

CONNECTION

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Pet Connection

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Anna Wilson with Snowball, a one-year-old male mouse, now at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, described by staff as “the best mouse in the whole wide world,” and that’s a lot of mice! <https://www.fairfax-county.gov/animalshelter/>

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PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Old Town Hall Gets Makeover

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PET CONNECTION

‘All Dogs Need Routine, Preventative Care to Stay Healthy’

Scenthound dog-grooming business opens in Fairfax City.

By BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

A wellness-based dog-grooming and routine-care service, Scenthound’s goal is to keep dogs happy and healthy. And on Jan. 19, it opened its first location in Fairfax City at 9448 Main St. in the Pickett Shopping Center.

Scenthound takes a wellness-based approach dedicated to improving the quality of life for dogs. As embedded in the first five letters of its name, Scenthound focuses on the five, core areas of maintenance – Skin, Coat, Ears, Nails and Teeth – and employees are fully trained to give each dog the care it requires.

CEO Tim Vogel founded Scenthound in 2015 after spending more than 10 years running both a mobile grooming business and a local grooming business called Scenters. He says that doing so enabled him to witness firsthand the shortcomings within a booming pet industry and the lack of education surrounding dog care.

He then began a mission to give dogs and their owners “a fast, easy and affordable solution that not only keeps dogs clean and looking great but maintains their overall health and wellness.”

“There’s a lack of understanding among



This cheerful dog is getting dried off after a bath.



This dog is getting her teeth brushed.

dog parents that we intend to change,” explained Vogel. “Many dog parents don’t realize that only about 10 percent of dog breeds require regular haircuts, but all dogs need routine, preventative care to stay healthy and comfortable.”

“We started Scenthound to provide basic grooming services for all breeds,” he continued. “And as we expand nationally, we hope to educate as many people as possible to make sure their dogs get the routine care they need.”

The new Fairfax location is the first of 20 Scenthounds that local franchisee Dean DeGood intends to open throughout Virginia

and Maryland. The next one is slated for Alexandria. A Virginia native, DeGood has previous experience working in the pet industry and is excited to bring this business to the Fairfax community.

“Scenthound brings safe and affordable pet care from a trustworthy, experienced dog care team,” he said. “We hope to remove barriers so that people can love and connect with their dogs every day.”

Prior to joining Scenthound, DeGood owned and operated an award-winning, dog-walking company, DoggyWalker.com, for 17 years. And seeing the need for quality pet care, he wanted to help bring

Scenthound’s offerings to pets around the country. It currently has 113 locations open or under development across 12 states.

The business also has a Monthly Care Club with three membership options.

These items are packaged so dog owners only pay for what they need, when they need it. And Scenthound keeps them informed by providing regular health checks and technology-based, wellness tracking.

Hours at the Fairfax location are Monday-Saturday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; and Sunday, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. For more information, go to www.scenthound.com/fairfax-va-001 or call 703-688-3150.

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BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

The front of Old Town Hall along University Drive in Fairfax City.



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

The hole at the top shows where the fallen column was.



MTFA Architecture's rendition of the building, from the northwest, when work is finished.

Rehabbing Fairfax City's Old Town Hall

'It Wasn't Just about the Column; Other Things Needed to Be Done'

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Arguably the most recognizable and iconic building in the City of Fairfax is Old Town Hall at the corner of Main Street and University Drive. So when one of its pillars fell off and crashed to the ground, in the wee hours of Aug. 14, 2020, residents were stunned.

Traffic cameras captured the action around 4 a.m. And while the building's four columns are mainly for looks and don't actually support anything, the City had a third-party, structural engineer evaluate the remaining three columns and the building's overhang to check its integrity.

In addition, a Virginia historical architect advised the City about needed repairs to the then-120-year-old building. And now that the data's been gathered and a construction contract awarded, work is underway to make Old Town Hall even better than before.

"For the past few years, it's looked like the Mona Lisa with a tooth missing," said Andrew Wilson of the City's Public Works department. "We're going to fix that."

Constructed in a classical revival style, Old Town Hall was built in 1900 by Joseph E. Willard, who later donated it to the City. In 1987, it was added to the National Register of Historic Places as part of the City of Fairfax Historic District.

A beloved Old Town landmark, the white, two-story building is often used for weddings, parties, meetings, cultural and artistic programs and performances. It also hosts special events such as the annual Chocolate Lovers Festival and Lunch with Santa.

The week before the 21-foot column fell, the City of Fairfax was deluged by torrential rain, and Public Works Director David Summers believes that's what ultimately caused

the column's demise. "We think water got in there during the heavy rains and rotted it at the bottom," he said, the next morning. "We think that was the tipping point. And all the damage was on the inside of the column – you couldn't see anything wrong from the outside."

Pointing at a couple piles of wet pieces of wood on the ground that broke off from the white-painted pillar, he noted that, "These are hollow, wood columns with no structural support, at all. The columns at City Hall have a structural steel beam inside them because they're load-bearing; these aren't."

Then, looking at the inside of the top of the column, also on the ground, Summers said it was obvious, as well, that "Birds got in there from the roof and roosted. And if birds could get inside the column, so could water."

He was right, but the subsequent inspection revealed more problems that need to be rectified. Wilson presented details during the Jan. 25 City Council meeting. "The person who made the columns had never made them before," he said.

Making matters worse, added Summers, "Someone had put a coating around that column, so we couldn't see the rot. But it was rotten to the core."

Now, said Wilson, "The entire concrete porch floor needs to be replaced. But it'll be supported by a steel foundation, not a wooden one, for greater longevity. And it'll also be stronger. We'll raise the porch floor in front to make it ADA-compliant, add an ADA ramp to the side entrance and add stairs that'll come down to the parking lot."

He also noted that the current utilities at the corner of University and Main will be moved elsewhere. However, he said that work isn't part of the contract; instead, the City will do it.

MTFA Architecture did the building's con-

dition assessment and made several rehabilitation recommendations. It said the failed column must be replaced, but the remaining columns may be reused.

It stated that, "The probable cause of failure stems from moisture and lack of ventilation. This issue will continue to affect the standing columns if not resolved." It then recommended a new, cast-aluminum plinth – a structure at the base of each column – be installed to both support and ventilate the columns.

MTFA also recommended the porch replacement Wilson mentioned, plus reconstruction of the building's stone foundation walls. Furthermore, a Building Code analysis confirmed deficiencies with the existing west stairs and recommended they be replaced. It also recommended providing additional stairs at the north side of the portico to mitigate any safety concerns, as well as the ADA accessibility measures Wilson discussed.

After advertising this project for bids, the City awarded the construction contract to Kadcon Corp. Phase one work will include replacing the portico, stairwell, one column and rehabilitating the remaining, three columns. Then landscaping and a new retaining wall will be provided on Main Street.

The contract allows 225 days for completion – which is anticipated by mid-September. It includes all calendar days and allows for planned events, such as July 4 and already-scheduled weddings. Days may be added for inclement weather.

No new events may be scheduled until completion, and the contractor may close one lane of University Drive during construction. Doing so, said Wilson, "will speed up this project considerably because it'll give them more hours to work."

Councilmember Joe Harmon asked why a second staircase is being added to the side of the building. "The center staircase is steep and leads to a narrow sidewalk," replied Wilson. "And the new one will provide a more direct route to the parking lot."

"Is the 225-day commitment dependent upon their ability to close down one lane of University Drive?" asked Councilmember Sang Yi. Summers said yes because it'll enable the crew to work additional hours.

"Especially during spring and summer, when they can work longer because of Daylight Saving Time," added Wilson. "It'll save about two-and-a-half months of construction work by allowing them to close that lane."

