

Great Falls CONNECTION

As by-right construction continues in Great Falls, the need to protect the tree canopy sparks new concerns in 2022. "There is huge concern about the loss of the tree cover."

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Matters of Importance to Great Falls in 2022

Supervisor John W. Foust's perspective.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

John W. Foust (D-Dranesville), who represents Great Falls on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, enumerated issues facing the community in an interview during the first week of January 2022. Among the topics discussed were the Route 7 widening, a “game-changer according to Foust, by-right construction, tree loss, dark skies, and the Springvale Road bridge design options by VDOT.

“I am optimistic that a lot of the traffic that diverts on Georgetown Pike will stay on Route 7 once [its] capacity has been dramatically increased,” Foust said. VDOT and local officials broke ground in June 2019 on nearly seven miles of transportation improvements on Route 7 to increase capacity, safety, and traffic flow and provide better mobility for cyclists and pedestrians. “Close to 52,000 drivers a day travel this important artery in our region,” said Helen Cuervo, PE., VDOT’s Northern Virginia district engineer at the time, “with 86,000 a day projected by 2040.”

Despite the high level of residential construction, zoning activity is low in Great Falls. Much development is “by-right,” meaning it complies with the zoned use of the area and thus does not require discretionary approval. “It was already approved many years ago,” Foust said. By-right development means a lost opportunity to negotiate concessions from a builder in exchange for approval.

One example is a property known as Marmota Farm. The 22.78-acre site along Georgetown Pike has a new name, Hayden at Great Falls, a Toll Brothers development of 11 single-family homes. Because the original site plan, which was submitted and approved years ago, is still operable and is the one Toll Brothers is using, county staff approved the project without bringing it before the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. The project still needed to obtain the necessary permits.

However, Foust said he wanted to identify ways to mitigate the negative impacts associated with future by-right development in particular.

“There is huge concern about the loss of the tree cover,” Foust said.

The trend for larger homes often reduces tree canopy. In addition to the building footprint, other requirements such as stormwater mitigation, setbacks, septic fields, and underground and overhead utilities compete with the mature trees on the lot. Trees come down to make way for the requirements, and other trees die after the disturbance of construction.

“There are some good ideas that have been generated recently by the Tree Com-



Supervisor John W. Foust (D-Dranesville) represents Great Falls on the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors; one of his offices is in McLean.



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

As by-right construction continues in Great Falls, amiable means to protect the unincorporated community’s tree canopy sparks new considerations in 2022.

mission that have been endorsed by both the McLean Citizens Association and the Great Falls Citizens Association that I think will be quite helpful if we can move those forward,” Foust said.

Increasing infill property setbacks is one way to reduce tree canopy loss, according to Foust. Then there is the case where building height restrictions could be relaxed in exchange for a smaller footprint and less tree impact.

Foust endorsed the pending International Dark-Sky Association’s designation of Observatory Park at Turner Farm in Great Falls as an Urban Night Sky Place. The Board of Supervisors submitted a letter of support to the Park Authority for its nomination of Obser-

“There is huge concern about the loss of the tree cover.”

— Supervisor John Foust

vatory Park, according to Jane Edmonston, Supervisor John W. Foust’s chief of staff. Staff is also working on a Dark Sky Zoning Ordinance Amendment. Edmonston expects the board to see the draft this year.

“We will be working to advance the Dark Sky Ordinance in Great Falls,” said Foust. “We have, over the years, been able to get some significant accommodations from VDOT and others to maintain the dark

skies that we have there. This would make it much easier to get exceptions in terms of street lighting and so forth from VDOT.”

Preliminary designs for a replacement bridge over Piney Run on Springvale Road (Route 674) are some cause for concern. The current bridge is a one-lane bridge, and the community has expressed a strong preference for maintaining the one-lane bridge. Both proposed alternatives on VDOT’s website call for two lanes. One proposal is for two lanes with four-foot-wide shoulders, and a second proposal is for two lanes separated by raised/splitter island median with two-foot-wide shoulders.

FCPS Faces Staff Shortages With the Rise of Omicron

Superintendent pledges to keep students in the classroom, but it will “not be business as usual.”

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Public Schools is immediately switching to a new operational plan as the area is being slammed by the size and speed of the Omicron wave.

“We will follow this operational plan for the next two-to-three weeks,” said Superintendent Scott S. Brabrand, on Friday, Jan. 6. “During this time, we must adjust our expectations about instruction and give our staff the space needed to make adjustments and on-the-spot decisions needed to combat this Covid spike.”

FCPS plans to deploy its central office and management staff to school operations.

