents
(Fairfax Times, 08/20/21)

Board Approves 5 Cent Bag Tax
(Fairfax Times, 09/17/21)

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SCAN ME

Fairfax City's multimodal plan for Old Lee Highway

FROM PAGE 3

A bus stop and bike-amenities hub are envisioned for Van Dyck Park, as well as bus stops and shelters, bikeshare stations, bike-repair areas and emergency, blue-light phones placed strategically throughout the corridor. There are currently nine pedestrian crosswalks along Old Lee, but they might be reduced to six, with about 1,000 feet between crossings.

The two lanes of road will be 13 feet, 5 inches wide each, and retaining walls will be added where necessary. And buffer spaces and bike-lane widths would be reduced, as needed, to minimize property and right-of-way impacts. Having separate lanes will allow pedestrians, cyclists and drivers to travel at different speeds safely.

The only roundabout still proposed would be at Ridge Avenue to improve neighborhood ingress/egress to and from that street. It would also accommodate U-turns for vehicles coming from Fairfax Shopping Center and would reduce vehicle speeds and provide a gateway to Old Lee.

Four, new, left turns would be added as follows:

*From southbound Old Lee Highway into Daniels Run Elementary;

*From northbound Old Lee Highway to Old Post Road;

*From northbound Old Lee Highway to Great Oaks Drive; and

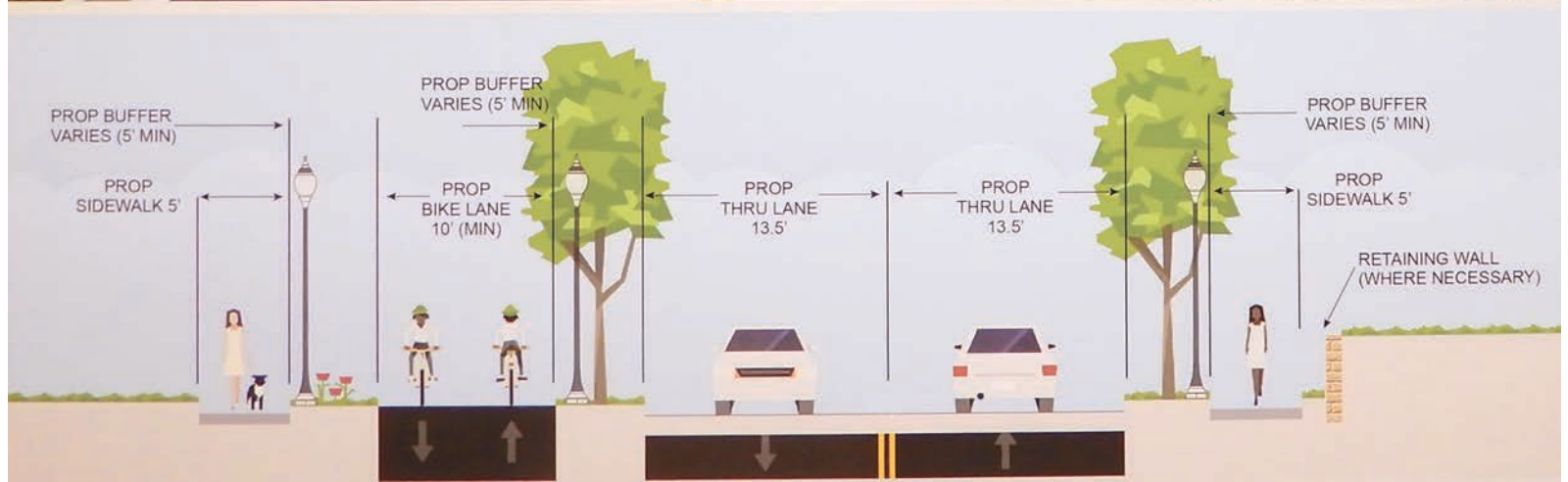
*From northbound Old Lee Highway to the Sherwood Center/Police Station/Van Dyck Park.

A shared-use path is being considered from Great Oaks Drive to Ridge Avenue, to further reduce property and right-of-way impacts. And flashing lights at all proposed, mid-block, road crossings would alert drivers when pedestrians are present.

Total, estimated, project cost is \$25.2 million. Funding includes \$10 million in state revenue sharing money, \$13 million from the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority and \$2 million from the City's commercial and industrial tax – dedicated to increasing transportation capacity.

However, not everyone attending the open house was pleased with what they saw, and several objected to various parts of the plan. "It looks like they were more focused on getting bicycles through this City than cars," said Gary Bottorff. "All we have to do is put a tree-lined median down the middle of Old Lee, a bike path on one side and a sidewalk on the other. We don't need sidewalks on both sides."

Furthermore, he added, "I don't think they need to take property from the north side. And we don't need a traffic circle. We need one, traffic light at the upper end of Fairfax High – and controlled remotely, so police can



Design concept of a standard section of the revamped Old Lee Highway.



Fairfax City Transportation Director Wendy Sanford and resident Gary Bottorff discuss the project.

put it on red when buses are trying to exit." Amy Wilson said flashing beacons aren't effective. "At Fairfax High, I watched someone try to cross, but the drivers wouldn't slow down," she said. "Maybe they need speed bumps there."

