

CONNECTION

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A man shovels snow off a neighbor's lengthy sidewalk in Herndon so that no one slips.

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MARCH 16-22, 2022

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COMMUNITY



PHOTO COURTESY OF STEVEN HUNTER

Group photo of the participants in the American flag retirement ceremony in Centreville.

Centreville American Legion Post Officially Retires Flags

American Legion Post 1995 of Centreville recently conducted an American flag retirement ceremony at West Centreville Fire Station 38. Station 38 and Post 1995 have hosted this annual event for the past 16 years.

Boy Scout Troop 1995, members of the Fairfax County Police Honor Guard and others within the Scouting community participated, as well. They helped Legion members fold the flags and then took part in their official, retirement ceremony and disposal.

Approximately 200 small- to medium-sized, mostly cotton flags were burned. Because of the toxic fumes created by the burning of synthetic-fiber flags, another 505 flags will be retired in a special burn ceremony

in conjunction with Post 177 of Fairfax. The American Legion partners with Fairfax County's waste to energy Covanta plant in Lorton to

dispose of these flags.

"The purpose of burning them is to respect these American flags, while also taking into consideration the fumes and pollution generated by doing so," explained Steven Hunter, commander of American Legion Post 1995. "The Covanta plant scrubs the emissions from the fire to significantly reduce pollutants to the atmosphere and, particularly, to those participating in the ceremony at the fire station."

For anyone interested, all Fairfax County police stations, plus Fire Station 38, have flag collection boxes where residents may donate flags, so they'll receive a proper and respectful disposal.

— BONNIE HOBBS

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NEWS



A site plan of Gallery Park in Chantilly.



A drawing showing the proposed Gallery Park community from above.



Artist's rendition of the front of the proposed townhouses.

'We Hope to Bring this Quality Project to Westfields'

Townhouse community is proposed for Chantilly.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Besides being a popular place of worship in Centreville, Korean Central Presbyterian Church (KCPC) is also a landowner. And as such, it wants to rezone the property it owns in Chantilly so homes may be built there.

Attorney Ken Wire, representing the church, presented the details to a recent meeting of the Sully District Council (SDC)/West Fairfax County Citizens Assn. (WFCCA) Joint Land-Use Committee. He said KCPC needs to amend its current, special-exception approval to make this change possible.

"The property is at the corner of Stonecroft Boulevard, Old Lee Road and Northridge Drive," said Wire. "It has three office buildings on it now, and just to the north of it is Westfield High School. The applicant is seeking a rezoning of the land from I-4 industrial to residential."

The site is 11 acres in Land Unit J – not far from Dulles International Airport, and the proposal is for the construction of 154 townhouses, including 16 affordable dwelling units. They'd be stacked, two-over-two townhomes with brick-masonry façades.

"There'll be a deck off the back and a covered porch, with optional roof terraces," said Wire. "Each lot is 24 feet wide, and every unit has its own, one-car garage, plus an outside driveway space, so there are two parking spaces per unit."

An open-space network is planned throughout the new community – to be called Gallery Park – and Wire said the proposal includes keeping and adding to the trees already there. In addition, he said the Westfields Business Owners Assn. wants the site's open space accessible for use by the people who work in the nearby Westfields Corporate Center.

Once built, said Wire, the neighborhood's homeowners' association would be responsible for snow removal. But he said the applicant would have Northridge repaved and brought up to VDOT standards. Proud of what's proposed, Wire added, "We hope to bring this quality project to this portion of Westfields. We go to the [county] Planning Commission in April."

Existing power lines bisect the property, so the architect turned the homes perpendicular to avoid them. However, the WFCCA's Steve Chulick was concerned about the power lines still being visible from the

homes. And the SDC's Jeff Parnes worried that some of these lines are near one of the trails there.

Chulick asked how much the townhouses would sell for and was told they'd probably be listed in the \$500,000 to \$600,000 price range. Looking at the site layout Wire showed during his presentation, Parnes said, "I'm happy there'll be a sidewalk on the southern portion, leading to Westfield High."

In the past few years, the county's Board of Supervisors has approved some controversial, residential projects in Land Unit J that are next to and/or directly underneath Dulles Airport runways – and therefore will experience the full force of jet aircraft constantly flying overhead. As a result, the WFCCA's John Litzenberger inquired about the applicant's noise-mitigation plans. "Since it's near the airport, will you have noise-attenuation measures?" he asked.