“It will not be business as usual,” Brabrand said. “These shortages will impact us in every way, from classroom instruction to operations.” Brabrand outlined the plan and asked for patience. “There will be some things that simply cannot happen as we move central office staff to supporting school operations,” Brabrand said.

Brabrand outlined the division’s five-point plan beginning with classroom coverage.

He reminded teachers to upload materials to Schoology and said that FCPS may not always be able to provide StreamIN/CheckIN, the plan for students who are paused, quarantined, or isolated due to Covid. FCPS will seek a substitute teacher from the sub pool, another teacher or staff member, and Central Office volunteer subs who have instructional experience when a classroom teacher is absent. FCPS could combine two classes with one teacher and group multiple classes together, to provide supervision.

The shortage of school bus drivers is causing delays in bus routes, double-back runs, and students arriving at school after the bell.

“Schools will adjust instruction to ensure that no child is missing important classroom time,” Brabrand said. Check the Bus Delay App <https://bus-delay.fcps.edu/>.

Food Services continues to provide breakfast and lunch, but bag lunches may be offered instead of the regular meals given more significant staff shortages

Brabrand asked families to help beginning with their health and safety:

- ❖ Keep sick children home;
- ❖ Get students vaccinated;
- ❖ Enroll students in optional screening testing



FCPS is resolved to keep schools open.



FCPS is urging families to get their children vaccinated as the best protection against Covid-19.

❖ Use FCPS’ diagnostic testing if a student has symptoms.

❖ Help students use layered prevention strategies: proper masks, wash hands, and use hand sanitizer; and be sure students bring home their laptops and chargers every night.

❖ Finally, he urged parents to apply to be substitute teachers.

“Please know that while things will not be perfect, we are all doing our best. We are all in this together as a community, and it will take all of us to keep our schools open,” Brabrand said, Read Dr. Brabrand’s January 6 Letter to Families

<https://www.fcps.edu/blog/message-families-navigating-january-2022-covid-surge>

The Fairfax County Health Department explained a more specific approach to vaccination for the coronavirus for children and teens.



“There are now expanded vaccination opportunities for teens and children effective this week. Following recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Virginia Department of Health, the Fairfax County Health Department immediately adopts the following recommendations:

❖ individuals ages 12–17 years should get a Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine booster dose five months after finishing their two-dose primary series;

❖ individuals ages 18 years and older should get any COVID-19 Vaccine booster dose five months, rather than six months, after finishing their two-dose primary series of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine; and

❖ 5–11-year-old vaccine recipients who are moderately or severely immunocompromised are eligible to receive a third dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine 28 days after the second dose.



Students return to in person learning in Fairfax County Public Schools.

Return to School 2022

After a week of weather closures, FCPS opens with Covid-19 surging.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Regardless of where one lives in Fairfax County or the surrounding jurisdictions, the highly infectious Covid-19 variant omicron is setting records.

Fairfax County Public Schools, the nation’s eleventh largest school district, remains committed to in-person learning. But schools were closed the week of Jan. 3-7 because of weather.

What do you think? Send your thoughts to mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com. You can submit your comments as a letter to the editor at <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/contact/letter/>

Dawn Stuvland Crosson is a teacher in Herndon and resides in Reston. “As a teacher and a parent, I am very happy to be back in person. The idea of going virtual again is a terrible one. I’m glad the superintendent is clear that we’re in it for the long haul. Omicron is not a threat to children; no healthy child has died from Omicron -- and most have probably already had it. In contrast, virtual school was terrible for our kids. I still see such tragic repercussions from last year in my classroom, and with my own children. If parents are uncomfortable with sending their kids because of media hype surrounding a new variant of a virus that is harmless to children, they can keep them home, but life should go on as normal. Kids need to be in school.”

Erin Lobato of Great Falls is a parent of a Langley 10th grader and recent 2021 grad. “Quite frankly, given the shocking drop in academic achievement from 2019 to 2020, the incredibly low risk of Omicron to healthy people - especially children - and FCPS’s tendency to focus on style over substance, I’m more worried about their ability to provide our children with a solid education this year.”

Julia Malakoff, Herndon, children in Oakton High School: “Two of my four kids are currently in the Fairfax County School system. (Oakton High School) They both experienced extreme depression, isolation and difficulties learning online last year. My junior, whose grades were barely passing last year, is now making straight As as an in person student. And my freshman has come out of his depression now that he can socialize, have personal attention and be on the track team.

“We are 100 percent for in person learning no matter what.” One parent said that she was keeping her child home out of concerns about an environment safe from Covid infection, but did not want to use her name because of possible backlash.

