

Fairfax Animal Shelter Has New Director

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

Pet Connection

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Anti-semitic Flyers Investigated

PAGE 2

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OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ SENIOR LIVING, PAGE 5 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 9, 11

Here's What's Happening at MCC!

MCC Strategic Planning



Winter Listening Session (In-Person)
Thursday, Feb. 24, 6-7:30 p.m.
Register online: mcleancenter.org

MCC Strategic Planning



Winter Listening Session (Virtual)
Thursday, Feb. 24, 7:30-9 p.m.
Register online: mcleancenter.org

Presented by The Alden



Performing Arts Documentaries
Thursday, Feb. 24, 1 p.m.
Free; Registration is required.

The Old Firehouse



Teacher Workday Trips
Indoor Trampoline/Summit Ropes
Friday, March 4, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.
\$70/\$60 MCC district residents

Presented by The Alden



Unruly Theatre Project Improv Show
@ The Old Firehouse
Friday, March 4, 7 p.m.
Free admission

The Old Firehouse



5th & 6th Grader Party
St. Patty's Party
Friday, March 11, 7-9:30 p.m.
\$35/\$25 OFC members

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NEWS

Anti-semitic Flyers Distributed In Wolf Trap Neighborhood

Detectives from Fairfax police Organized Crime and Intelligence Bureau are investigating a bias incident that occurred on Sunday, Feb. 20. Officers were called to 1400 block of Laurel Hill Road, in the Wolf Trap area of Vienna, after a community member found a sealed plastic bag containing an anti-Semitic flyer weighted with corn kernels on his property. Prior to police arrival, the community member found an additional 70-80 flyers throughout the neighborhood. Officers collected several of the flyers for evidentiary processing. Detectives are working to determine the origin of these flyers, and patrols have been increased

as a precaution.

The Department is actively working with the Anti-Defamation League and the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington to ensure the community is aware of these flyers.

We would like to hear from anyone who may have information about these flyers or may have home surveillance footage that may have captured the distribution. To contact our detectives, please call our Organized Crime and Intelligence Bureau at 703-802-2750. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone – 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477).



Nate Goss, James
Madison High School.



Mayra Rios, James
Madison High School.



Angel Samsuhadi, George
C. Marshall High School.

Local High School Students Pen Essays about Optimistic Mindsets

OPTIMIST CLUB OF GREATER VIENNA

Building resilience and thinking positively is important, but can it literally pay to be optimistic? For three thoughtful local high school students, the answer is yes.

Students from George C. Marshall and James Madison High Schools won monetary prizes recently for writing insightful essays on the topic of "How an Optimistic Mindset Changes my Tomorrow", courtesy of the Optimist Club of Greater Vienna.

Nate Goss, a freshman at James Madison High School, earned \$1,000 for first place honors; Mayra Rios, a junior at James Madison High School, snared \$600 for a second-place prize; and Angel Samsuhadi, a senior at George C. Marshall High School, took home \$400 for a third-place award.

Goss's essay moves on to the Optimist International Organization's District com-

petition, where it could possibly win a \$2,500 college scholarship.

"I look forward to the essay contest every year because I love seeing firsthand how talented the students are at conveying their optimism about the future," Dan Irvine, essay contest chair, said.

The Optimist Club of Greater Vienna supports area youth through its mission of "Bringing Out the Best in Kids".

To help generate money for the scholarships the Optimists provide, the Club runs several fundraisers through the year, such as the upcoming annual Vienna Farmers Market and the annual Christmas tree sale at the Vienna Giant, plus more.

The Optimist Club of Greater Vienna is a 100% (501c3) organization and one of 2,500 Optimist Clubs worldwide.

For more about the Club, its programs, and memberships, visit www.optimistclubofgreatervienna.org or www.facebook.com/Viennaoptimists.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 2

Drive-Thru Ashes. 6:30-8 p.m. At Church of the Good Shepherd (United Methodist) parking lot, 2351 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna. Pastor Eric Song will distribute small crosses filled with ashes to go and the church's 23rd annual

Devotions for Lent booklet. Evening service at 7:30 p.m. The church also will hand out copies of the church's 23rd annual Devotions for Lent publication, which will be mailed to surrounding neighborhoods and available on the church website and Facebook page. Visit the website: www.GoodShepherdVA.com

NEW STEM PROGRAM

The Center for Excellence in Education is inaugu-

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 10

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

PET CONNECTION



Bella held by Lisa McAdams at Moscow international cat show in 2003



Bella McAdams at home in Alexandria at age 19 (2021)



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.