"I think the two, biggest problems aren't being addressed – the egress out of the Fairfax Circle Shopping Center and, across the street, from Mama Chang's [restaurant] and Home Depot," said Jane Gabbay. "It's difficult going left onto Old Lee, or even across

the street, from the shopping center. But it's not within the scope of the project."

Avid cyclist Doug Stewart said, "We like having Old Lee as pedestrian- and bike-friendly as can be and making sure it's safe to walk and bike across. There's a balance to be struck. But with all the churches, schools and parks along there, we want to maximize the opportunity for people to bike and walk there."

City Councilmember Joe Harmon said he'd like to see a left-turn lane into the Old Lee Hills community, going from Fairfax Circle toward Old Town. "In the afternoon rush, people are trying to turn into their neighborhood from Old Lee Highway without backing up traffic," he explained. "Other than that, I think the plan is pretty good."

City staff worked with a stakeholder advisory group to provide input on the preliminary plans. It included 18 volunteers representing the Preserve at Great Oaks, Historic Blenheim, Great Oaks, Old Lee Hills, St. Leo's, Fairfax High, Country Club Hills, Daniels Run Elementary, Christian Science Church, Army Navy Country Club, City Council, Daniels Run Peace Church, City School Board, Farrcroft, and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

Construction is tentatively set to start in spring 2023. For more information, go to fairfaxva.gov/OldLeeHwy. Submit comments at engage.fairfaxva.gov.

OBITUARY

Jerry Corbin Dies at 96

FROM PAGE 5

At one time, there was a bowling alley in Springfield Plaza too, and Corbin had a permit to carry a gun, so he'd walk between his barber-shop and the bowling alley and let the "ruffians" that hung out there know he was around. "Dad never got robbed," she said.

Carl Sell, long time area resident and curator at the Franconia Museum, participated in some local events with Corbin including the Lions Club. "Jerry was a primary mover in the Lions Club," Sell said. "Community efforts included the

Christmas tree and fresh fruit sales that benefited the community and the less fortunate," he added.

When he turned 95 last year, Joyce wrote a very quick post in the "I Remember in Springfield VA When," Facebook page of his milestone birthday. "It was quite overwhelming the number of people remembering him and received over 1200 'likes' and 451 comments," she said.

He was a Frank Sinatra fan too, and lived by the Sinatra song, "My Way."

"He did everything his way," Joyce said.

Man Dies After Springfield Crash

A 23-year-old man died this morning following a crash that occurred a round 4:34 p.m. yesterday on Fairfax County Parkway at Rolling Road in Springfield. Detectives from our Crash Reconstruction Unit preliminarily determined Syed-Humza Mahmood of Annandale was driving his 2008 Lexus southbound on Fairfax County Parkway at a high rate of speed, according to police reports. His vehicle struck a 2015 Honda Odyssey and a 2019 Honda CRV. Mahmood's Lexus overturned, and he was ejected from the vehicle. Mahmood was transported to the hospital, where he was later pronounced dead. The two other drivers were also taken to the hospital with minor injuries. Alcohol does not appear to be a factor in the crash, which remains under investigation.

Anyone with information about this crash is asked to contact our Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone -1-866-411-TIPS (866-

411-8477).

This is the 13th non-pedestrian related fatality in the county to date in 2021. Year to date, in 2020 there were 10 non-pedestrian related fatalities.

WEAPONS VIOLATION: 9700 block of Ashbourn Drive, 10/9/21, 10:42 p.m. A community member witnessed a man shoot a firearm into the air. Multiple units responded and were unable to locate the man. No injuries and no property damage were reported.

STABBING/ROBBERY: 7900 Heritage Drive (Ossian Hall Park), 10/12/21, 3:17p.m. After a dispute, a woman approached the victim on the soccer fields and assaulted him with a tree branch. The woman then stabbed the victim with a knife in the upper body, took his property, and ran away. The victim was taken to the hospital and remains hospitalized. Preliminarily, it is believed that the woman is known to the victim and this was not a random act of violence. Detectives from our Major Crimes Bureau responded to assume the investigation.

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 7

has handled our voting rights crisis. He's advocated for voting rights legislation and asked Congress to take action, but he's failed to do one very obvious thing that would change this fight: unequivocally support ending the filibuster.

The Jim Crow filibuster is the thing standing in the way of passing once in a generation legisla-

tion like the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. If Biden actually wants the Senate to pass those bills, he needs to use his influence as president to get the Senate to abolish the filibuster.

Anything less is a failure to meet this crisis.