"And in this case, it benefits getting this thing done and getting a higher-quality product," said Summers. "We'd still have to close it down from 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m., anyway, during the construction. And we've done it before, during the construction of Old Town Square."

Still, said Yi, "I don't believe it's worth it. But can they not do it during rush hour?"

"It would cost more for them to set up and take down the closure each day," answered Summers. "And that would increase the cost by about \$75,000."

Seeing the wisdom in Summers's words, Councilmember Janice Miller said, "We can use Chain Bridge Road or East Street and Old Lee Highway, [instead]. And we can let people know to use other roads. I'm happy to support this proposal, and I'm happy that this process is moving forward."

Agreeing with her, Councilmember Tom Ross said, "It wasn't just about the column; there were a number of other things that needed to be done. This will be useful and up to standards for many years to come. I think people will understand the road closure and temporary inconvenience. We want this done in an efficient and cost-effective way."

Furthermore, added Mayor David Meyer, "Putting up and taking down the lane closure each day poses a risk to the workers."

The Council then officially approved awarding the construction contract to Kadcon. It also unanimously endorsed a motion to approve \$590,000 for the cost of the phase one construction.



Chairman Jeff McKay, Supervisor Rodney Lusk and FCDOT Director Tom Biesiadny join project engineers to cut the ribbon on this bike and pedestrian improvement.

Ribbon Cut on Telegraph Road Walkway

Walking and biking to Lee District Park just got a little easier.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Officials cut the ribbon on the Telegraph Road Walkway project, opening a travel path that was once off limits to anything but a car.

Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D-Lee) jogged the route once before the path was built and felt the cars flying by on Telegraph Road. "It was pretty harrowing," he said.

The walkway is a portion of sidewalk connecting Huntley Meadows Park with Lee District park, along the northbound side of Telegraph Road in the Alexandria part of Fairfax County in an area known locally as "the forks," where South Kings Highway hits Telegraph Road. The sidewalk project features more than a half-mile of sidewalk, curbs and gutters, a storm drainage pipe, a retaining wall and handrail. The total price tag was \$3 million.

It was a project that was planned for a few years but delayed because the land ownership was divided between the Federal government, Fairfax County and the park authority. Chairman Jeff McKay (D-Lee) worked on it when he was with the Lee District supervisor office and it's been on the books ever since. "We worked with the Corps of Engineers to get an easement," he said, stressing that bringing together several landowners showed the "importance of local government," he said.

This was a Fairfax County Department of Transportation project, and they enlisted several contractors due to the soil make up and the marine clay that permeates in Lee District and Mount Vernon. FCDOT Director Tom Biesiadny noted a few other projects going on in the Telegraph Road corridor including a portion of the bike-ped trail linked with a stream restoration project in Virginia Hills and the intersection reconstruction project that will be happening at Telegraph Road and Hayfield Road in the near future.



The sidewalk goes along Telegraph Road across from Greendale Golf Course.



Joggers now have a safe venue in this part of the county.

Crash Kills Pedestrian

Detectives from the Fairfax County Police Crash Reconstruction Unit continue to investigate a fatal crash that occurred around 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 19, on Ox Road near Workhouse Road in Lorton. Preliminarily, detectives determined Victor Savier Barillas Delao, 28, of Alexandria, was crossing mid-block on Ox Road from east to west, near Workhouse Road. The driver of a 2015 Honda Accord was traveling south on Ox Road, approaching the intersection on a green light. Delao was struck in the roadway and pronounced deceased at the scene. The driver of the Honda remained on the scene. Preliminarily, speed and alcohol do not appear to be factors in the crash.

Anyone with information about this crash is asked to contact the 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 2nd pedestrian fatality in the County to date in 2022.



PHOTOS BY STEVE DOUGHERTY

Zema Market ribbon cutting celebrates a new Ethiopian store on Richmond Highway.

Zema Opens

There's a genuine Ethiopian store on Richmond Highway. A ribbon cutting celebrated the grand opening of Zema Market, 8217 Richmond Highway, on Saturday, Feb. 5. Mount Vernon Lee Chamber Vice-Chair Kevin McNulty conducted with remarks by Supervisor Dan Storck, Mark Viani, SFDC, and His Grace Abune Fanuel, Archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, DC area dioceses. The owners are Tesfaye Gebremichael, Genet Tesfaye, Dawit Gebremedhin and Meron Tesfaye. The store is named after the daughter Zema. More than 250 people visited Zema Market during their grand opening weekend. (571) 347-7072



Owner Meron Tesfaye talks with Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck.



His Grace Abune Fanuel, Archbishop of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, DC area dioceses

SENIOR LIVING



PHOTO COURTESY ENCORE CREATIVITY FOR OLDER ADULTS

Seniors will now have access to a variety of musical opportunities.

Voice Lesson to Music History Classes at Your Fingertips

New collaboration offers video-streaming service to seniors.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Every afternoon at 3 p.m. Evelyn Fabiano scrolls through the music on her iPhone until she finds a playlist of music from the 1940s and 50s. Pairing the phone to Bluetooth speakers in the family room of her Mount Vernon home, she releases the sounds of Nat King Cole's voice and soon his crooning fills the air. The music is for her father Frank, who is in the early stages of dementia. Fabiano says that her father experiences sundowners syndrome, a condition that is linked to dementia and is marked by memory loss and confusion, and occurs in the late afternoon and early evening. It is during that time that her father becomes agitated and irritable.

"If I start playing the music, asking questions and getting him to reminisce about the times he spent with my mother who died years ago, that soothes him," she said. "My parents loved Nat King Cole. They met at one of his concerts, so his music was always special to them. Music was a big part of our family. My mother played the piano, my sister and I took piano lessons and we both sang in our church choir. Music has always been a source of joy in our family."

The options for the Fabianos and others who appreciate music have expanded. Inspired by research that shows the positive impact that music can have on the lives of the elderly, including those with Alzheimer's,

mer's and other types of dementia, two organizations that provide music are collaborating to bring virtual programs to seniors. Saltbox TV, a video-streaming service targeting seniors, and Maryland-based Encore University and Encore Creativity for Older Adults Encore University will offer online classes that are taught by musicians and music teachers.

Those who reside at home, in assisted living communities or nursing homes have access to classes ranging from voice training to rock-n-roll history that are taught online using a video conferencing platform.

"We're hardwired with music," said Patty Carver, co-founder of Saltbox TV. "When listening to music, especially live music, it lights up your brain. Music can help older adults with dementia relate to the moment ... a conduit to help connect with family and friends."

"We're hardwired with music. ... Music can help older adults with dementia relate to the moment ... a conduit to help connect with family and friends."

— Patty Carver, co-founder of Saltbox TV

It was music that created a bond in Fabiano's family that she says still exists today. "It's almost amazing that something as simple as playing music can change his mood. [He] starts telling my sister and me stories of when he and my mother started dating."

Those who are part of Encore Creative say that they appreciate the social connections and interactions that they gain from music. "The benefits I get from singing with Encore are shared by almost all of us, I'm sure," said Judy Termini of Bethesda, who sings with Encore Rocks at the Washington Conservatory of Music at Glen Echo Park as well as the Encore Chorale at

the Washington Conservatory. "I think it's keeping my brain and my spirit vital and thriving. I believe strongly in the value of singing together and of learning music in a group of colleagues."

In fact, such connections were a driving force behind the partnership between the musical organizations. "The opportunities for older adults to engage in the arts ... is so important for their well-being," said Joshua Vickery, CEO of Encore Creativity for Older Adults.

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OPINION

Budget Success

\$400,000 for the new Lee District Community and Workforce Development Center.