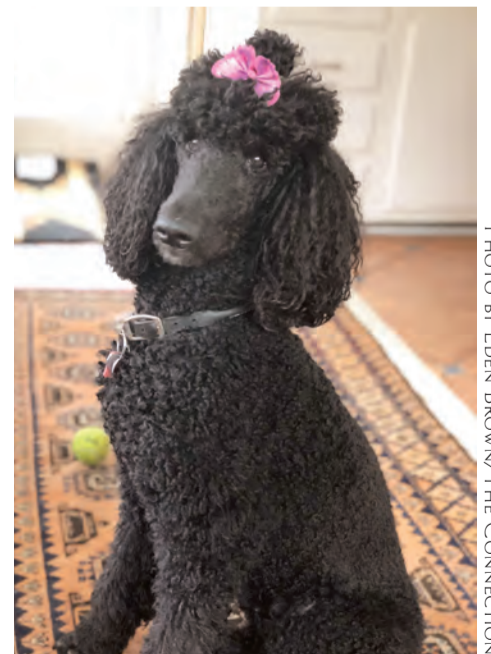


PHOTO BY EDEN BROWN/THE CONNECTION

Budgeting When Resources Are Available

BY DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM



The House of Delegates Appropriations Committee on which I serve met this past weekend to complete its recommendations on state spending for the remainder of this year (HB29) and for the next biennium beginning July 1 (HB 30). The Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee chaired by Senator Janet Howell also completed its recommendations. These reports must be approved by their respective houses before a conference resolves differences that are inevitable between the two houses in time to go to the Governor for his signature before adjournment of the General Assembly on March 12, 2022.

I have not seen the Senate Committee recommendations yet, but from having just attended the House Committee where our recommendations were adopted, I can say that the budget for the next two years is an exceptionally good one. The reason is simple: the Commonwealth has more resources with which to meet the needs than ever before. The proposed biennial budget has a net general fund spending

increase of nearly \$10.3 billion over the previous two-year period. In contrast, there was only \$2.7 billion in new spending in the last budget.

There has been an unparalleled rise in revenue with economic growth and substantial federal revenue increases during the pandemic. I have cautioned against calling the increased revenue a surplus because of the number of unmet needs in the state. I think the House Appropriations Committee does a good job of balancing taxpayer relief with funding short-term projects without recurring costs and with funding unmet needs. For example, the budget proposes to eliminate all sales taxes on food and hygiene needs with no loss in revenue to local governments. There is also a doubling of the standard deduction on the income tax that will return more money to taxpayers.

Substantial reserves are set aside in the budget to meet future obligations when revenues are not so strong. By FY2024 there will be an historic \$4.4 billion in all reserves, that is more than 400% higher than the reserve level in FY2020 and is the equivalent to 16.8% of assumed revenues in FY 2024.

The budget includes a 15 percent increase in elementary and secondary funding and is the largest K-12 budget in Virginia's history. There is funding for a five percent increase in teacher salaries and funding for additional school support personnel that in the past were funded entirely by local governments. A school construction fund is proposed to assist localities with school construction since half the schools in the state are over 50 years old. Additional funding is provided for programs in remediation and dropout prevention.

An additional \$1.5 billion is provided in health and human services to address unmet needs. An additional 1,200 DD waiver slots are proposed bringing the total waiver slots to 18,139 for individuals with developmental disabilities. More than \$101.0 million to increase funding for nursing homes is proposed with close supervision over quality of care.

In higher education there is an increase in support of \$425.5 million to increase access and affordability. Major increases in agricultural best management practices and wastewater projects will help the state meet its objectives of Chesapeake Bay clean-up.

For more details on the proposed House budget go to <http://hac.virginia.gov> and for additional analysis go to <https://thecommonwealthinstitute.org/budget-revenue/>

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 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.