"We're proffering to a 45 dba [decibel level] inside the homes," replied Wire. "And we'll do post-construction testing to make sure [that's indeed the case]."

Parnes then asked where this site is located in regard to the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority's (MWAA) updated noise

contours, which provide guidance to both Fairfax and Loudoun counties as to where, specifically, homes should not be built because of the aircraft noise levels.

In 2019, MWAA updated its noise-contour map delineating aircraft-noise decibel levels in Westfields, and it identified the 65 dba contour too noisy for human habitation. But the Board of Supervisors chose to deny the new map's existence, thereby giving developers free rein to construct homes there based on MWAA's outdated map from 1993.

But in this case, said Wire, the proposed project "doesn't touch the 65 dba, at all. And it's even further away when the 2019 contours are applied."

Still, said Jim Hart, a former at-large planning commissioner, "To the county's shame, it's approved residential developments in Land Unit J that will be very noisy and were approved over MWAA's objections. Is this site lined up with one of the runways or their approaches?"

"We haven't looked at that, but we will," answered Wire. Parnes then asked him to return to the joint land-use committee's March 21 meeting, so the members could hear any changes to the plan and make a recommendation prior to this matter going before the Planning Commission.

ROUNDUPS

Car Seat Inspections, March 24

Parents may get their children's car seats inspected on Thursday, March 24, from 5-8:30 p.m., outside the Sully District Police Station. It's at 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Inspections are done on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants are asked to wear a mask and adhere to social-distancing and safety precautions.

They should also install the child safety seat themselves, so the inspection can be performed. The seat will

be properly re-installed, if necessary, and parents will be taught how to install the seat properly, in the future. Another car-seat inspection is scheduled for April 7, at the same place and time.

Collect, Donate Supplies for Local Schools

Fairfax County's Communities of Trust is holding a drive to re-supply the local schools. Collection boxes are at these

police stations: Fair Oaks District Station, 12300 Lee Jackson Memorial Hwy. in Fair Oaks, and Sully District Station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Drop off donations by March 31.

Needed are: Composition books (wide-ruled, 100 sheets); crayons (boxes of 24); erasers (large, pink); folders (plastic, colors, two pockets, no prongs); glue sticks; No. 2 pencils; colored pencils (boxes of 12); earbuds with mic; pencil sharpeners; scissors (5-inch, blunt tip, stainless); pencil pouches (soft-sided); dry-erase markers (black); and dry-erase boards (8.5x11 inches).

Not Quite Finished

BY DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM



The General Assembly adjourned its regular session last Saturday afternoon after sixty calendar days of deliberations on more than 2,500 bills and resolutions including a biennial budget. Its work was not quite finished, however, and legislators will need to return to the Capitol to complete work on the budget and nearly two dozen bills for which the differences between the House and Senate had not been resolved. While the Constitution provides that sessions may be lengthened, there has been a reluctance to do so in a state that prides itself on limited government and where a longer legislative session may be viewed as a failure. Special sessions may be called by the Governor and by a super majority of legislators to deal with exceptional needs for which a budget to keep the government running after June 30 would qualify.

The approximate \$158 billion budgets proposed by the Republican House of Delegates and

the Democratic-controlled Senate have major differences and were the major reason for the legislative work not being completed. With the higher-than-expected revenue levels of cash in hand and projected for the next two years, the task has been more difficult than usual. The Governor and Republicans want to return more monies to individuals through tax cuts and rebates. While the Democrats support those changes, to a much lesser degree, they seek to increase funding for public schools, programs for mental health and the disabled among others. There will be taxpayer relief for sure, such as eliminating the tax on food and personal hygiene products, but there also will be some relief to cash-starved schools and human service programs.

Republican lawmakers introduced many bills that would have rolled back reforms made by Democrats during the previous two years that they controlled the governorship and both houses of the General Assembly. Most all of these proposals passed the House of Delegates

on a party-line vote 52 to 48 and were defeated in the Senate on a party-line vote of 21 to 19. Republicans sought to repeal voting laws that Democrats had passed to make voting more accessible and easier to a time when it was harder to vote. Ironically Republicans won the governorship and control of the House of Delegates under the reformed laws that they then wanted to repeal. The Senate defeated this effort. The Senate also defeated Republican measures that would have made many abortions criminal and that would have capped the minimum wage. The Governor's various schemes for school choice with charter schools were defeated although laboratory schools associated with colleges were approved with details and funding to be worked out. A Senate committee defeated legislation that would have rolled back the 2020 Virginia Clean Economy Act which commits Virginia to 100 percent renewable energy by 2045. There is a proposal still being considered in a conference committee to use tax incentives to attract a football stadium to Northern Virginia which I adamantly oppose.