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

On this past Sunday afternoon, Feb. 20, the House Appropriations Committee, on which I serve, and the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee met separately to report their respective proposed budget bills, HB 29 and HB 30, and SB 29 and SB 39. Spending for HB/SB 29 ends at the end of this fiscal year, June 30, 2022. HB/SB 30 covers the fiscal year 2023-2024 biennium beginning on July 1, 2022. This is an exciting day each session, and the culmination of many hearings and a lot of work for the money committees in each body to allocate \$58.3 billion over the biennium period.

As an update to my column earlier this session, I am pleased to announce that many of my important budget initiatives were included in the House Appropriations Budget which will be voted on this Thursday before it then will go into conference to be reconciled with the Senate version.

Most exciting is a joint effort with Lee District Supervisor Rodney Lusk where I was able to procure \$400,000 to outfit the new Lee District Community and Workforce Development Center, scheduled to open this year in the heart of Hybla Valley, serving residents up and down



Richmond Highway with job training, recreational activities, and childcare. In addition, the center will contain classroom and workshop space that will be utilized to upskill and train residents for employment in the trades and technology jobs of the future. Through partnerships with the building trades, and companies like Amazon and INOVA Hospital Systems, these trainings will

be directly linked to employment opportunities that will be available in the area over the next two years and beyond.

Also good news is that two of our local charities, United Community and Good Shepherd Housing are included in the budget at \$500,000 per year, and a one-time amount of \$200,000 respectively. This is a much needed infusion of funding that will enable these charities to continue their critical work to end multi-generational poverty, providing housing, emergency services, children's services, and budget counseling, among many other resources for low-income families in our area.

I secured funding of \$75,000 to create a code commission to review the Code of Virginia and recommend changes to the General Assembly that are needed to reflect the recent federal recognition of Tribal Nations that share territory with the Commonwealth. This two year Commission

will include members from each of the federally recognized tribes as well as ten legislators.

My bill HB 766, which passed the House, creates an Illegal Gaming Enforcement Coordinator to organize the enforcement of illegal gaming laws by the state and local law enforcement agencies and is now funded with \$334,962 over the biennium.

My effort to create a Special Assistant to the Governor for Disability Rights Advocacy is in the budget at \$350,000 for each year of the biennium. One in four Virginians live with a disability. This position will be a great asset to the residents of Virginia, for people with disabilities, caregivers, and family members, regardless of age of onset, type of disability, and socio-economic status.

Likewise, I will fight to keep the \$2 million I had in last year's budget for River Farm to be repurposed for accessibility improvements on the property, including ADA compliant public trails, viewing and parking areas, shoreline stabilization, and elimination of invasive plant species.

While we had many budget "wins," I am disappointed that the budget does not include my request to use additional ARPA funds for a hazard pay bonus to public transit workers.

I was also disappointed to see funds proposed by Governor Northam and me to allow Virginia's federally recognized Tribal Nations to acquire historic property stripped from the House budget proposal. I hope to continue working in future years to advocate for this funding.

I look forward to voting on this budget on the House Floor on Thursday, and fighting to keep these critical initiatives in the final budget that will soon head to Governor Youngkin's desk.

Helping Virginians Get Health Coverage

BY SEN. GEORGE BARKER (D-39)

I am happy to say that in our 2022 legislative session in Richmond, we are continuing to make a difference in the health and lives of Virginians. We have accomplished much during my time in the Senate of Virginia and are continuing to improve things on a bipartisan basis.

During my first term as a Virginia Senator from 2008-2011, many Virginians, about 15 to 16 percent of our population, had no health insurance. Many, if not most, of them had no medical home or personal doctor. They did not get preventive care. When pain got bad, they might go to a hospital emergency department, but even then they often did not get necessary follow-up care. Thousands got their care from annual three day events with volunteers in fields and barns in Southwest Virginia.

My education and professional background is in health care.

In the legislature, I have used my knowledge and commitment to help make large strides in getting health care coverage and health care services for those who used to lack both insurance and a place to get regular care. We have been largely successful. The percent of our population who now are uninsured is less than half of what it was just over a decade ago.

Since 2014, many families have gotten private health insurance through the Affordable Care Act. Several hundred thousand modest income adults who did not have health insurance from their jobs have gotten Medicaid Expansion coverage from the 2018 budget. Two years later, we added dental care coverage for over half a million adults, many of whom had not seen a dentist in decades.

I am working hard on expanding private health insurance. For the third year in a row, I am patron of a bill to authorize creation of a health care coverage plan for real estate agents. Although most real

estate agents have good incomes, data show that 20 percent do not have health insurance. Most real estate agents are not eligible to receive coverage through their real estate companies because they are

1099 contractors rather than employees.

My bill will permit the state Realtors association to develop a

SEE HEALTH COVERAGE, PAGE 7

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Local Media Connection LLC

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Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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Juvenile Deception, Facial Recognition and Medical Record Transparency

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL



The sixth week of the General Assembly brought us to “Crossover” – the moment when each chamber must finish work on bills originating in each chamber and we begin work on bills coming from the other side.

Twenty-five of my twenty-seven bills were passed by the Senate and will now be heard in the House of Delegates. On the last day of session, I defended eight bills on the floor of the Senate alone. I will discuss several in this column that I have not covered in prior columns.

In 1969, the Supreme Court of the United States held that it was constitutionally permissible for law enforcement to lie to suspects during interrogation to gain information for prosecution. Several states have questioned the fundamental fairness of using this tactic to juveniles who are not as sophisticated and are more susceptible to persuasion than adults. False confessions are involved in about 35 percent of wrongful convictions and there is a plethora of cases involving juveniles who wrongfully confessed.

My legislation would prohibit law enforcement from using deception tactics during a custodial interrogation of a juvenile and shift the burden of showing a confession was voluntary to the government if these tactics were used. It passed the Senate on a bipartisan 26-14 vote.

I also carried a bill that will allow the limited use of facial recognition technology to develop leads in criminal investigations and for use in specific community welfare situations. Last year, we passed legislation prohibiting facial recognition from being used in Virginia law enforcement due to concerns about accuracy across racial subgroups. The Fairfax County Police Department had previously used this technology over 12,000 times with no false positives.

More recently, you may have read about the “shopping cart killer” who was arrested on U.S. 1 near the Penn Daw Walmart pushing the bodies of two dead women in containers in a shopping cart. He was later linked to three other murders across the country. Facial recognition companies have additional information about him, but the FCPS is prohibited from obtaining or using it by statute. This technology

can also be used to identify individuals without identification such as lost adults with dementia, people unable to provide information due to medical emergencies such as strokes or concussions, or dead bodies. Police cannot use this technology even if no foul play is suspected.

The National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) has begun a program that now certifies many facial recognition technologies as being 98-99% accurate with minor deviations across racial subgroups. Many are being used in national security applications, for air travel, and for trusted-traveler programs such as Global Entry run by U.S. Border and Customs Control. My legislation would allow it to be used for specific investigations and community welfare incidents, but not for general surveillance or monitoring. It passed the Senate on a bipartisan vote.

I am also working with the Virginia Chapter of the Humane Society on legislation to modernize Virginia law relating to the sexual abuse of animals. While Virginia currently prohibits bestiality, it does not have criminal sanctions for individuals who traffic in animals for sexual abuse or for the manufacturing or possession of “animal porn” which has all been shown to have strong correlation with child sexual abuse and other sex crimes. Detectives also testified at our hearing regarding suspects destroying child pornography during raids, but separately storing or keeping their animal porn because they knew it was not illegal. My bill passed the Senate unanimously.