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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.

CALENDAR

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Visit: [HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/MCLEAN-CENTER-ELECTION](https://tinyurl.com/mclean-center-election)



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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 liter

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



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

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 LRCP, <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.

CALENDAR

NOW THRU MARCH 13

"The Phlebotomist." Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road in Tysons. Tickets can be purchased online at www.1ststage.org or by calling the 1st Stage box office at 703-854-1856.

NOW THRU MARCH 13

"Every Brilliant Thing." At NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Guided by an unnamed narrator, the audience is drawn into the story of a young boy who tries to cure his mother's depression by creating a list of all the most wonderful things in the world. At times humorous and at others gut-wrenching, this extraordinary, interactive play brings the actor and audience along together on a unique journey of shared discovery and catharsis. Visit www.NextStopTheatre.org.

FEB. 21-MARCH 30

Fiber Optics. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At McLean Textile Gallery, 6819 Elm Street, McLean. Philadelphia print-maker Fay Stanford will show her fabulist banners. Stanford creates wry fairy tales about suburban family life – especially death, disease and aging. Visit the website: mcleantextilegallery.org.

THURSDAY/FEB. 24

Performing Arts Documentaries. 1 p.m. At The Alden, McLean Community Center, McLean. Learn a little about the performing arts



The Sweetheart Parent & Child Dance will be held on Friday, Feb. 25, 2022 at the McLean Community Center.

through these one-hour (or so) documentaries. Safety permitting, join Performing Arts Director Sarah Schallern Treff for a discussion after.

FRIDAY/FEB. 25

Sweetheart Parent & Child Dance. 7-9 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. For all ages. Children can come to MCC for a fancy "date" with their parents or guardians. Create lasting memories by joining us at the MCC's Sweetheart dance. Activities include a dance lesson, music played by a DJ, a photo booth and craft activities. Visit www.mcleancenter.org

FRIDAY/FEB. 25

McLean Art Society Meeting. 10 a.m. to noon. Via Zoom. Ann Wallace, an established local artist who paints with pastels, will be the featured presenter at the meeting of the McLean Art Society. The meeting will be held on Zoom and the art demonstration will begin at 11 a.m. Guests are invited and anyone who would like to be included for the Zoom presentation should contact M.A.S. President Anna Katalina at annakatalina@aol.com.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

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BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 2

rating a new program for Virginia's high school students that will nurture their interest in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers. The free virtual STEM Lyceums kickoff event is on Thursday, February 24, 2022, from 4 to 5 p.m. via Zoom. Tune in by registering at <https://www.cee.org/programs/stem-lyceums>.

Students will explore STEM careers in genomics, clean/renewable energy, nuclear engineering, and the Internet of Things (IoT) in healthcare (smart devices). More information about CEE's STEM Lyceums, including an overview video and the spring schedule, is here. All the events take place via Zoom. Those interested in supporting this innovative program are encouraged to contact CEE at (703) 448-9062.

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.

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. Twitter – @fairfaxcounty and @fairfaxhealth

Facebook – www.facebook.com/fairfaxcounty and www.facebook.com/fairfaxcountyhealth

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 Oakton Vienna Caregivers' Support Group takes place first and third Thursday of each month, 10-11:30 a.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax (UUCF) - Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. For caregivers to adult family members with dementia. First and third Thursdays of every month. Hosted by Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna, scov.org. Contact facilitator Jack Tarr at 703-821-6838 or jtarr5@verizon.net. Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, www.havenofnova.org or havenofnova@verizon.net.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 9

FEB. 25-26

Capital Remodel and Garden Show. At the Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. Barry Williams, former teen star of "The Brady Bunch" and of HGTV's "A Very Brady Renovation," will be headlining. More than 200 companies will be on hand to showcase the latest products and services in home remodeling, renovation, home décor, landscape and garden design. An ongoing schedule of home remodeling and landscape experts conducting seminars will be carried out throughout the three-day event. From 10 a.m. until 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday and from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets may be purchased at: www.capitalremodelandgardenshow.com

SATURDAY/FEB. 26

"I'mpossible." 2 p.m. At Capital One Hall, 7750 Capital One Tower Road in Tysons. Led by Ringmaster Johnathan Lee Iverson, the talented cast of circus superstars presents a death-defying, awe-inspiring, and hilarious circus adventure. "I'mpossible" is a show where there are no limits, no boundaries, and no barriers. Visit CapitalOneHall.com.