Liane Kerry
Springfield

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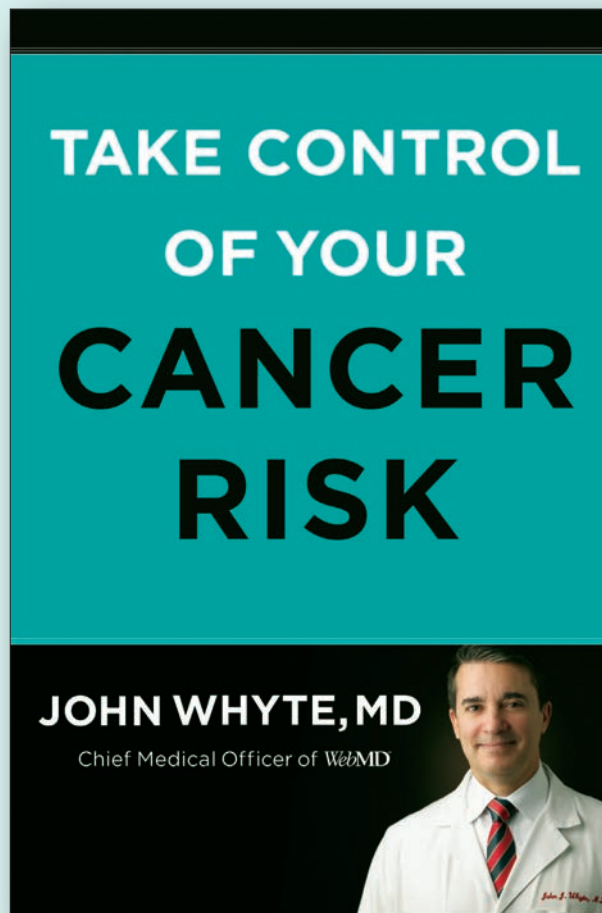
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You have the power to reduce your cancer risk--and this book will show you just how easy it is.

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other books on Amazon.com

HALLOWEEN HAPPENINGS

NOW THRU NOV. 6

Workhouse Haunt. 7-11 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. This year's Workhouse Haunt immerses guests through a highly-themed walk-through experience, as creepy characters deliver contactless scares in multiple scenes. Guests will travel in small groups for a frightening 30-minute experience that brings them next to the site's abandoned, historic buildings and into the dark woods where they will encounter terrifying characters and sights that are not for the faint of heart. Cost is \$25. Occurs Friday, Saturday, and Sunday each weekend from Oct. 3 through Nov. 6. Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/workhouse-events/2021-workhouse-haunt-the-collection-2/>



A 75-year tradition, the Vienna Halloween Parade is Oct. 27. This year's theme is the "Roaring 20s."

OCT. 1-31

Ghost & Graveyard Tour. 7:30 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays additional tours at 8:30 and 9 p.m. Admission: \$15 per adult; \$14 for seniors, military and law enforcement; \$10 per child. Tour departs from Alexandria Visitor Center, 221 King St., Alexandria. Follow an 18th-century costumed guide by lantern light through the charming streets of Alexandria's historic district known as Old Town. On this entertaining tour, you'll hear ghost stories, legends and folklore. You will also hear about unsolved mysteries, tales of romance and angry ghosts looking for revenge. Appropriate for ages 9 and up. Visit alexcolonialtours.com

THROUGH OCT. 31

"The Madness of Poe." At Synetic Theater, 1800 South Bell Street in Arlington. "We watch how Poe, the inventor of American horror, created some of the most frightening and disturbing stories the world has ever known," said Synetic Theater founder Paata Tsikurshvili. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. Industry Night is Monday, Oct. 25, at 8 p.m. Tickets \$10-\$60, www.synetictheater.org, or in-person at the box office located in the underground Crystal City Shops, or via phone at 703-824-8060 x117.

THROUGH OCT. 31

Ongoing Halloween Display. At 2508 Halterbreak Court, Herndon. Come see the punny skeletons, which are cooking up fun and ghostly apparitions appear in the windows and yard. Animated skeletons (Queen, Bruno Mars 24 karat magic, and Rick James Superfreak), talking witches and jumping spiders come out on Oct 31.

COX FARMS FALL FESTIVAL THROUGH NOV. 7

Giant slides, hayrides, rope swings, farm animals & their babies, Cornfield adventure, farm chores, kiddie zone, apples & cider, food, entertainment, Imagination Trail, over 90 acres. <https://coxfarms.com/fall-festival/festival-attractions/>.

Fields of Fear. Not recommended for children under 12 years old. When night falls on the farm, it's time for Fields of Fear. Friday and Saturday nights until Nov. 3. Fields of Fear, the Dark Side Hayride and the Cornnightmare. The Firegrounds feature several bonfires, a six-lane slide, music, karaoke, entertainment, tasty treats, Foamhenge, and more. All under age 14 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian (18+). Tickets required. Last admission at 10pm Come alone or in a group. Buy your tickets online or same-day at the door. Proof of age required. See <https://fieldsoffear.coxfarms.com/> for more details on timed entry assignments, rain policy, food options, and complete list of attractions.

OCT. 16 TO NOV. 6

"Wait Until Dark." 8 p.m. At The Little Theatre of Alexandria, 600 Wolfe St., Alexandria. Set against the socially turbulent 1960s, "Wait Until Dark" follows the story of Suzy, a blind woman who, while left alone in her apartment, becomes embroiled with a group of con men hatching an elaborate scam. As the tension mounts, Suzy must fend for herself, but the phone line is cut, and the house is plunged into darkness. Can Suzy outwit her murderous visitors? Note: All patrons are required to wear a mask (even if vaccinated) for the duration of the performance. Admission: \$21 to \$24 per person. Visit the website: thelittletheatre.com.