FCPS Superintendent Search Survey

Superintendent Scott Brabrand has stated his plan to leave at the end of this school year, and a plan to find a new FCPS superintendent is underway. The Fairfax County School Board says it is committed to hiring the best possible candidate for FCPS' next superintendent.

With that in mind, the Board has contracted a search firm to conduct a national search for the new superintendent. Community voices are an important part of this effort.

The school board asks the community to weigh in by participating in the Superintendent Search Survey. The survey allows FCPS parents/guardians, staff, high school students, and community members to share their thoughts on the leadership characteristics and qualities of the next superintendent. Information gathered through the survey,

focus groups, and upcoming town halls will help inform the selection of FCPS' new superintendent.

Parents should check email for a survey link from K12 Insight (survey administrator), which was sent on Jan. 4.

High school students received their survey invitation on Jan. 5, via their FCPSSchools.net email accounts.

If you are a FCPS community member and would like to take the survey, click here https://www.fcps.edu/school-board/superintendent-search?utm_campaign+=&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

Then scroll down the webpage for the link to the Superintendent Search Survey for Community Members.

The survey deadline is Tuesday, Jan. 18.

Tax on Plastic Bags

The new five-cent tax on disposable plastic bags went into effect at certain retailers across Fairfax County on Jan. 1, 2022. Here are five things you need to know about this new tax.

1. ONLY THREE TYPES OF RETAILERS ARE AFFECTED

The tax is only on disposable plastic bags from grocery stores, convenience stores and drug stores. Some bigger box stores, like Walmart, are also included.

2. THE TAX IS COMPLETELY AVOIDABLE

If you bring your own reusable shopping bag and use it at the register, you can avoid paying this tax.

3. THE PURPOSE OF THE TAX IS TO CURB PLASTIC POLLUTION

Unlike some other taxes, this tax does not exist for the purpose of collecting revenue. The entire goal of the tax is to help encourage

change behavior and to reduce the use of disposable plastic bags.

4. ANY REVENUE COLLECTED WILL BE USED FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

The Virginia Department of Taxation will administer and collect the tax. Any revenue collected will be provided to Fairfax County periodically and will be used to help stand up environmental programs and services to curb litter and pollution, and to provide reusable bags to those eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits.

5. ARLINGTON AND ALEXANDRIA ALSO HAVE A PLASTIC BAG TAX

The region is moving collectively to address plastic pollution. Both Arlington and Alexandria have implemented a five-cent tax on disposable plastic bags as of Jan. 1, 2022.

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Great Falls in 2022

FROM PAGE 3

“The community has spoken pretty loudly that they want to see the single-lane bridge preserved. I agree with that,” Foust said. “A two-lane bridge would induce more traffic and adversely impact Georgetown Pike, which we are obligated by state resolutions and our commitment to the community to protect,” he said.

According to Foust, there is no imminent threat of a two-lane bridge being constructed or approved yet. It is VDPT’s general policy not to build one-lane bridges. VDOT’s website states that “Design waivers for one-lane bridges only can be considered when the design year Average Daily Traffic (ADT) is less than or equal to 400... ADT on Springvale Road is 4,700.”

“The process will be for me to make a motion and get the support of my board to submit a request to the Commonwealth Transportation Board and their Chief Bridge Engineer of VDOT. They would have the approval authority. As a Board Supervisor, I can only ask. They will decide,” Foust said.

The Great Falls Grange Foundation, Inc. plans to take over management and marketing from the Fairfax County Park Authority to make the Great Falls Grange complex a community gathering place.

“I basically told them it is a great idea. I asked them to get it to the point where they have a finalized proposal to the Park Authority that we can then take to the community at large to make sure that there’s no issue,” Foust said.

The Board of Supervisors set a goal to identify \$100 million in new funding for unfunded countywide pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects. They added an addendum to the Transportation Priorities Plan [TPP] that will run through FY 2027.

Foust asked McLean Citizens Association leaders to prioritize their initiatives. On Jan. 5, their board recommended 14 bike and pedestrian projects. “One hundred million dollars is just going to scratch the surface needed across Fairfax County. We need to find more money,” Foust said.



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

The Great Falls property known as Marmota Farm is moving forward with by-right residential development. Supervisor Foust wants to find ways to mitigate the adverse effects of future by-right development on the community’s tree canopy in 2022.



MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

County staff will continue to work on a Dark Sky Zoning Ordinance Amendment in 2022, based on an unanimously approved resolution by Fairfax County supervisors on Oct. 5 supporting the county Park Authority’s proposal to seek dark-sky status for Observatory Park at Turner Farm in Great Falls.



MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

In 2022, at the request of Supervisor John Foust, the Great Falls Grange Foundation is seeking community support as they finalize their proposal to the Park Authority to manage and market the Grange as a rental.



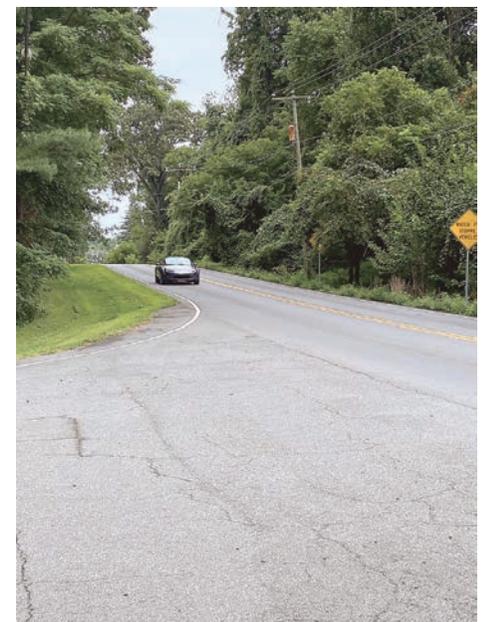
VDOT

Considered design drafts [2020] for the Springvale Road Bridge over Piney Run.



MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Drivers queue on Springvale Road to cross Piney Run on the one-lane bridge that VDOT might replace some time in the future, possibly as considered a two-lane bridge. Foust heard constituents say they want to keep it one lane.



MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

In 2022, there are still no paths or sidewalks along Georgetown Pike in this section heading toward the village center.

Veri Peri 2022 Color of the Year

Described blue with red-violet undertones, the hue is expected to be on trend this year.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Those home accessories or planning a whole-house remodeling project or simply looking to purchase home accessories will have a new color option. Described as a shade of blue with violet-red undertones, Very Peri is Pantone's 2022 Color of the year. The hue, which is expected to be on trend in products that range from home furnishings to runway fashion, is getting mixed reviews from local designers.

"Very Peri isn't a color that I would choose often, or recommend to clients frequently, but I can see why some people would love it," said McLean designer Ashley Hollings,

"I may be in the minority, but I think it's a beautiful color," said North Potomac designer Dana Wiseman of Wiseman Designs. "However, I don't think I'd recommend it to a client. It's a bit too dark for an interior."

"As a purple with a blue edge, Veri Peri is cold and bold," said Annie Elliott of Bossy Color and Annie Elliott Design "It's a strong, impressive color, but it isn't welcoming and that's the number one word my clients use when describing their ideal home."

There are those aren't afraid to embrace it, says Cathy McNamara of Dream Interiors in Alexandria. "I'm seeing an uptick in the number of homeowners and designers who are taking risks. Veri Peri is definitely risky," she said. "This was once a color that was only used as an accent, but more and more of my clients are choosing bold colors for whole rooms."

Those who find the color appealing, but want to use it with caution. Veri Peri can add a burst of vibrancy to a neutral interior.

"As a solid color, it would look great on lamps or a quilt in a crisp white bedroom," said Elliott. "It would be a dramatic accent color in an extremely contemporary home, and the only accent color, possibly. It would be effective as a splash of color on pillows, vases, and art."

Though considered by designers to be a vivid hue, Veri Peri can be paired with colors to increase or subdue its vibrancy. "You can pair it with neutral colors like beige or white to balance the shade and provide a calming, comforting effect," said interior designer



PHOTO BY ANNIE ELLIOTT

Very Peri, color of the year for 2022, is expected to be prevalent in home furnishings such as the sofa in this room which was designed by Annie Elliott of Annie Elliott Design.



PHOTO BY ANNIE ELLIOTT

Annie Elliott of Bossy Color and Annie Elliott Design says Veri Peri, color of the year for 2022, can be integrated into a splash of color on pillows, vases, and art.

"I think Pantone picks wild colors on purpose to spark some conversation. If they picked a boring beige no one would talk about it."

— Ashley Hollings, interior designer

Michelle Zimmerman of Potomac.

"If you want to make more of a statement, pair it with oranges or yellows, which makes the purple hue pop and appear more vivid," continued Zimmerman. "They're complementary and will create a bold statement."

"To tone down the boldness of Veri Peri, I

would pair it with adjacent colors such as red, burgundy, and navy blue," added Elliott. "The cleverest thing about Veri Peri from an interior design perspective is that it will look great with cool gray."