SUNDAY/FEB. 27

CIA's Project Azorian. 2-3:30 p.m. At The Cold War Museum, 7134 Lineweaver Road, Vint Hill, VA (Via Virtual). It Was a Top-Secret CIA Mission Against the Soviets. But Now There's a Court Case Involving It. How Do You Resolve That Fairly? Cost: \$20. Visit the website: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-glomar-explorer-in-court-the-cia-in-a-court-case-on-project-azorian-tickets-243250427577>

SUNDAY/FEB. 27

Traditional Celtic Music. 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. At

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 10

Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group Meets from 1:30-3 p.m. the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW. 703-532-4892.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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.

Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed. Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriendA-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil at Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-4547.

Operation Paws for Homes, a Virginia based 501(c)(3) organization seeks volunteers, especially to foster dogs. See www.ophrescue.org for information and all volunteer opportunities.

RSVP a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP visit www.rsvpnova.org.

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the Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Featuring Lilt with Eileen Estes: Irish music featuring flute, bouzouki, banjo and singing. Tickets must be purchased in advance through the link at www.oldbrogue.com: \$21 general admission. Season ticket: \$110. Visit www.liltirishmusic.com.

SUNDAY/FEB. 27

Mark Charles Speaker. 7-9 p.m. At Oakbrook Church, 1700 Reston Parkway, Reston. Native American author and activist Mark Charles will speak at Oakbrook Church. The event will be open to the entire community. Visit the website: <https://www.oakbrookchurch.org/>

SUNDAY/FEB. 27

Art Spiegelman. 3 p.m. What the %@&*! Happened to Comics? At Reston Community Theater's CenterStage. Pulitzer Prize-winning artist/illustrator and author Art Spiegelman, author of Maus and Maus II, almost single-handedly brought comic books out of the toy closet and onto the literature shelves. Cost is \$20 Reston/\$30 Non-Reston. Visit www.restoncommunity-center.com.

MONDAY/FEB. 28

Scholarship Application. Fairfax County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. will award scholarships to African American female high school students who demonstrate a high degree of scholarship, leadership, and community service. Applicants must meet certain criteria as outlined in the application and be a resident of Fairfax County, Virginia. Email Questions to Scholarship@fcacdst.org. Application Due Date: February 28, 2022. The FCAC scholarship application is available at: <https://www.fcacdst.org/scholarship-application>.

Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean continues to have an urgent need for new volunteers to help area senior citizens get to and from their medical and therapy appointments. To find out more about the Shepherd's Center and how you can volunteer to provide transportation and other services, call the Center at 703-506-2199 or e-mail the Center at info@scmaf.org. The Center's website is www.scmaf.org.

Master Gardener Training. The Fairfax County Master Gardener Association offers plant clinics, home turf training or speakers for homeowner's meetings. Fees vary. Visit fairfaxgardening.org or call MG Help Desk at 703-324-8556 for more.

Volunteers Needed. PRS is looking for empathetic and caring volunteers to make phone calls to older adults who may be feeling socially isolated. The commitment is one 3-hour shift per week for one year. Located in Arlington. Ages 21 & up. Intensive training provided. Learn more and apply: prsinc.org/caring-volunteering/. Questions? Email lpadgett@prsinc.org.

The Northern Virginia Long Term Care Ombudsman Program needs volunteer advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Contact Lisa Callahan at 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov. Also visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/ltcombudsman/.

Fairfax County needs volunteers to drive older adults to medical appointments and wellness programs. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

Respite Care volunteers give family caregivers of a frail older adult a well-deserved break so they can go shopping, attend a doctor's appointment or just have coffee with a friend. Volunteers visit and oversee the safety of the older adult for a few hours each month. Support and training are provided. Contact 703-324-7577, TTY 711, or Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov.

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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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