Medical records have become electronic over the last two decades. However, when a doctor makes a change on your chart, you can no longer see the scratches to show the change and the edits are often invisible without careful inspection. I carried legislation requiring medical providers to produce the audit history for medical records so that patients can quickly see any changes made to their contemporaneous medical records.

Next week, we move on to the budget and action on legislation that has crossed over. Please complete my constituent survey at www.scottsurovell.org/survey and if you have feedback, send me an email at scott@scottsurovell.org

Helping Virginians Get Health Coverage

FROM PAGE 6

plan for their members. It will be a quality plan, covering all essential health benefits and pre-existing conditions and having the same protections as Affordable Care Act health insurance plans. It cannot discriminate and will have the same rates for the whole state.

I consistently got near unanimous support in the Senate for my bills to let Realtors have a health plan the past two years but ran

into problems after the legislation left the Senate. This year, I got unanimous approval in the Senate and have worked with a Republican colleague in the House of Delegates who handily got the same bill passed there. This will become law and will help many Realtors get health care coverage.

I also have a bill to address an issue regarding a reinsurance plan that we authorized last year and that will substantially lower monthly premiums to individuals

and families who buy their health insurance on the state exchange. My bill and a companion bill in the House have both passed unanimously.

We are helping Virginians get health care coverage and needed health care services. I enjoy my job and am happy to be a leader on this. I will keep working to help Virginians get needed care.

Please contact me at district39@senate.virginia.gov if you have questions or need help with an issue.



The handmade cards were delivered to Sunrise on Valentine's Day.

Shares a Little Love with Their Neighbors

The seniors at Sunrise next door were the center of attention on Valentine's Day.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

The seniors at Sunrise in Springfield have been so close to the Starbucks next door that it's only fitting that the two connected on Valentine's Day to share the appreciation. Starbucks manager Jodi Hanaity made it all happen with handmade cards and cake pops to spread the love.

"It was such an amazing event that we did as a community to spread a little Valentine's Day love to our cherished Seniors, that we love and proudly serve," Hanaity said.



The whole staff at Starbucks was part of it.

Currier Named New Director of Animal Sheltering

Currier brings long record on animal welfare.

By SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

It is common practice in large corporations and government for newly appointed department heads to select their preferred immediate staff. If you are the newly appointed head of Fairfax County's Department of Animal Sheltering, your staff selection just might be of the four-legged, furry variety. Meet new director Reasa Currier, J.D., and her newly appointed assistant, Gandalf, a rabbit. Currier, and Gandalf, who took their positions on Jan. 31, head Fairfax County's only municipal animal shelter, located at 4500 West Ox Road in Fairfax.

Currier learned about animal care as a young girl, developing a passion for their welfare with early exposure at the side of her grandfather, a hog farmer and large animal veterinarian. Her family often made a home for animals abandoned by others; the three legged and the one-eyed, leading Currier to know animals "would have a huge role in my life." Working in animal welfare for most of her career, her first job was advocating for Arizona's Humane Treatment of Farm Animals Act in 2006. Under Proposition 204, Arizona became only the second state to ban the use of gestation crates for hogs; passing with a wide majority of 61 percent of the vote; assuring that pregnant pigs be confined only in ways that allow the animals to lie down, stand up, fully extend their limbs and turn around freely for the majority of the day. Ten states now ban the use of hog gestation

crates and many food companies have voluntarily given up the practice under the pressure of public opinion.

Currier comes to the county from the Humane Rescue Alliance, established in 1870 by Congress to care for animals in the D.C. area. Previously, Currier worked for the national animal advocacy organization, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). There she worked on areas of systemic cruelty: factory farming, puppy mills, the wildlife trade, and animal fighting. She also was a founding director of Humane Dominion, a non-partisan political action group formed in 2012, which analyzed animal welfare voting records for Virginia legislators, promoting the campaigns of those strong on animal welfare support.

As Currier takes the county shelter reins, or perhaps more aptly, the shelter leash, she will find a modern, relatively new shelter building, complete with a surgical unit; outside exercise runs and play areas; and separate dog, cat, small mammal, in-take and quarantine sections; with robust volunteer and foster programs; and which offers low cost rabies vaccine clinics. The shelter has boasted a consistent live release rate of over 90 percent since they started tracking this metric in 2013.

Looking ahead, Currier wants the shelter to "be a resource for all things related to animals; not just for caring for homeless animals and helping them find homes, but also to provide resources to keep pets and their people together." Resources may include infor-

Gandalf, a Chinchilla rabbit, available for adoption hopes to use his experience in a home office setting, or just a home.



Reasa Currier, Director, Fairfax County Department of Animal Sheltering, with office assistant rabbit, Gandalf.

mation on pet friendly housing, affordable veterinary care, and behavioral and training support. Under the "One Fairfax" lens, she says, such support will deepen the shelter's relationship with neighborhoods where there are "pet resource deserts." And since transportation to the shelter may not be available to all, she expects future events to target neighborhoods on site with additional grooming, pet food, and basic medical care. Her goal? "Help to keep animals with their people. The shelter should not be a place of last resort."

The shelter's success depends on animal fosters and shelter volunteers to supplement an able, knowledgeable staff, Currier says. She expects to ramp up the volunteer program again this summer, following their Covid pause. The shelter especially needs additional fosters during the summer kitting season. Also after recently accepting dogs from the Korean dog meat trade, they need volunteers to spend time with fearful dogs

who need a chance to acclimate before adoption. Next year, the department will add a second shelter, now under construction on Lorton Road in Lorton, to better serve south county areas; which also increases their need for volunteers. Office assistant rabbit Gandalf remained quiet through our interview, moving calmly around his designated portion of the office. A Chinchilla rabbit, he is a member of one of the largest rabbit breeds, known for their mild manners and gentle dispositions. Although sharing an office now with Currier, his plans include hope for retirement to the ease of an adopted home, perhaps taking on the role of experienced home office assistant. We are not sure what skills Gandalf brings to his position beyond impeccable lit-

ter box training, and being super cuddly. If one considers "hiring" him, it should be said that Gandalf fits the expression, "doesn't work for peanuts." He works for blueberries. Readers looking for more information about adoption and other shelter services can find it and view adoptable pets at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter. Those viewing the Facebook page, Fairfax County Animal Shelter, should be forewarned that the level of irresistible cuteness there is very high.

Beagles Find Heroes in General Assembly

By SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

As the Virginia General Assembly moves to the midpoint of its 2022 session, several animal welfare bills remain under consideration. This session both Houses took up possible regulation of breeders who raise animals for research; such breeders are not currently regulated by the Commonwealth. Ongoing issues, over several years at the only research animal breeder currently in the state, located in Cumberland County, prompted legislators to act. Eleven such bills were sponsored this session. Bills in the Senate took a one more "last chance" approach; while those in the House were written to shut down the current operation and any future violation-plagued research breeders.

Envigo, a large Indiana based corporation, which breeds Beagle dogs for research, has been cited for violations by inspectors from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). The site is currently under investigation with more charges expected in coming months. The facility is a large "factory farming" type operation, spread over the equivalent of five football fields; at times housing as many as 5,000 dogs breeding 400-500 beagle puppies per month sold within the United States and to foreign customers for animal testing and research.

Seven bills were submitted in the Senate by Sen. Dave Marsden, (D-37), chairman of the Senate companion animals subcommittee; Sen. Bill Stanley, (R-20), a frequent sponsor of companion animal bills; and Sen. Jennifer Boysko, (D-33). Boysko last year sponsored legislation which now limits cosmetic testing on animals in Virginia and prohibits sale here of cosmetic products tested on animals.