For the past 23 years, experts from the Pantone Color Institute forecasts global color trends and select a Color of the Year.

"I think Pantone picks wild colors on purpose to spark some conversation," said Hollings. "I mean if they picked a boring beige no one would talk about it."

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nection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyper local news to residents. It feels like no small miracle to be looking forward into 2022.

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

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Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
MONTGOMERY	12333	726	GOLD RUSH ROAD/726 ROUTE	BRUSH CREEK	12/16/2021

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth, but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit <https://www.virginiadot.org> and navigate to Info Center/Trucking Resources. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact, haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730.

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

SATURDAY/JAN. 15

Martin Luther King Weekend Event.

2-4 p.m. Teaching Truth: Putting Students First. Countering the baseless claims of anti-CRT politics. To reinforce the importance of teaching inclusive history, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax (UUCF) will sponsor a virtual teach-in. Organized by UUCF's Racial Justice Steering Committee and groups and individuals committed to truth, equity and justice, the teach-in commemorates Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday. It also coincides with Virginia Governor-elect Glenn Youngkin's first day in office, a date he has vowed to "ban CRT" in the Commonwealth. Since CRT is not taught in Virginia schools, the event organizers aim to counter disinformation about CRT and lift up how quality education needs to include "teaching truth." Teaching Truth: Putting Students First, visit www.uucf.org/teaching-truth.

JAN. 26-27

Preschool Open House. At FB Meekins Cooperative Preschool, 900 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. 1:30-3 p.m. (Last Tour at 2:45 p.m.) Learn about the Yellows (2s), Greens (older 2s/3s), Blues (older 3s/4s), Reds (pre-K), and Kindergarten programs. Take a tour and meet the teachers and current families. Have any application questions answered. Visit the website: www.fbmeekins.org.

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Wegmans Pharmacy locations are now offering the Moderna and J&J/Janssen vaccine booster doses to eligible individuals by appointment only. Schedule an appointment by visiting Wegmans.com/pharmacy or calling 1-800-207-6099.

FAIRFAX COUNTY CORONAVIRUS INFO CENTER

Fairfax County Health Department COVID-19 webpage – www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/novel-coronavirus
Emergency Information Blog (you can subscribe by email or follow by RSS) – www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/blog
Coronavirus (COVID-19) Call Center – The community may call 703-267-3511 with questions. The call center is open from 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends.
Residents may also text FFXCOVID to 888777 to receive updates from Fairfax County about COVID-19.
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Facebook – www.facebook.com/fairfaxcounty and www.facebook.com/fairfaxcountyhealth

ONGOING

1 Million Cups. Wednesdays, 8:30 a.m. networking; 9-10 a.m. program at Make Offices at Tysons, 1751 Pinnacle Drive, Suite 600, McLean. Each week a different business owner gives a brief six-minute presentation about where they are in their business. They then offer up a challenge

question about a new idea, product, expansion or something they are facing in their business. The group then masterminds solutions. Free and open to the public. Visit www.1millioncups.com/.

Great Falls Friends and Neighbors (GFFN) invites women living in the Langley High School District or The Estates of Lowes Island to learn more about the group. The purpose of GFFN is to establish and foster an atmosphere in which new and current residents can develop new friendships and community contacts through social, educational and cultural activities. In addition, the club provides service, support and donations to philanthropic and civic organizations in and around the Great Falls community. Email info@gffnva.org or visit www.gffnva.org.

Vienna Toastmasters. 2nd and 4th Wednesdays from 7:30-9 p.m., at the Vienna Community Center on the 2nd floor room opposite the elevator, 120 Cherry St., S.E., Vienna. A friendly place to get comfortable with public speaking and impromptu speaking for new and experienced speakers. Open to the public.

Run With the Doctor. Every other Saturday at 7 a.m. 8230 Boone Blvd., Tysons Corner. The Center for Orthopedics and Sports Medicine offers its services in a convenient format to runners at this running event. Free. facebook.com/run-withthedoctor.

Virginia Sheriffs' Institute Scholarship Program. Those enrolled in a Virginia college or university who are pursuing a degree in the field of criminal justice are eligible for the Virginia Sheriffs Institute Scholarship Program; recommendation letter needed. 703-246-3251, shf-pio@fairfaxcounty.gov or vasheriffsinstitute.org/scholarship/.

Brinker Toastmasters. 2nd and 4th Saturday, 9:30 a.m. at Vienna Presbyterian Church, 124 Park St. N.E., Vienna. Brinker.wordpress.com.