To review the fate of legislation you may have been following, go to <https://lis.virginia.gov/>.

Springtime?

JOHN LOVAAS



As I'm drafting this column, snow is falling on Lake Anne! It is blustery cold, with temps falling to the upper teens tonight. But I know Spring is coming. Soon it'll be 80 degrees and the Reston Farmers Market will spring to life again.

In the meantime, our Reston Association will undergo a promising, but tricky metamorphosis, over the next few weeks. The current Board majority, which has stumbled through the last 2 years, will be replaced as a result of the annual election now underway for three seats on the Board. There is but one candidate for each open seat. So, assuming all three well-qualified candidates achieve the 10% minimum of eligible votes required for a valid election, they will be seated in early April.

The three outstanding newcomers to the Board are: Laurie Dodd as North Point Director, Irwin Flashman for Lake Anne/Tall Oaks, and Glenn Small as the At-Large Director.

Go to the still-temporary (2 years so far) RA website for their individual bios and platforms to see for yourself, dear reader. With the new majority, we can expect a

INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE

return of transparency, functioning IT systems, prudent financial management and accountability in RA.

However, on its way out, the current majority is rushing the appointment of a new CEO, which the new majority will have to live with. It is possible the not-so-lame ducks will appoint someone who in fact contributed to decisions (such as acquisition of the ill-fated "Lake House") shaping RA's sad current condition. And, a major role of the new CEO will be filling five top senior RA staff positions. Still, in my view, these changes at the top should be a remarkable net positive.

More Spring good news for Reston is the return of the Reston Farmers Market. On April 30, the Market will open its 25th year since Robert Simon joined us in celebrating the grand opening in 1998. As a founder of the Market and a co-Manager, I am proud to say it is still recognized as the best in Northern Virginia. And the best is yet to come.

Not only are 26 out of 30 of last year's favorite farmer/vendors returning this season, but

we are adding five exciting new ones, fresh and local. They are: Doughboy with great homemade ice cream; Grateful Gardeners with beautiful cut flowers; Seven Bends with a grand selection of native plants; Green Planet with nutrient-dense microgreens; and, Greenheart's first-rate healthy juices.

The Reston Farmers Market's motto has long been "the place where friends meet." Although the Covid 19 pandemic put a crimp in our market ambience over the last two years, it will be back in 2022. Not only are the Fairfax Master Gardeners back to help shoppers with their plant and garden questions, but so is CORNERSTONES

with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Composting is back in a big way in the Reston Farmers Market. We've added the Veterans Composting service, thanks to a special program of the Market's sponsor, the Fairfax County Park Authority.

Speaking of ambience, there will also be a growing number and variety of community musicians throughout the season.

Final Note: Market management this year will be shared among four Co-Market Manager volunteers. That is, Fran and I will be joined by Keith and Anne Strange for the 2022 season.

We look forward to welcoming you on April 30.

Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

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Saving Lives, Solving Burglaries and Seeking Suspects

Lieb gives update on the Sully District Police Station.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

In his March 9 station update, Lt. John Lieb discussed topics including calls for service, recent crimes and personnel changes. The Sully District Police Station's assistant commander was speaking during an online meeting of the station's Citizens Advisory Committee.

Starting with some year-to-date statistics, he said that, so far, the station has received 5,975 calls for service. And, said Lieb, "Considering we have seven to eight officers on duty per shift, that's a heavy workload."

Like other employers nationwide, he said Fairfax County police have a staffing shortage and are currently down some 150 officers. But he stressed that they're making the best of it and still doing all they can to keep the public safe.

Of Sully's nearly 6,000 calls for service since the start of the year, 813 have been people calling to report a crime. Another 3,390 calls were people requesting a variety of assistance, and 1,772 were traffic complaints.