Marsden's bill would establish an Animal Welfare Oversight Officer report-



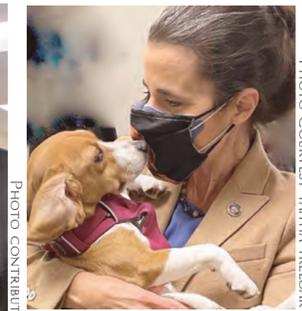
Sen. Jennifer Boysko (D-33rd) and Senator Bill Stanley (R-20th) reach across the aisle to protect animals from poor conditions at Virginia research animal breeder.



Tannis is comforted by Sen. Bill Stanley, whose bill would make adoption consideration a first alternative required for research animals prior to euthanasia.



Sen. Dave Marsden whose bill would establish an on-site animal welfare officer at research breeder operations.



Sen. Jennifer Boysko shares a moment with Tannis, a research Beagle surrendered to Richmond SPCA, which found her a loving home.

ing to the State Veterinarian's office, paid for wholly by research breeder fees, and with twenty-four hour access to the facility to assure on-going humane practices. The other Senate bills established requirements for regular reporting on animal dispositions after inspectors found 300 dead puppies; adoption opportunities for animals no longer needed in the operation as an alternative to euthanasia; and prohibiting sales to foreign entities or those U.S. research entities which conduct animal testing not required by federal law or regulation.

In the bill review process, some of the bills were amended in the agriculture subcommittee to add a "re-enactment clause," a delayed date of effect; whereby the bills would not go into law unless reenacted by next year's General Assembly.

Adding that clause would have the effect of giving the research breeder additional time to correct their deficiencies. Following the attachment of the reenactment clause, Stanley successfully introduced a senate floor amendment substituting March 1, 2023 as the date at which any additional violations would be considered under the law. His action eliminated the need for the Gen-

eral Assembly to act again to protect the animals; a greater reassurance to animal advocates.

FOUR HOUSE BILLS also deal with research animal breeder issues. Bills sponsored by Delegates Shelly Simonds (D-94), Irene Shin (D-86), Kaye Kory (D-38), and Rob Bell (R-58), would prohibit the sale of research animals to foreign testing facilities; animal purchase by Virginia State testing facilities from research breeders with significant citations; and trading with an entity with critical animal welfare violations. Given Envigo's history of violations, these bills, if enacted, could prevent their operation for several years.

Having reached the point of the General Assembly's session cross-over, eight of the original eleven bills, which passed floor votes in each body, move to the other for consideration.

Although animal welfare bills are often viewed differently by legislators in rural and urban areas, passage of these bills with near unanimity demonstrates legislator's resolve to solve research breeder issues. Given the difference in approach taken by legislators, those following this issue must wait to see which will move forward.



More than 150 Beagles recently surrendered to shelters, although bred for animal research, sent by professional animal transport to two rescue groups.

County Animal Shelter Employees Care for Adoptable Pets

By SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Here are a few of the many caring employees of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, who daily care for homeless pets. From mice, guinea pigs, and bunnies, to snakes and turtles, to exotic birds and the occasional chickens and horse, and to the far too many dogs and cats who need a home, shelter employees provide a safe place, food, and human companionship.

In 2021, 3,177 animals of all types passed through those comforting arms, most on their way to connecting with an area family seeking a pet. Meet some of the shelter employees who make it possible for our voiceless, homeless animal neighbors to find lasting comfort and a home.

Anna Wilson with Snowball, a one year old male mouse, now at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, described by staff as "the best mouse in the whole wide world," and that's a lot of mice!



Katherine Denvano, humane education coordinator, with 2 year old Toby, a friendly, fast learner with a huge smile (Pet ID 42623643)



Heather Baskett, animal care manager, with Storm, aka Stitch, a 2 year old happy-go-lucky, full of fun girl (Pet ID 49389592)



Melanie Leopold, foster & rescue coordinator, with chatty and snuggly, Dio, an orange 5 yo male short hair, with a freckled nose (Pet ID 47573053)



Dannie McClammy, shelter caretaker, with Duff, an 8 month male Guinea pig, a playful dude, who was adopted soon after being photographed.



Anna Wilson, administrative assistant, with "best mouse," Snowball, a one year old male, who likes to be held and to snack on string cheese and veggies (Pet ID 47890843)



Reasa Currier, shelter director, with Gandalf, a 3 year old male Chinchilla rabbit, coming in at 12 pounds. This gentle giant with office assistant experience, is ready to take over a home office staff of kids and small dogs (Pet ID 49422570)

PET CONNECTION



Lucy, 9 ½, “is the sweetest girl who wants love, attention, and a comfortable bed.”
<https://www.lab-rescue.org/seniors>



Rudolf, 10, is “a true gentleman with impeccable manners and a kind, gentle demeanor ... He would be very happy with a single person or an older person looking for loyalty and companionship.”
<https://www.lab-rescue.org/seniors>



Sunny, 9, is “up for anything, like swimming and long walks, and has lived happily with children and the commotion they bring.”
<https://www.lab-rescue.org/seniors>



Duke and Luke, both male, are a bonded pair, 12 years old, and “excellent work-from-home buddies ... laid-back, happy and affectionate.”
<https://www.lab-rescue.org/seniors>

Adopting a Senior Dog Could Be a Better Match, Really

One woman’s passion and ‘Tribute’.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Senior dogs are Barbara Nugent’s passion and calling. In her free time, Nugent, Park Services Division Director at Fairfax County Park Authority, is a volunteer for Lab Rescue LRCB, <https://www.lab-rescue.org/>, serving as a transporter for the non-profit organization. She drives the dogs to the vets, helps deliver them to their foster and adoptee homes, and welcomes often overlooked senior rescue dogs into her home, and adopts them herself.

As young as seven or eight years old, they are the dogs with the sugar muzzles of gray fur under their eyes, on their noses, and around their mouths. Nugent made the choice many years ago when her Labrador retriever, a “wonderful dog,” died at 16 years. “I knew that I had room in my heart and my head to continue to address the issue of making sure that senior dogs have a forever home,” Nugent said.

Chester and Sarge, a bonded pair, were Nugent’s first adoptees when she returned to Northern Virginia, both 12 years old and from Lab Rescue.

“Oh my, there was part of me that was saddened that someone would surrender a 12-year-old dog. You never know why, and I don’t need to know the backstory,” Nugent said. “I just hold on to them as long as I can.”

Nugent continued to adopt older labs throughout the years, possibly a dozen in all, providing them forever homes. Some were the more typical bonded pairs who couldn’t be separated, with one very old dog and one much younger, “So, I keep rotating through and making sure that when I lose an older lab, I can cycle into another lab. I typically have two,” she said.

Nugent says they all deserve as good a home as she can provide them, and she spoils them. Currently, Nugent has Molly, thirteen, and Sadie, eight. Nugent takes Molly “water-walking” once a week to assist the muscles in her rear legs. Water-walking is a kind of zero-impact training in which the hydrostatic pressure of the water reduces weight or strain on the dog’s joints. Warm water helps to relax the body and promote



Jacinta, 10, “doesn’t get on any furniture and is easy on the leash.”
<https://www.lab-rescue.org/seniors>

mobility.

“They have treadmills filled with water, and the dogs walk on the treadmill as the bottom moves. With Molly and some of the dogs, they will put up a small dish with suction cups and put peanut butter in it. Molly would walk all day if you do that,” she said. Molly has improved, now able to hop on the bed and walk upstairs.