Pauline Shirley Toastmasters Club Meeting. 2nd and 4th Tuesday, 7 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Develop better speaking and presentation skills, learn to think quickly and clearly on your feet. 703-893-5506 or pauleshirley.freetoasthost.info.

Northern Virginia Charter Chapter of the American Business Women's Association Holds Business Meetings. The Chapter meets the third Thursday each month from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Tickets via Eventbrite are \$25 in advance and \$30 cash at the door. Seating is limited. Open to businesspersons working or living in and around Fairfax and Prince William counties. Guests and prospective members welcome. The Northern Virginia Charter Chapter of the American Business Women's Association embraces positive, energetic and supportive women willing to help themselves and other women succeed both professionally and personally. To register, use www.eventbrite.com/e/abwa-nvcc-welcomes-shereton-washington-from-the-p3-solution-tickets-25778817136.

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The Daryl Davis Band will perform at the McLean Community Center on Jan. 14 and 16, 2022.

NOW THRU FEB. 19

New Art Exhibits. At McLean Project for the Arts, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Give and Take: Building Form (Emerson Gallery) will feature abstract wood sculpture by Emilie Benes Brzezinski, Rachel Rotenberg, Foon Sham, and Norma Schwartz, while the Atrium Gallery will feature Intersectional Painting: Works by Sheila Crider. Both exhibitions run through Feb. 19, 2022. Visit www.mpaart.org/ or call 703-790-1953 for gallery hours.

NOW THRU JAN. 30

Paint & Pen. 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. At Jo Ann Gallery Reston Community Center, Lake Anne, 1609 Washington Plaza N, Reston. Two Artists, One Show with paintings by Angie Magruder and drawings by Bob Biedrzycki. Visit the website: www.restoncommunitycenter.com

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 12

Color Theory. 7-8:30 p.m. At Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive, Centreville. Learn about color theory, what color combinations work well together, and how to use the color wheel. We will then create art using what was learned. Materials are supplied. Adults.

THURSDAY/JAN. 13

Kite Festival Virtual Workshop. 6 p.m. At McLean Community Center, McLean. Makar Sankranti / Uttarayan is the Hindu festival dedicated to the Surya, the Sun God. In Gujarat, the festival is also known as the kite festival, as people of all backgrounds take to rooftops and fill the sky with colorful kites or patang. Kites for Uttarayan are made of special lightweight paper and bamboo and a single bow. The string is often coated with glass powder to make it easier to cut down other kites during the frequent kite fights that take place.

FRIDAY/JAN. 14

The Daryl Davis Band. 7 p.m. At The Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Daryl Davis is a boogie-woogie pianist who has played with

the likes of B. B. King, Chuck Berry and Jerry Lee Lewis. He and his band kick off Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. weekend with an evening of R&B and blues. Tickets to Friday's concert are \$30/\$20 for MCC district residents. Visit www.mcleancenter.org.

SATURDAY/JAN. 15

A MLK Event. 2-4 p.m. Virtual. At 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax will sponsor a virtual teach-in to counter the baseless claims of anti-critical race theory politics and reinforce the importance of teaching inclusive history. Free. Visit the website: www.uucf.org

SUNDAY/JAN. 16

Baratunde Thurston Live. 2 p.m. At RCC Hunters Woods – The CenterStage, Reston. Baratunde Thurston holds space for hard and complex conversations with his blend of humor, wisdom and compassion. He is an Emmy-nominated TV host who has worked for The Onion, produced for The Daily Show, advised the Obama White House and written The New York Times bestseller How To Be Black. Visit www.restoncommunitycenter.com or call 703-476-4500.

SUNDAY/JAN. 16

MLK, Especially for Youth. 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. At RCC Hunters Woods, Reston. For children 6 – 12 Years Old. Free. Children will rotate through a series of activities, including an age-appropriate video and arts and crafts. All activities will be based on the history of Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement. A self-contained lunch will be provided. Registration Required. Reg. #704750-2A. Children must be registered in advance and no onsite registration will be available on the day of the event. Visit www.restoncommunitycenter.com or call 703-476-4500.

SUNDAY/JAN. 16

Pocket of Freedom. 2-3:30 p.m. Virtual at the Cold War Museum, 7134 Lineweaver Road, Vint Hill. Your Cold War German village is

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 10

Here's What's Happening at MCC!