THURSDAY/OCT. 21

Halloween Ball and Anniversary Celebration. 7:30 to 10 p.m. At Barkhaus, 529 E Howell Ave, Alexandria. Celebrate Barkhaus's first birthday with a Halloween ball. Guests will dress formally and add their own Halloween twists to their costumes. Dogs are encouraged to dress up as well. Enjoy hors d'oeuvres, drinks, puppuccinos for dogs, a limited-edition Barkhaus anniversary shirt and more. Admission: \$75 per person. Visit the website: brewskisbarkhaus.com

OCT. 22, 23, 29, 30

Grief & Ghost Tour at Lee-Fendall House. At 7, 7:30, 8:30 and 9 p.m. At Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St., Alexandria. Celebrate Halloween with a look at Victorian mourning traditions coupled with stories of tragic deaths and mysterious occurrences at the Lee-Fendall House. Customs such as draping the mirrors after a death, funeral practices, hair mementos, mourning clothing and séances will be explored. These tours offer a rare opportunity to see the house after dark. Tours groups will be limited to 10 participants and tickets must be purchased in advance. Face masks are required. Admission: \$15 per person. Visit leefendallhouse.org

SATURDAY/OCT. 23

Old Town Trick or Treat by Old Town Business Association. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At various locations throughout Old Town Alexandria. Bring your little ghouls and goblins to historic Old Town Alexandria for tricks and treats from your favorite boutiques and restaurants. Check the event website for more details and a trick or treat map. Visit the website: oldtownbusiness.org

SUNDAY/OCT. 24

8th Annual Doggie Trick or Treat. 1 to 5 p.m. Meet at The Dog Park, 705 King St., Alexandria. Bring your costume-clad four-legged friends to historic Old Town Alexandria for tricks and treats from your favorite boutiques. Winners receive gift cards from The Dog Park

in three different categories. Visit the website: thedogparkva.biz

SUNDAY/OCT. 24

Del Ray Halloween Parade. 2 p.m. Parade begins at Mount Vernon Ave., south of E. Bellefonte Ave., Alexandria. Del Ray's annual Halloween Parade begins at Mount Vernon Ave., south of E. Bellefonte, and continues down to the Mount Vernon Recreation Center play fields. Children, pets and strollers in costumes are invited to march and show off their finest and scariest Halloween garb; awards are given for Best Pet Costume, Best Decorated Business, Best Decorated Home and Best Decorated Stroller. visitdelray.com/halloween

OCT. 24, 30, 31

Halloween Pet Portraits and Trick or Treat. At Village at Shirlington, and Westpost (formerly known as Pentagon Row.) Federal Realty invites kids in costumes to trick o' treat (tickets go on sale October 15th and are required), and complimentary Halloween pet portraits by Pooch Portrait Studios. This photography experience welcomes pets in costumes to capture a Halloween moment. Details: Sunday, October 24, 2021 at Pooch Portraits at Westpost Plaza (1201 S Joyce Street in Arlington) from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Pike & Rose on Saturday, October 30, 2021 with PIKEkids Trick or Treat from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. (*Tickets required). Sunday, October 31, 2021 a Bark Social Halloween Puppy Parade at 2 p.m. (*Tickets required at www.barksocial.com) Village at Shirlington on Arlington Mill Drive in Arlington. Saturday, October 30, 2021, Pooch Portraits on the Plaza at Arlington Mill Drive from 12 p.m.-3 p.m. Dogma Bakery Puppy Trick or Treat from 2-4 p.m. Sunday, October 31, 2021 a Kids Trick or Treat from 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

WEDNESDAY/OCT. 27

Vienna Halloween Parade. The 75th annual Town of Vienna Halloween Parade will take place at 7 p.m. The theme for this year's parade is "The Roaring Twenties." Children and others in costume are invited to march along in the parade, no need to register, meet at 6 p.m. at the United Bank, 374 Maple Ave., E. For sponsorship details, check out the Town's Halloween Sponsor brochure or contact Lily Widman via email or at 703-255-5738. Visit the website: <https://www.viennava.gov/residents/concerts-and-events/halloween-parade>

OCT. 28 AND 30

Poems and Stories of Edgar Allen Poe at Ivy Hill Cemetery. 7 to 8 p.m. Tour begins at the Ivy Hill Cemetery Office, 2823 King St., Alexandria. "Even in the grave, all is not lost!" The Guillotine Theatre presents "Poe outside the Vault" at Ivy Hill Cemetery. Actors from Guil-

lotine Theatre will read from the works of Edgar Allan Poe. This is a sell-out event in a most suitable atmosphere. Seating is limited. RSVP to info@IHCHPS.org. Admission is \$20. Visit the website: ivyhillcemetery.net

FRIDAY/OCT. 29

Halloween Vampire Ball. At Synetic Theater, 1800 S. Bell Street, Arlington. Doors open at 7:30 p.m.; Show starts at 8 p.m. Synetic Theater, in association with the National Landing Business Improvement District, JBG SMITH, and The Freshman, is throwing a VAMPIRE BALL. The festivities start with a performance of The Madness of Poe followed by an indoor/outdoor dance party with all the food, drinks, and candy that a ghoul could ask for. Expect aerialists, Edgar Allan Poe-themed cocktails, dancing, physical theater, spooky Georgian remixes, fun-sized candy bars, and more. Tickets are \$95-\$125 and are available at synetictheater.org.