"In Sully, we've had 16 burglaries – seven of them, commercial burglaries – and six of those have already been closed by arrests," said Lieb. "Our biggest problem is still lar-

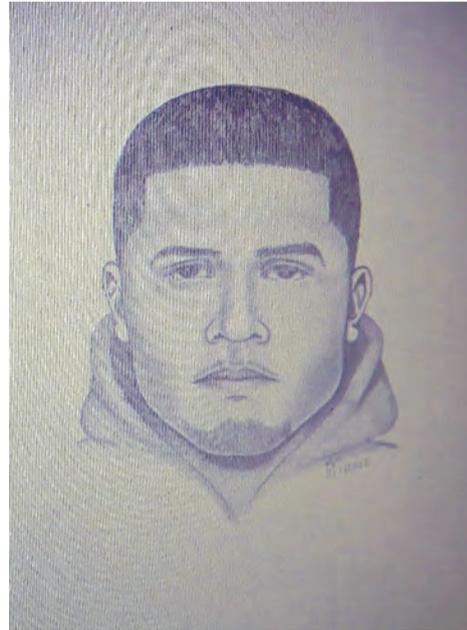


Suspect one

cenies from vehicles – and, overwhelmingly, these cars were unlocked."

He said 13 cars have been stolen here and, of that number, "Nine were unlocked and all had the keys inside of them." Thefts of motor-vehicle parts are also a problem. Stolen items include tires, rims and catalytic converters – sought after by thieves for their metals that can be sold.

"So be suspicious of someone shining a light underneath a car or lying under a car for a long period of time and emerging with a muffler," said Lieb. "And contact the police."



Suspect two

He then praised MPO Scott Bates, a 27-year veteran of the Police Department. "MPO Bates, along with a member of our Motor Squad and some firefighters, responded to the home of a U.S. Air Force veteran who was cleaning his gun when it went off accidentally," said Lieb. "It shot him in the leg, and he'd lost a lot of blood, so Bates applied a tourniquet with a belt and helped save the man's life."

Regarding personnel changes at the station, Lieb said, "Within a couple weeks, we'll have eight, new, trained officers joining us, and we're looking forward to having the

additional help." He also announced that Capt. Jason Allegra, commander of the Sully District Station, retired a couple weeks ago and "went on to a law-enforcement job in Loudoun County." So that means the Sully police will soon be getting a new commander.

Lieb also told the meeting attendees about a sexual assault that happened Feb. 22 in the 5100 block of Woodmere Drive in Centreville. Police say an adult woman was walking in her housing complex during the nighttime hours when two males approached her.

According to police, "The first one punched her in the face, causing her to fall to the ground. The second male then held her down while the first one sexually assaulted her."

The first suspect is described as white, 6 feet, with blond hair in a buzzed style and greenish eyes. He wore a black, zip-up sweatshirt, blue jeans and gray shoes. The second suspect is described as Hispanic, 5 feet 8 inches to 6 feet, with dark-brown hair. He was wearing a dark top, red-and-black tennis shoes and blue jeans.

"Our major crimes detectives are continuing to investigate this," said Lieb. "And we've released sketches of the two suspects."

Police ask anyone with information about this incident or who may have witnessed it to call the Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 3. Tips may also be submitted anonymously via Crime Solvers by phoning 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477), texting FCCS plus the tip to 847411, or going to <http://www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org/>. Tipsters are eligible for cash rewards of \$100-\$1,000 for information leading to an arrest.

One Bill for Town of Herndon and County Real Estate Taxes

Heads up businesses and residential property owners.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

A tax payment change is happening in the Town of Herndon. The town's businesses and residential property owners will receive one bill from the County of Fairfax for both their town and county taxes, not two separate invoices

Effective June 1, 2022, the Fairfax County Department of Tax Administration will begin collecting the Town of Herndon's current real property taxes and those after that. The Herndon Town Council approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on February 8, 2022, which laid out the new agreement.

The town will invoice its pre-2020 tax year and past due invoices.

"This agreement creates efficiencies for both the Town of Herndon and Fairfax County – but, more importantly, for real property owners in the town," said Mayor Sheila Olem.

Town residents who owe real estate taxes must pay them by July 28, 2022, and Dec. 5, 2022.

"We are excited to partner with the Town of Herndon on this important initiative and strengthen government efficiency," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay.

The Town of Herndon is notifying major mortgage firms that their first tax statements for both the town and Fairfax County will be sent to them in June 2022.

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.