Presented by The Alden



MCC 2022 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration
The Daryl Davis Band
Friday, Jan. 14, 7 p.m.
\$30/\$20 MCC district residents

Presented by The Alden



Author Daryl Davis
Sunday, Jan. 16, 2 p.m.
\$10/\$5 MCC district residents

Closing Notice



Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Monday, Jan. 17

The Old Firehouse



Teacher Workday Trips
The Zone
Friday, Jan. 21, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
\$65/\$55 MCC district residents

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D'DAT Native American Fusion
Sunday, Jan. 23, 4 p.m.
\$15/\$10 MCC district residents

The Old Firehouse



Teacher Workday Trips
Skiing/Snowboarding
Monday, Jan. 24, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
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Home of The Alden Theatre
www.aldentheatre.org

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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 9

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SUNDAY/JAN. 16

The Daryl Davis Band. 2 p.m. At The Alden Theatre, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Davis will return to The Alden to speak on his experiences confronting Ku Klux Klansman on their racist beliefs. Tickets to Sunday's event are \$10/\$5 for MCC district residents. Visit www.mcleancenter.org.

MONDAY/JAN. 17

Reston MLK Celebration. 11 a.m. At Reston Community Center, Hunters Woods, Reston. Heather McGhee, author, will deliver the Keynote Address. Attendees are invited to the community lunch following McGhee's speech. Tickets are \$5 for Reston residents and employees, and \$10 for all others. Tickets to the Community Lunch and Keynote Address are required. Tickets are available at the CenterStage Box Office or by calling 703-476-4500.

THURSDAY/FEB. 17

Mardi Gras Celebration. 12-2 p.m. At the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street SE, Vienna. Cajun cuisine lunch, Mardi Gras mask making, trivia and entertainment. Dressing up is part of the celebration so be sure to wear purple, green and gold. To register, call 703-281-0538.

JAN. 18-FEB. 1

Mah Jongg Lessons. 6:30-9:30 p.m. At Temple Rodef Shalom, 2100 Westmoreland Street, Falls Church. Mah Jongg beginner class, Jan. 18, 25 and Feb. 1. 6:30-9:30 p.m. \$90. Send non-refundable check to WoTRS, Attention Iva Gresko, Temple Rodef Shalom, 2100 Westmoreland St, Falls Church, VA 22023. Include email address, home address, and telephone numbers. Check is your registration. Enrollment limited. Masks required.

THURSDAY/JAN. 20

Performing Arts Documentary. 1 p.m. At McLean Community Center, McLean. Learn a little about the performing arts through this one-hour (or so) documentary. Safety permitting, join Performing Arts Director Sarah Schallern Treff for a discussion after.

JAN. 21 THRU FEB. 6

"The Dinner Party." Presented by Vienna Theatre Company. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., SE, Vienna. Performance Dates and Times: 8 p.m.: Fridays and Saturdays: January 21, 22, 28, 29; Feb 4, 5; 2 p.m.: Sundays: Jan 30, Feb 6. In Neil Simon's farcical take on love, marriage, divorce, and what comes after, six strangers are invited to a mysterious dinner party. They do not know who the other guests will be or why they have been invited. Tossed together in a private dining room, they have a sneaking suspicion that this unorthodox dinner party will forever change their lives. Visit www.viennatheatrecompany.org for more details or email vtcshows@yahoo.com.



PHOTO BY SABRINA ANWAH/COURTESY MCLEAN COMMUNITY CENTER

David Siegel (left seated) experiencing the virtual reality of “Traveling While Black” as Daniel Singh (right standing), MCC Executive Director provides guidance.

Exploring Black America Past and Present

Virtual Reality experience of “Traveling While Black” at McLean Community Center.

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

In a one-of-a-kind Virtual Reality experience, participants will not be passive onlookers in their immersion into 360° footage of events and conversations of “Traveling While Black.”

“Traveling While Black” is an intimate 20 minute experience connecting the past to current times.

It all begins when patrons don headsets and Virtual Reality (VR) gear while seated at a replica of DC’s famous Ben’s Chili Bowl that has been fabricated and set in the McLean Community Center lobby. Soon events of decades in the past and of the right now, both tragic and uplifting, unfold.

Directed by Academy Award recipient Roger Ross Williams, “Traveling While Black” melds VR technology and art with powerful, palpable social justice issues. “We are proud to present this first virtual reality exhibit in our center and will be hosting several discussions to help us consider the different questions this exhibit raises,” said Danial Singh, McLean Community Center Executive Director.

“As we near Martin Luther King Day and Black History Month events, we hope our patrons will take the time to come learn with us and become change agents in creating the world that Dr. King envisioned in his ‘I Have a Dream’ speech.” added Singh.