It’s critical to rehome senior rescue dogs and place them with their second chance families; it is immaterial whether they end up in an apartment, townhouse, or detached home. “They need to be in a home so they can continue to work on their manners,” Nugent added, rather than having them stay longer at shelters and kennels and possibly live out their lives there. “It’s a challenge to find people who will foster and adopt older dogs. Lots of people like the puppies and the middle-aged dogs who are already house trained,” said Nugent.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals reports that older dogs are adopted at a rate of 25 percent. In contrast, younger dogs and puppies are adopted at 60 percent.

As a consequence, senior pets are often overlooked. Prospective owners might reassess their expectations and consider adopting senior dogs to provide joy, and less stress than a puppy.

An older dog can be the unexpected ideal



Rescue dogs. Molly, 13 years old, is the yellow Lab, and Sadie, eight years, is the chocolate lab. They are a bonded pair, not to be separated and love their forever home with Barbara Nugent.



The Labrador retriever who changed the course of a woman’s life and that of over a dozen rescue dogs.

fit, Nugent said. What you see is what you get. A puppy’s personality and attributes may alter with time, but a senior dog’s personality has already been established. Senior dogs also generally know all the basic commands. And although all dogs need medical attention, Nugent has discovered that the expenditures are not greater for senior dogs.

When she adopts a senior dog, she brings them to the veterinarian for a baseline senior panel to evaluate “how their kidneys, liver, and other things are doing.” Then, if anything gets their attention, “we watch,

monitor, and attempt to mitigate it,” she said.

Puppies, on the other hand, may be highly costly, and middle-aged dogs can experience severe injuries if they get loose or go to a dog park where there might be rough play. Senior dogs are more mellow in activity and are less prone to high-energy injuries.

Finally, senior dogs settle into a home better; they get each other, as Nugent said. She is not a “pup” herself. “I understand much more about senior dogs after all these years than I did before. I think I can read them when they are a little off,” she said.

Finally, if something were to happen to Nugent, the dogs would be cared for. “With Lab Rescue, I signed a contract for each and every one of my dogs that if something happens to me, Lab Rescue takes the dogs back... to rehome them,” she said.

Nugent considers it an honor to have been a part of the lives of the over a dozen dogs she has welcomed into her home, regardless of how long they have been there. Her story is one of honoring and paying homage, a tribute to her first Lab through her adoption of older Labs.

“I’ve done that since I’ve been in Northern Virginia. ... All these dogs have been a tribute to her,” said Nugent. “She was a wonderful dog. I miss her all the time.”

Her name was Tribute.

www.connectionnewspapers.com

NEWS

Man Shot by Police in Lorton Identified, Charged

Officer not yet named.

By Mike Salmon
The Connection

The man shot by a Fairfax County police officer in an early morning shooting last week was identified as 34-year-old Michael Vaughn, a fugitive who was arrested on Feb. 16 for two outstanding warrants for failure to appear and a probation violation.

According to Fairfax County Police, Vaughn's warrants stem from previous charges of possession of a firearm while in possession of certain substances and selling a schedule I/II drug that occurred on March 18, 2021. When Vaughn violated his probation, a warrant was issued on Sept. 2, 2021. A second warrant was issued on Sept. 22, 2021 when Vaughn failed to appear in court on the original charges.

The police offered a detailed report of the events:

In the morning of Tuesday, Feb 15, Vaughn was in his vehicle in the 8300 block of Fitt Court in Lorton when officers arrived to investigate after being called by nearby residents about a car parked on the street with a North Carolina license plate. The first officer arrived at 8:12 a.m. and found a red 2008 Kia Sedona with tinted windows and curtains inside separating the driver and passenger compartments. The officer attempted to look inside the van, but the view was obstructed. The officer then began knocking on the windows but did not receive any indication someone was inside, police said.

A second officer arrived as back up, they determined the North Carolina license plate on the van was reported stolen. Due to the stolen license plate, officers requested a tow truck for the van. As officers began the procedure for it to be towed, they found a Virginia license plate in the rear cargo area. The Virginia license plate matched the VIN of the van. Officers then contacted the owner of the van to determine who might have been driving it.

As officers spoke to the owner of the van on the phone, the tow truck driver arrived and opened the driver's door. An officer pushed



SCREENSHOT

Fairfax County Police Chief Kevin Davis on the scene in Lorton after the shooting.

a button inside the van, which opened both rear sliding doors. As the doors opened, the officer observed Michael Vaughn holding a carbine-style rifle and emerging from the rear driver-side door. The officer and the tow truck driver quickly took cover. Vaughn was given several commands, but he refused to comply. One officer discharged their firearm, striking Vaughn twice in the upper body. Officers immediately rendered aid until fire and rescue personnel arrived. Vaughn was taken to a nearby hospital with injuries that were later determined not to be life threatening. One officer was taken to the hospital for injuries that were not considered life threatening. He remains hospitalized, police said.

The Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney is reviewing the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident and will determine if additional charges will be placed.

The officer involved in the incident has been identified as a 2-year veteran who is assigned to the Franconia Police District Station. Per department policy, the officer has been placed on a restricted duty pending the outcome of an administrative investigation by our Internal Affairs Bureau. An independent review will also be conducted by the Police Auditor.

The name of the officer will be released within 10 days, unless there is a credible threat to the safety of those involved or if additional time is required to thoroughly complete the risk assessment process.



PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

Fitt Court is in the Newington part of Lorton, where an officer from the Mount Vernon district shot a man who pointed a gun at officers on Tuesday while they were investigating an illegally parked van.

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PET CONNECTION



From Moscow to Alexandria

Journalist Lisa McAdams was covering the international cat show in Moscow, Russia, in 2003 when four-month-old Bella reached out with her paw to touch her and stole her heart. Now 19 years old, Bella has lived for the last 15 years in Alexandria, Virginia, with Lisa and her husband, Michael Collins, who affectionately refer to her as “the Czarina!”



Bella with Lisa McAdams in February 2022

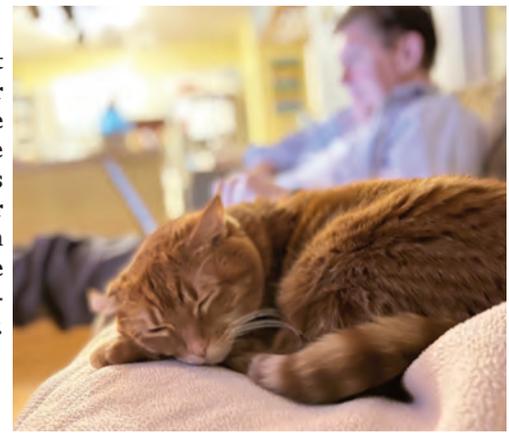


PHOTO COURTESY OF ALCORN FAMILY

Hunter Mill District Supervisor Walter Alcorn gets some work done, while family cat Princess Carolyn opts for a nap. She was a 13-year-old rescue when she was adopted by his family.



Now going on two years old, Samson and Mishka were “pandemic puppies” along with their nine other siblings – born in the fall of 2020 in West Virginia to their mixed-breed mother, Sadie. In November, 2020, Sadie and her brood landed in the care of Animal Welfare League of Arlington <https://www.awla.org/>, who ultimately placed all eleven puppies into different foster homes in groups of twos and threes. In December 2020, the lucky brother and sister were adopted by a pair of next-door neighbors – Alyssa Tope and Galina Ginzburg of Arlington.



David Griffin, Ana Claudia Griffin, Poppy of Alexandria
 “Poppy is a Basset Hound and is almost 1.5 years old. We got him from Peru which is where my wife (Ana, pictured) is originally from. He loves to chew any sticks he finds and really enjoys walking around Old Town. We also go to Blackjack Dog Park off Route 1 almost every day and he loves playing with other dogs.”