OCT. 29-31

Boos & Booze at Café 44. At Café 44, 44 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 401, Alexandria. Café 44 is hosting its annual Boos & Booze Halloween event featuring themed craft cocktails and treats. Costumes (and reservations) are encouraged for this weekend-long riverside soirée. Visit cafe44.com

SATURDAY/OCT. 30

Trunk or Treat. 3-5 p.m. At 14550 Lee Road, Chantilly. Calling all families! Dress in your Halloween costume and come to nZone October 30, for New Life Christian Church's Trunk or Treat. Collect candy/prizes from themed and decorated cars. Visit the website: newlife.church/treat

Air & Scare. At the National Air and Space Museum's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free admission, tickets required, parking \$15; At 14390 Air and Space Museum Parkway, Chantilly. Annual Air & Scare program is back, with fun Halloween-themed STEAM activities, costumes, Star Wars characters, and of course, candy. Outdoors. Free, reserved tickets will be required. Also some virtual activities. Details at <https://airand-space.si.edu/events/air-and-scare-2021>

Trick-or-Treating at Mount Vernon. 2 to 6 p.m. At George Washington's Mount Vernon, 3200 Mount Vernon Memorial Hwy., Mount Vernon. Celebrate Halloween with 18th-century entertainment and activities. Visit Mount Vernon in costume, watch Halloween-themed Punch & Judy shows, see 18th-century chocolate-making demonstrations and more. Trick-or-Treating at Mount Vernon takes place rain or shine. Admission: General public: \$25 per adult; \$15 per youth; Members: \$17 per adult; \$9 per youth. Visit the website: mountvernon.org

Fall Frolic at Lee-Fendall House. At Lee-Fendall House, 614 Oronoco St., Alexandria. Hourly sessions occur from 10 a.m. through 3 p.m. Admission: \$15 per person. Enjoy some seasonal family fun in the garden of the Lee-Fendall House during the Fall Frolic. Put on your Halloween costumes and join in on activities catered to children ages 3-12. Activities include a "ghost" hunt, crafts and a costume parade. Timed tickets must be purchased in advance. Visit the website: leefendallhouse.org

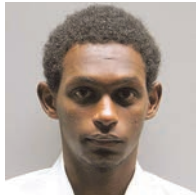
Nightmare at Barkhaus. 5 to 8 p.m. At Barkhaus, 529 E Howell Ave, Alexandria. Visit Barkhaus for the dog bar's annual costume contest. Enjoy spooky food and drink specials and send your costumed four-legged-friend down the dog runway in pursuit of prizes. Visit the website: brewskisbarkhaus.com

Fairfax Man Charged with Assaulting Teen

Fairfax County police have arrested a Fairfax man following an alleged sexual assault inside Chantilly High. He is Galata Bekele Bengessa, 22. Police responded to the school, Sept. 27, after the victim's mother contacted them to report her daughter had been assaulted, two hours earlier, at 8 a.m.

According to police, a man wearing a mask entered the school with other students, early that morning. "He approached the female victim, who believed he was another student," police say. "The man initiated a conversation and then unlawfully touched the victim. She was able to get away as other students approached. She contacted her mother and returned home prior to alerting school officials."

Upon hearing from the mother, officers searched the area surrounding the school and found Bekele Bengessa on foot near Route 50 and the Fairfax County Parkway. Police say he was "positively identified as the offender" and was then taken into custody. During his arrest, Bekele Bengessa



Bekele Bengessa

reportedly made statements to the officers that led him to be taken to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Last Wednesday, Oct. 13, Bekele Bengessa was officially arrested and taken to the Adult Detention Center. Police charged him with abduction by force, sexual battery and trespassing on school property. Further investigation led officers to two, additional alleged victims, who reported similar incidents involving the suspect that occurred away from school property.

Police would like to hear from anyone who has information about this crime and anyone who may have had unlawful contact with Bekele Bengessa. Tipsters are asked to call the Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 3. Tips may also be submitted anonymously to Crime Solvers by calling 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477), texting "FCCS" plus the tip to 847411, and at <http://www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org/>.

— BONNIE HOBBS

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10/20/2021.....A+ Camps & Schools
10/27/2021.....Senior Living
Connection Families: Safe for Halloween
10/2/2021.....Election Preview

NOVEMBER

11/3/2021.....Wellbeing
11/10/20.....HomeLifeStyle
11/17/2021.....A+ Camps & Schools
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Creepy Characters

Abandoned, historic buildings and into the night-time woods at the Workhouse Arts Center.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Northern Virginia's outdoor, walk-thru haunting tradition returns at the Workhouse's annual "Haunt." This year's all new version is "The Collection."