2022 TEEN JOB FAIR

A Teen Job Fair will be held at Chantilly High School on March 19, 2022 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event is hosted by Supervisor Pat Herrity's office, Connection Newspapers and Fairfax County Public Schools. It includes a career-building workshop which focuses on students and young job seekers looking for a variety of employment opportunities; full time, after-school, seasonal positions, internship opportunities, and volunteer positions.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION AT COLIN POWELL

Now Thru May 31, 2022. 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Colin Powell Elementary School, 13340 Leland Road, Centreville. Colin Powell Elementary School in Centreville has begun kindergarten registration for the 2022-2023 school year. Children must be 5 years of age by September 30, 2022, to qualify for enrollment. Parents may call or email the registrar at 571-522-6008 / Rljohnson2@fcps.edu for more information and to schedule an appointment.

Forms and other information are available online at: <https://www.fcps.edu/registration/kindergarten-registration>.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION AT UNION MILL

Union Mill Elementary is currently registering new students for the 2022-23 school year. If your child will reach his or her 5th birthday on or before September 30, 2022, he or she is eligible to attend kindergarten in the Fairfax County Public School that serves your

address. Follow the following steps to register your child:

1. Find your neighborhood school by entering your address at <http://boundary.fcps.edu/boundary/>
2. Complete a packet of registration forms on the Union Mill Elementary School website or by calling Union Mill's registrar at 703 322 8500.
3. Gather your supporting documents—proof of residence in the Union Mill boundary, a certified copy of your child's birth certificate, parent/guardian photo ID, and any custody orders. Certificate of physical exam and immunization will be required before the student may start school.
4. Save the date for our virtual Kindergarten Orientation on Tuesday evening, March 1st. We will also have an open house, by invitation only, on March 3rd. Reach out to the school for more information on both. Parents who choose to delay enrollment in kindergarten by one year are required to notify the school in writing of their intent.

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.golden-girls.org or call Marilyn at 571-261-9163.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 9

Billion Dollar Question: When Will Silver Line Extension Open?

WMATA is actively hiring and training new employees, “also very key to getting the system up and going once it is opened.”

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

At the March 10, 2 p.m. public meeting of the Dulles Rail Advisory Board for the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project, Fairfax County staff did not provide a date for when Phase 2 of Metro’s Silver Line Extension might open. Martha Coello, special products division chief Fairfax County Department of Transportation said during her presentation to the Dulles Rail Advisory Board, Operational Readiness Testing is not yet complete. “There is no fixed duration for this period,” Coello said.

Coello made a similar presentation to the Transportation Committee of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors earlier in March. Committee Chairman Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill) posed the following question to Coello: “Do your best to give me a range of possibilities. When is Phase 2 going to open?”

“That’s a billion-dollar question at this point,” said Coello. “We believe early summer is a good time to start thinking about how some of the activities relate to opening,” she said.

The opening date for the long-delayed project will remain hung up until two project deliverables are carried out, Coello said on March 10. First, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority must complete the operational testing and simulated service. Second, the Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority and contractor must complete punch lists.

The opening date is contingent on the completion of operational testing by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. “Once that is done and it is found to be adequate by WMATA, they will declare Operational Readiness,” she said.

Coello said that announcement would be a key project milestone since it marks the transition of the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project from contractor control of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority to Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority control.

“On a positive note, we have initiated discussion with WMATA on opening day activities,” Coello said.

The Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project is not on schedule, but it is within budget. “The Phase 1 budget remains unchanged, at \$2.98 billion,” Coello said.



Silverline Reston Town Center Metro

SCREENSHOT



Innovation Center Station is located near the toll road’s Route 28 intersection.



Herndon Metro Station

SCREENSHOT

“We believe early summer is a good time to start thinking about how some of the activities relate to opening.”



Martha Coello, Special Projects Division Chief, FCDO

SCREENSHOT

be substantially complete as of Dec. 1, 2021.

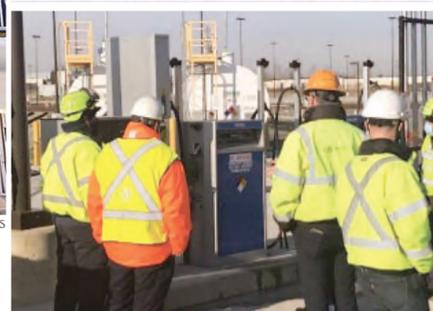
Coello provided updated information on testing activities for Packages A and B as of March 10, 2022. She said that progress had been made on each of those fronts. For Package A, tracks, stations, and systems, 81 percent of testing has been accomplished, with 73 percent of its punch list completed. Package B, the rail yard, is 78 percent complete, with a 95 percent completion rate on the punch list.