The deeply moving production depicts dangers and difficulties that African Americans have had to navigate. Some of the VR experience that will be witnessed

include sitting at the back of bus while traveling through the segregated South. Viewers learn about the “Green Book” that helped answer questions such as will there be a place for Black people to eat or go to the bathroom?

There are profound conversations of Civil Rights activist Courtland Cox and Ben’s Chili Bowl co-founder Virginia Ali as they sit across a small table at Ben’s Chili Bowl. Or the intense, heartbreaking, soft-spoken words of Samaria Rice, mother of young son Tamir who was killed by police.

As for the title; “Traveling While black” it is “a term people use to illustrate that in America when you are Black and you are going from point A to point B, you are always at risk.” said Williams.

In heartfelt closing remarks, Dranesville District Supervisor John Foust and Fairfax County Executive Bryan Hill spoke of the powerful, essential message of “Traveling While Black” that McLean Community Center participants can bear witness to.

WHERE AND WHEN: Virtual Reality Experience “Traveling While Black” at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean, Virginia 22101. On exhibit in McLean Community Center’s lobby from Friday, Dec. 15, 2021 to Saturday, Feb. 12, 2022. Free. Patrons can sign up for hour-long appointments Wednesday through Saturday, Noon to 8 p.m. and Sundays, Noon to 6 p.m. For detailed information visit www.mcleancenter.org. Note: Masks are required at the McLean Community Center.

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So Long Old Memory



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As of Wednesday, Dec. 8, the 2000 Honda Accord, which I inherited from my widowed mother 13 years ago, nearly to the day, was officially “totaled” by an insurance adjuster. After my mother died in 2008 leaving the Honda ownerless, I took possession. As I recall, on Dec. 24, 2008, I went to the Montgomery County administrative offices in Rockville and paid my dues (taxes, actually). And though I’ve had miscellaneous car repairs over the years - fortunately, nothing which was too drastic or expensive, I’ve not had to make one monthly car payment in almost 13 years. For a non-car person like me, not having a car payment for that many years trumps all negative considerations.

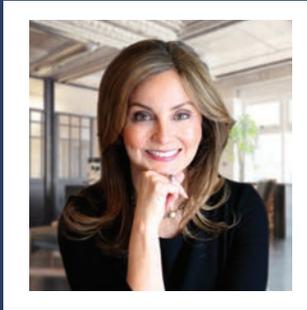
As written about in the “Oh Deer” column a few weeks back, the end of our association (the Honda and mine) was unexpected and for my money - literally, quite unnecessary. The Honda was our back-up/second car. Maybe it was driven 5,000 miles a year, almost exclusively local and most often, it sat in the driveway minding its own business. Now, I’ll have to upgrade and consequently incur a new monthly car payment. A car payment I don’t want and an extra expense I certainly don’t need. Though I’ll be receiving a settlement check from the insurance company, it won’t cover the cost of a new car. In fact, it will barely cover the amount of down payment. And as any of you similarly impacted by a car accident where your car is “totaled” know, the math rarely ends up in your favor, especially if the “totaled” car was old and payment free.

But more to the point if this column. The Honda was one of the last remaining physical links to my parents, particularly my father, who died in early December 2006. He was the driver in the family and the Honda was the only car in the family so most images and feelings I have about my father and a car were from this 2000 Honda Accord, the last car he owned/drove. As such, when I sit in the driver’s seat, I remember my father. And I also remember the front of one of his birthday cards which said: “When they made you, they broke the mold.” Open card: “You should see what they did to the mold maker.” We all laughed. I gave him that card on his 65th birthday dinner which we all celebrated at Jimmy’s Harborside Restaurant (his favorite) on the wharf in Boston on or about Sept. 23, 1984 (his actual birthday). It was a memorable occasion to be sure, especially when my father opened the card and shook it to see if any money would fall out.

And though I still have lots of enduring memories of my father (I still wear his winter gloves as well as an old collard short-sleeve Polo shirt of his - which amazingly sort of fits), nothing conjures his memory and is so physically enveloping - literally, as the front seat of the car where when driving, he spent the last years of his life. And now that feeling/his presence is gone.

I imagine I’ll get reconnected to his memory every month for the next 36 at least, when I make my new car payment. It won’t quite be the same as sitting in the Honda payment free. Nevertheless, I’m sure I’ll still feel a car connection to my father. After all, I’ll be driving a car that he helped me buy.

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



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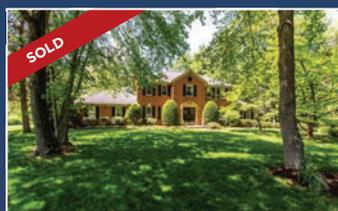
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