This year's Haunt immerses guests in a highly-themed walk-through experience with creepy characters delivering contactless scares in multiple scenes. Guests will travel about the Workhouse campus to rarely visited areas in small groups for a 30-minute experience of abandoned, historic buildings and into the night-time woods.

"It was important for us to create an experience that was both highly entertaining and safe for all attendees and participants," said Leon Scioscia, president/CEO, Workhouse Arts Center.

"All staff, actors, stage technicians, other contractors, and volunteers will be required to either be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or provide a negative COVID-19 test prior to the start of each weekend's performances," Scioscia said. Guests are asked to wear a mask while on campus.

The Workhouse live, in-person, "Haunt: The Collection" is not only for patrons' entertainment, but as an extension of the Workhouse Performing Arts Program. The "Haunt" is providing opportunities for local youth to practice their acting skills, set production and overall theatrical skills.

"We are truly pleased to provide an artistic outlet for our young actors, set designers, stage technicians, and volunteers alike to participate safely in creating this incredible production," said Joseph Wallen, director, Workhouse Performing Arts.

Even with the many challenges presented by the pandemic, "the outdoor, walk-thru design of 'The Collection' will allow visi-



PHOTO BY MORGAN PRESCOTT

David Blanco in character for Workhouse Arts Center outdoor immersive "Haunt: The Collection." Weekend nights Oct. 3 to Nov. 6, 2021.

"People should definitely come check us out. I personally think we are one of the scariest haunted attractions in the state of Virginia."

— Alex Hansohn

tors to enjoy the Halloween season despite COVID-19," said Caroline Blanco, chair, Workhouse Board of Directors and co-chair of the Workhouse Haunt design team.

"People should definitely come check us out. I personally think we are one of the scariest haunted attractions in the state of Virginia," said Alex Hansohn, one of the volunteers involved in "The Collection."

For participant David Blanco, "the Work-

house enables my creativity by allowing me to bring out some ideas I have for how to design a haunted house. I am most excited to be back."

"This year's story is better than ever and you will get to see stuff you have never imagined before," added Morgan Prescott who helped design the event and plays one of the unscripted creative characters on the haunted trail.

Note: There will be premium nights with additional live entertainment on Oct. 16, 23, 30 and 31.

This is an outdoor event. The route includes paved and unpaved surfaces. Guests are cautioned to wear appropriate footwear.



PHOTO BY DAVID BLANCO

Morgan Prescott in haunting character for Workhouse Arts Center outdoor immersive "Haunt: The Collection." Weekend nights Oct. 3 to Nov. 6, 2021.

Where and When:

Workhouse Arts Center presents

"Haunt: The Collection" at 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton, VA 22079. weekend nights through Saturday, Nov. 6, 2021. Fridays and Saturdays, 7-11 p.m. and Sundays, 7-10 p.m. Recommended for guests 13 years of age and older. Timed-entry tickets available and must be purchased online. Tickets priced from \$25 per person on most nights and \$30 per person on Premium Nights. Ticket pricing varies upon the night. For details, tickets, and health and safety information go to www.workhousearts.org.

Snacks and beverages will be available for purchase at the Haunt Bar, located near the check-in area in the campus quad.

CALENDAR

NOW THRU NOV. 6

Workhouse Haunt. 7-11 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. This year's Workhouse Haunt immerses guests through a highly-themed walk-through experience, as creepy characters deliver contactless scares in multiple scenes. Guests will travel in small groups for a frightening 30-minute experience that brings them next to the site's abandoned, historic buildings and into the dark woods where they will encounter terrifying characters and sights that

are not for the faint of heart. Cost is \$25. Occurs Friday, Saturday, and Sunday each weekend from Oct. 3 through Nov. 6. Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/workhouse-events/2021-workhouse-haunt-the-collection-2/>

NOW THRU OCT. 31

Fall for the Book. Fall for the Book Festival featuring live and recorded events will be held virtually and in-person at George Mason's Fair-

fax campus. 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Fall for the Book events and sessions are free and open to the public. Fall for the Book is free with the generous support of sponsors including the Fairfax County Public Library, George Mason University, the Fairfax Library Foundation, and the City of Fairfax among others. On Friday, October 29 at 1:30 p.m., actor Henry Winkler will appear virtually to discuss his new children's book Hollywood vs. The Galaxy with co-author Lin Oliver.

Fall for the Book returns with a new hybrid format including virtual and in-person events, including lively Podcasts. For complete up-to-date schedule with details, visit www.fallforthebook.org.

NOW THRU NOV. 7

"Wicked." Open Wednesday thru Sunday 11 – 7 p.m. At 2905 District Ave. #105, Fairfax. There's a "Wicked" new exhibit at Mosaic District, but wicked in a good way. In today's informal slang, the word

"wicked" can mean excellent or even awesome. With Halloween in mind, it is in that spirit that the Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic is presenting its newest show titled "Wicked." Gallery artists will demonstrate the theme in a variety of mediums, including painting, fine art photography, exquisite jewelry, fabric art, printmaking, ceramics and sculpture. The Torpedo Factory Artists @ Mosaic is a satellite gallery sponsored by the Torpedo Factory Artists' Association.