Juno has been a resident of Arlington for almost 6 years. Her eight sons and two daughters live all over the country, but a few still live in Arlington. She cries when she is reunited with anyone in her family — no matter the species. Like any new mother, she had a makeover when the pups were all gone and she could stop nursing them, finally, and getting her figure back, could dress up again.

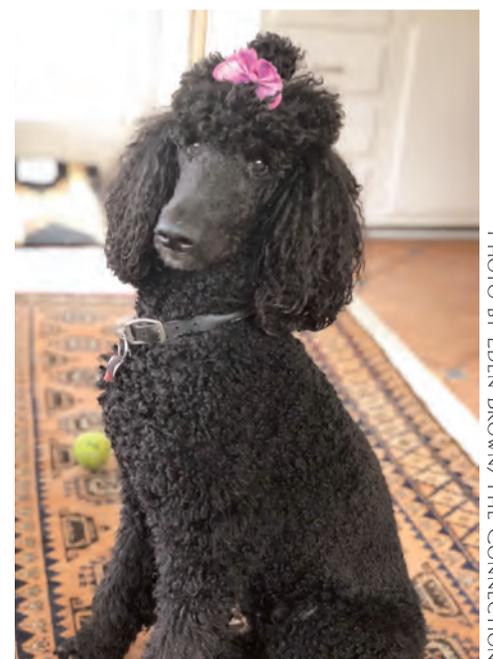


PHOTO BY EDEN BROWN/THE CONNECTION



Fairfax County Executive Bryan Hill



Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay (D-At Lage)



Supervisor James R. Walkinshaw (D-Braddock)



Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield)



Tammie Wondong, President SEIU Virginia 512 Fairfax

PHOTO COURTESY OF SEIU

County Executive Presents FY 2023 Advertised Budget

Increase in assessed values for real estate and vehicles drive higher tax payments.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Executive Bryan Hill is proposing a \$4.85 billion spending plan while maintaining the current real estate tax rate of \$1.14 per \$100 of assessed value according to his presentation on the FY 2023 Advertised Budget plan at the Board of Supervisors meeting on Feb. 22, 2022, at Fairfax County Government Center.

Because of increased home assessments, the typical homeowner's tax payment would rise by \$666, a 9.5 percent increase, according to Hill. "I did have to go back and recalculate that number, but I want you to know that is a true number," Hill said. "I expect mitigating this impact will be a priority."

In addition, used car prices are soaring. Updated information from JD Power for January 2022 suggests an increase of over 33 percent. Hence, with no changes to the Personal Property Tax rate, the average vehicle tax levy for the taxpayer will increase by about \$181. Revenues will increase by \$83 million beyond what is included in the Advertised Budget.

CHAIRMAN Jeffrey C. McKay (D) warned the Board and audience before the County Executive's presentation that Hill's proposal was not the final budget. It was the first stage in a protracted process and schedule that sought public input before board approval.

During the discussion, Supervisor James R. Walkinshaw (D-Braddock) said, "This one is going to shock the heck out of a lot of people. We're going to have to figure out how we can make an adjustment here."

Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) said in a statement after the meeting, "The real estate tax increase is on top of the 45 percent increase in real estate taxes over the last decade and comes while residents are facing record inflation, rising gas prices, and continuing to recover from the pandemic. Instead of increasing the burden on our struggling residents, the Board needs to prioritize the critical service issues that are going unaddressed and work to reduce the cost of government."

The proposed budget prioritized compensation for county and Fairfax County Public



Fairfax County Board of Supervisors listen to the County Executive Bryan Hill's presentation of the FY 2023 Advertised Budget. It is a proposal and not the final adopted budget.

Schools employees. "The budget proposal includes a 4.01 percent market rate adjustment for all County employees and performance, merit, and longevity increases," Hill said.

In addition, the County's living wage increases to \$15.90 an hour; Performance, Merit, and Longevity increases, including a new 25-year step proposed for uniformed pay plans, an average increase of 2.15 percent for non-uniformed; 3.85 percent for uniformed.

County compensation includes a 5 percent health insurance premium increase in Jan. 2023, and no changes in retirement employer contribution rates.

Because of increased home assessments, the typical homeowner's tax payment would rise by \$666, a 9.5 percent increase

Tammie Wondong is the President of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Virginia 512 Fairfax and a 30-year county employee. "For two years, my co-workers and I have been working on the front lines of the pandemic, with just a 1 percent raise. The rising cost of living and our healthcare increases mean that our paychecks have actually gone down. That's why SEIU members called for fair pay, affordable care, and safe working conditions. Today's proposed budget is one step in that direction, but only collective bargaining can ensure the good jobs and quality public services our community needs."

A SUMMARY of the proposed FY 2023 Budget reports net county resources, revenues,

and transfers increase by \$330.17 million and of the increase: \$127.84 million are for county priorities, \$117.90 million for schools, \$5.17 million for reserve requirements, and a \$79.26 million balance for Board consideration.

The proposed budget also fully funds Fairfax County Public Schools' request of \$2.285 billion. Schools are 52.4 percent of General Fund Distribution in FY 2023.

Highlighting investments in board priorities are affordable housing (\$1.52 million/7 positions), Diversion First Initiative (\$1.05 million/7 positions), Opioid Task Force \$0.40 million/3 positions), baseline support for Health Department staff, one public health nurse in all Fairfax County Public Schools, and additional resources for Public Health Readiness (\$12.92 million), Language Access Program, and One Fairfax Support (\$1.54 million/5 positions).

The proposed budget supports residents facing vulnerability, providing \$10.66 million and nine positions; including baseline funds for the Co-Responder Program, Behavioral Health, Equitable School Readiness and Emergency Rental Assistance Program support; and baseline funds for Public Assistance Eligibility Workers, Child Protective Services, and Family First In-Home Services added at Carryover.

"Lastly, we have begun to implement recommendations from the Joint County and Schools Capital Improvement Program Committee," Hill said. A net of 109 positions increases county positions.

Real estate taxes will be the primary source of funding for the County in the fiscal year 2023. Real estate taxes provide about 68 percent of general fund revenue, which is forecasted to increase by 8.1 percent over FY 2022. Taxes on personal property are likely to climb by 10.8 percent.

The proposed budget fully funds the

FY 2023 BUDGET TIMELINE

- Feb. 22, 2022 County Executive presents FY 2023 Advertised Budget Plan
- Feb. 24, 2022 School Board adopts FY 2023 Advertised Budget
- March 1, 2022 Joint Board of Supervisors/School Board Budget Committee Meeting
- March 8, 2022 Board of Supervisors authorizes advertisement of FY 2023 tax rates
- March 22, 2022 Board of Supervisors authorizes advertisement of FY 2022 Third Quarter Review
- April 12-14, 2022 Public Hearings at Board of Supervisors on FY 2023 Budget, FY 2023-FY 2027 Capital Improvement Program, and FY 2022 Third Quarter Review
- April 26, 2022 Board of Supervisors marks-up FY 2023 Budget, adopts FY 2023- FY 2027 Capital Improvement Program and FY 2022 Third Quarter Review
- May 1, 2022 Board of Supervisors adopts FY 2023 Adopted budget
- May 5, 2022 Public Hearings at School Board on FY 2023 budget
- May 26, 2022 School Board adopts FY 2023 Approved Budget
- July 1, 2022 FY 2023 Budget Year Begins

Schools Operating request as included in Superintendent's Proposed Budget, a 5.1 percent increase. Schools budget includes:

- ❖ \$88 million in increased sales tax and state aid
- ❖ 4 percent Market Scale Adjustment for all employees and Step Increases for eligible employees
- ❖ Reduction of over \$88 million based on lower projected enrollment
- ❖ Baseline funding for initiatives previously funded with federal stimulus dollars
- ❖ \$10 million placeholder for General Assembly actions

The FY 2023 Advertised Budget Plan and the FY 2023-FY 2027 Capital Improvement Program are available online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget.