ROUNDUPS

Tiny Beer Fest, Cut-a-thon, this Sunday

High Side and Mara Hair and Mode Studio will host Fairfax City Tiny Beer Fest 2021 and Cut-a-thon, this Sunday, Oct. 24, from noon-6 p.m., in their parking lot at 4009 Chain Bridge Road in Fairfax. This outdoor event for ages 21 and over will feature more than 30 craft beers, Asian street food, music a fall marketplace.

It's also a fundraiser to support the Breast Cancer Research Foundation (BCRF), which will receive 10 percent of the profits from the beer fest and 100 percent of the proceeds from the cut-a-thon. Mara hair stylists will give haircuts all day, with donations starting at \$40. Book appointments at 703-591-9099.

Tickets for the Tiny Beer Fest are on both businesses' websites and social media pages and at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fairfax-city-tiny-beer-fest-2021-tickets180522055327>.

Musical Performances at Fairfax High

The Fairfax Academy's Musical Theater and Actor's Studio present "Just Duet," an evening of musical duet performances and scene work. It's set for Tuesday, Oct. 26, at 7 p.m., in Fairfax High's auditorium. The show is free and tickets are not needed, but a \$5 donation is suggested.

Ghosts, Goons and a Bunnyman

At 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 23, the Burke Historical Society will partner with Sunrise at Silas Burke House to present a special Halloween-themed event. Please join festivities on the patio (between the assisted living facility and the historic house) for some local history, treats, and pumpkin-painting.

Starting at 1:30, BHS Treasurer Cindy Bennett will share her talk "Ghosts, Goons and a Bunnyman," which covers a wide range of spooky tales from Northern Virginia. Following the presentation, the Burke Historical Society will offer a limited number of tours of the historic Silas Burke House.

The address is 9619 Burke Lake Rd, Burke, VA 22015; park in Sunrise's lot or along Shiplott Boulevard.

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Hardly the Same Thing



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

It may not have been the miracle I was hoping for: shrinkage or tumor disappearance, from my most recent diagnostic scans but no growth and/or new metastases is nothing to be taken for granted. However, I did experience a miracle of sorts when the envelope I received at home from the "State of Maryland, Maryland SafeZones Automated Speed Enforcement" authority specifying and picturing yours truly exceeding the speed limit by 12 mph was for information purposes only. It was not an invoice. It was a warning. And the \$40 fine associated with this kind of infraction was left on the cutting room floor. Perhaps this is the extent of the miracle that Solange was able to perform when she prayed for me and my burned feet - and thyroid cancer, on July 20 in the Houston airport. Though this outcome was not exactly the delusional outcome I was hoping for, when we consented to her extremely kind offer to pray for me. Nevertheless, a win is a win. And though a shrinking/disappearing cancer tumor would have been an amazing - albeit unlikely outcome, the tumors remained "stable" and I saved a \$40 outlay. On balance, not a bad day's work.

For which I am extremely grateful. Soon after I entered the cancer-patient world, I learned that any not-automatically-bad news - whether internally or externally to that world, should be acknowledged and appreciated. Any port in a storm you might say. Moreover, I always sought to find the positive in this sea of negativity. Whatever I could see - through any rose-colored glasses I could find, served its purpose to emotionally support me for the many long and lonely nights that followed. Certainly, there's family and friends to help share the burden brought on by a "terminal" diagnosis, but at the end of the day, literally, it's sort of you and your thoughts. Finding a way to navigate this minefield of unpredictable results and anxiety is paramount. On the one hand, you can't take what the doctors and radiologists say as seriously as a cancer diagnosis obviously is, but neither can you pretend that you're not in the fight of your life. That being said, one must be open to new ideas and unexpected offers. Filtering and interpreting whether any of the suggestions made by your doctors and/or your well-meaning friends and family becomes your lot in life. And it's an awful lot at that.

Still, a cancer diagnosis is not nearly the death sentence as it used to be for the previous generation. Though it would be naive to characterize a cancer diagnosis as an opportunity, nevertheless unceasing research in a variety of hospital/cancer centers, medical schools, clinical trials, pharmaceutical companies and the like have led to an evolution in the treatment in cancer, particularly non small cell lung cancer which is the type of cancer I was originally diagnosed with in late Feb., 2009. (Though I am now being treated for papillary thyroid cancer as you regular readers know. As to whether I ever had lung cancer, the jury is still out, not literally.)

And since I have an incurable form of thyroid cancer, as written about numerous times in this space, I am forever open to new experiences that might create a path forward for me. The underlying problem in my situation is the odd circumstances that ultimately led to my more recent diagnosis. Since I had years of heavy-duty chemotherapy while treating my presumptive lung cancer, I have suffered kidney damage which only manifests itself in lab work and in what medications/treatment I can be given. As such when I went to the hospital after my thyroidectomy for post-surgical eradication of the remaining thyroid cancer that the surgeon was unable to remove, the dose of nuclear isotopes I was given was only one-third the dose it should have been had I not been so previously chemotherapy-damaged. As a result, I'm sort of stuck. I have a usually curable type of thyroid cancer which is now considered incurable. The solution? I need to find a clinical trial for patients who have been treated for lung cancer for nine years, perhaps mistakenly, suffered irreparable kidney damage from those years of toxicity, who now has been diagnosed with thyroid cancer and who is now unable to process the medicine likely to cure him and thus is: incurable.

You bet I need a miracle, and sooner rather than later. Maybe I should fly back to Houston.

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

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Improving Parent-Teen Relationships

Adolescence can be challenging, but living with constant discord is not the only option.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

“Why do you hate me?”
“You’re the worst mother in the world!”
These are some of what Kate Hoyle hears from her 14-year-old daughter.

“It’s like she went from being a sweet girl to a raging teen overnight,” said the Woodbridge-based parenting coach and mother of two. “It was like getting slapped in the face.”

As children become adolescents, they often begin to push away parents and crave independence. Topics of conversation that were once pleasant now can be volatile. Some parents may question their parenting abilities.

“Adolescents naturally become more autonomous and shift somewhat to peer influence after looking exclusively to parents for the answer. But a smart parent learns to shift their approach and skills with the onset of this stage of development,” said Hoyle. “This change can be gradual or it can be sudden and is sometimes the result of a major life change. It is important to get to know the parents of your child’s friends.”

Recognizing and understanding the change in behavior that is associated with this developmental stage can help parents to navigate it, says Bethesda-based therapist Carol Barnaby, LCSW. “Twins and teens begin to develop their autonomy by questioning, testing, and for some violating the rules parents set for them,” she said. “They express strong opinions about politics, clothing, music, and social relationships. They begin to yearn for their freedom to do adult-like things. They may lose interest in previous hobbies, be easily embarrassed, and have emotional ups and downs.”

It is not uncommon for teens to act like they know best and to dismiss a parent’s guidance. “It can be annoying, but it shows confidence,” said Hoyle. “Enjoy debates and discussion with them. They need to develop independent analysis and thought.”

However frustrating for a parent, this stage is necessary for a child’s transition from adolescence to adulthood. “It’s when they’re entering the final phase of childhood, where they are working on being able to self-govern and grow into an independent functioning adult,” said Barnaby. “Kids begin to enter this phase around the age of 12 to 14 and want more and more independence and less need for parent connection. Instead, they might see who they are in the eyes of their peers.”

SURVIVING THE TEEN YEARS

1. Avoid trying to control
2. Spend time together without electronics
3. Withhold judgement
4. Offer sincere praise
5. Maintain open communication
6. Allow independence, but set boundaries
7. Give teens personal space

Though they might appear to push away parents, teens still need to feel connected to them. Simple conversations can help recreate that bond. At times, parents must create opportunities to spend time without phones or electronics with their child, advises Ameila Muench, Psy. D., a child psychologist in Alexandria. “Do something together that they enjoy and try to keep the time consistent,” she said. “This can quickly become your special time away from other family members, and it allows them to open up.”

“Routine and ritual help maintain open communication,” added Hoyle. “Your child gets to know when you are available and you get to understand when they are most likely to be open to talk. Car rides work well because it removes the intensity of a sit-down conversation requiring eye contact.”

Listen without judgment or criticism and resist the urge to offer unsolicited advice, advises Muench. “Use active listening, which means being able to repeat back to them what they have just said,” she said. “Take note of the language they are using. What are they really trying to tell you? Ask questions to find out rather than instantly responding with your view. Listen rather than instruct.”

While establishing rules and setting boundaries are necessary, trying to control a teen might lead to rebellion, says Hoyle. “Get curious, not furious,” she said. “When your teen makes an unhealthy choice or does something you don’t agree with, getting mad or telling them you’re disappointed will further your disconnection. Their behavior is trying to get one of six core emotional needs met: acceptance, affection, appreciation, attention, autonomy, or connection. Which one is it? Look beneath the surface.”

Allowing teens to have a certain amount of personal space and feel that they are trusted can strengthen the relationship between a parent and an adolescent. “Continuous tracking and distrust can affect their mental health that can lead to depression,” said Hoyle.

Self-doubt is common among teens, so praise helps build confidence if offered sincerely. “They’re trying to find their place in the world, so focus on attributes not attainment,” said Muench. “If teens and tweens learn that they only get praise when they look a certain way or achieve through academic endeavors or sports, they can become people pleasers or unhappy perfectionists.”

Remember that this stage in a child’s life is only temporary. “One of the biggest things we can encourage in a child is curiosity. Talk to them as the person you want them to be,” said Hoyle.

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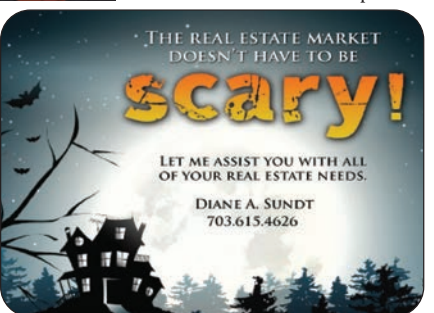
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