To provide input, the public can send written testimony or communicate with the Clerk's Office by email at clerktothebos@fairfaxcounty.gov. The Board of Supervisors will hold public hearings on the budget April 12-14.

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BULLETIN

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

NOW THRU APRIL 14

ESL Classes. 7-9 p.m. At Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Road, Fairfax. In-person and online ESL classes. Classes will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7-9 p.m. Online registration started at <http://www.lordoflifeva.org/esl>. Cost is \$20.

SEEKING SOFTBALL PLAYERS

The Golden Girls of Northern Virginia, a senior women's softball league, is looking for players. Any woman over the age of 40 is encouraged to join. All skill levels are welcome. They play on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in Vienna. For more information, visit the website www.goldengirls.org or call Marilyn at 571-261-9163.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax or www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html.

Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke sponsors a monthly meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, noon-1:30 p.m., for caregivers to learn and to share with others experiencing similar challenges. Before attending, contact the facilitator, Eileen Thompson at 703-451-8626 or eileen.thompson1@gmail.com.

Haven of Northern Virginia provides support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. To become a Haven volunteer, please call 703-941-7000 to request an orientation. Volunteers must complete a 30-hour training and commit to one year of service answering Haven phones (2.5 hours weekly). Next training is scheduled for fall 2017.

ONGOING

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

STEM Professionals Needed. Volunteers are needed to assist K-12 STEM teachers in northern Virginia as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, stemvolunteers.org, during the 2019-20 school year, beginning in September. Please contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488 or donaldrea@aol.com.

CALENDAR



The Mark Morris Dance Group will appear at GMU Center for the Arts on Saturday, Feb. 26, 2022.

FRIDAY/FEB. 25

QuinTango Argentina. 8-10 p.m. At Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Hear the heartbeat of classical Argentinian tango channeled by a quintet of top-notch female chamber musicians and their crackerjack bandoneon player. This is tango like you've never imagined it. Visit the website:

<https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts>

SATURDAY/FEB. 26

Archaeology Symposium. 9:30-5 p.m. At Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. Gunston Hall invite you to join the "Archaeology of the Garden." In this day-long symposium, they'll explore the buried history of 18th-century gardens. Visit the website:

<https://www.tix.com/ticket-sales/gunston-hall/5996/event/1255903>

SATURDAY/FEB. 26

Mark Morris Dance Group. 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. The Mark Morris Dance Group returns with a medley of lively works. The performance opens on a playful note with Words, called "frisky and enigmatic" by The Washington Post. Following is the passionate duet work Jenn and Spencer with musical accompaniment by one of Morris's favorite composers, Henry Cowell. Suite for Violin and Piano provides a rich and turbulent musical landscape for the dancers. Pas de Poisson lightens the mood with a work for a trio of dancers set to music by Satie. Visit the website: <https://cfa.gmu.edu/>.

SATURDAY/FEB. 26

School of Music Jazz Festival. 8 a.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. The Mason Jazz Festival is an invitational event open to middle school, high school, collegiate and community Jazz ensembles. Learn more about participating. Closing festival performance will be the United States Army Blues Jazz Ensemble at 7 p.m. in Harris Theatre. Visit <https://cfa.gmu.edu/>.

SATURDAY/FEB. 26

Burke Historical Society. 3-4:30 p.m. Virtual event. Susan Hellman will share a talk called

www.connectionnewspapers.com

"You Will Find It Handy: Traveling Through the Old Dominion with The Green Book." Registration required. Visit <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/8868672> Or visit the website: <https://burkehistoricalsociety.org/>

SUNDAY/FEB. 27

Ladysmith Black Mambazo. At 7 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Sharing a heartfelt message of love, peace, and harmony, Ladysmith Black Mambazo performs an uplifting concert showcasing traditional South African vocal styles. Already successful in their own right in South Africa, the group rose to worldwide prominence in 1986 when they collaborated with Paul Simon on his hit album Graceland. A pre-performance discussion will take place in Monson Grand Tier, which is located on the third level of the Center for the Arts Lobby, 45 minutes prior to curtain. Visit the website: <https://cfa.gmu.edu/>.

MONDAY/FEB. 28

My Gym Fun. 10:30-11:30 a.m. At Stacy C. Sherwood Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Young children can enjoy music and movement, stretches and exercise, songs and dances, balance and agility skills. Part of the City of Fairfax's Funday Monday program. Register online. Free event. Visit the website: <https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts>

THURSDAY/MARCH 3

Screening of "All Light, Everywhere." 4:30-8 p.m. At the Johnson Center Cinema, GMU, Fairfax. George Mason University's Visiting Filmmakers Series will hold a screening of "All Light, Everywhere," followed by a conversation with the film's director Theo Anthony. "All Light, Everywhere" is an award-winning film that explores the shared histories of cameras, weapons, policing and justice. As surveillance technologies become a fixture in everyday life, the film interrogates the complexity of an objective point of view, probing the biases inherent in both human perception and the lens. The film screening will begin at 4:30 p.m., and the post-screening Q&A with Theo Anthony will begin around 6:30 p.m.

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By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Consider yourselves advised. Eighteen months or so into my treatment for thyroid cancer and the dry-mouth I've been "side-effecting" has not diminished one bit. In fact, it's gotten worse in one respect: the missing saliva or whatever it is causing this chronic condition, directly impacts your product line and dare I presume, your profits as well. Chocolate, miscellaneous cookies and snack cakes do not satiate like they used to. The constant dryness makes eating certain foods difficult. And as a result, less desirable, and not purchased nearly as much.

How much impact can one individual's changing eating habits have on a company's bottom line? I don't want to boast, but I have a long history of buying and re-buying the same foods repeatedly. If any of these three brands had frequent-buyer incentives when I was growing up, I would have saved my parents thousands of dollars at the supermarket. I recall my mother regularly collecting green stamps for something; I'm sure she would have saved box tops or whatever to earn additional discounts or a baker's dozen type of freebee.

Growing up, I had dessert with breakfast, lunch, after school/midafternoon, dinner and once more before bedtime. Five desserts daily. Part of the reason for this rigorous routine - which I thoroughly enjoyed, was my mother's desire to follow the regularly advertised calcium advisories for children to have strong bones: eight glasses of milk per day. And the way to get children to drink all that milk, at least in my mother's house, was to give us all that chocolate. Which brings me back to the point of this column. Though my chocolate consumption isn't nearly the same now (I know. How could someone keep up that pace?), it is still ample, to say the least, the very least. But unfortunately, I'm simply unable to maintain my life's work.

I blame this squarely on the thyroid cancer drug I've been swallowing every morning since Sept. '19. (In the interest of not defaming a drug/pharmaceutical company, I will not name names.) But there cannot be any other logical explanation. The only variable in my life these last 18 months has been this daily dose. And though initially the treatment didn't curb/impair my chocolate consumption, it seems the cumulative effect of over 500 pills ever since (my re-diagnosis from stage IV non-small cell lung cancer to stage IV papillary thyroid cancer being the cause) has led to this unpalatable condition.

For me, I'll adjust, though I'm not happy about it. There are other desserts, snack cakes and candy (specifically jellybeans of late) which will likely fill the void. But it will be a void, nonetheless. And that means less money going to these big three. I wouldn't say my lack of demand is going to affect the number of eight-hour shifts the manufacturers schedule, but if any line employees want to take early retirement, given the slack, it might be advisable to accept their offer. On the other hand, Jelly Belly's profits will likely increase.

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

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