Coello said that a parallel process, the Safety and Security Certification, is also underway. Before operation, the system must pass through an independent organization,



SCREENSHOTS

Fairfax County punch list verification is approximately 96 percent complete. Operational testing is underway and WMATA is hiring and training as seen at the wheel lathe and at the fuel center.



the Washington Metro Rail Safety Commission, to confirm that it conforms with all applicable safety regulations. Additional items may be added to the punch list as testing progresses. Coello provided an example of how one problem, heat tape inadequacy, remains unresolved. “They have brought the manufacturer out there, and they have provided a report needed to try to address the issue,” she said.

WMATA is actively hiring and training new employees to meet its monthly goals. They were scheduled to recruit 400 people in February. “They hired 420. That’s also very key to getting the system up and going once it is opened,” Coello said.

Shifting to Fairfax County activities, the Herndon Station and the Innovation Center Station garages are completed. However, according to Coello, “a little bit” of warranty work is being done at Innovation, and the items are approaching completion.

Other activities required between now and the opening of the Silver Line Extension begin with the Maintenance and Operations Agreement. It defines the roles and obligations of all stakeholders, including the Virginia Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. According to Coello, the Agreement will have to go before the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors since the county has certain ownership and maintenance obligations at the Kiss and Ride stations.

The last item Coello discussed was the Silver Line Phase 2 Bus Service Plan. It was approved by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on Feb. 22, 2022 and will complement the new Metro service. “We’re working on the next steps for that, including working with our contractor and our outreach campaign. So, we’re excited to start offering a lot more information related to the bus routes,” she said. There will be a lot of public input on the bus network, so it will be ready to go when Silver operations start.

The Reston/Herndon Extension of Phase 2 begins at the Wiehle-Reston East terminal, operating since 2014. The expansion continues with three stops in the



SCREENSHOT

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved the Silver Line Phase 2 Bus Service Plan on Feb. 22, 2022. It complements the new Metro service.

median of the Dulles Toll Road and the Dulles Access Highway. The Reston Town Center Station is located adjacent to Reston Town Center. There is no designated parking at this station. The Herndon-Monroe Station is located at the toll road’s intersection with Herndon Parkway. A parking garage is located within walking distance of this station. A new garage with about 2,000 parking spots is constructed to the east of the present park-and-ride. The Innovation Center Station is located near the toll road’s Route 28 intersection. This station is equipped with a dedicated parking structure.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Advantages of Real-world Connection

To the editor:

I am writing in response to the article titled “SLHS Program Launches Student-led company” published in your newspaper by Mercia Hobson, on March 9, 2022.

High School students these days are so busy whether it be from sports, homework or life in general but taking the time to create and manage a small business is no easy feat. Extremely motivating, as these SLHS Students started and operated an entire company, whose net proceeds are being donated to each student’s chosen charity.

So much is being learnt from this activity, from business skills, to interpersonal skills and humanitarian adeptness. Something most teenagers these days

lack and graduate High School without any of that knowledge. A real-world connection is a huge advantage to these students as they learn how to navigate life outside the classroom.

Education has been so focused in the classroom and so many students once they leave the “textbook” are lost in the real world. This project was a perfect culmination of making education more relevant and engaging by allowing students to apply a hands on approach.

Schools and programs should take this and make it part of their curriculum, to make education more relevant, as it is a key factor in teaching kids hands on experience and problem solving.

Danielle Shahn

Considering Costs

To the editor:

I am writing in response to “The Combination of Programs Will Be Great for Everybody,” published in your newspaper on March 10, 2022. It is mentioned that Sherwood Community Center and Joseph Willard Health Center will become one location for the services provided previously in the separate centers. A list of additional benefits due to the combination of these centers mentions fitness rooms, a childcare center, and programs for senior citizens. It concerns me that these facilities and services may not benefit all citizens as the title claims. Many individuals’ choices are constrained when making the decision to

visit similar centers because the services offered may be out of their budget. To increase accessibility to these centers, which is a main goal of the combined campus, it is vital to consider the distribution of wealth among the target audience in which the center applies to. From the services listed, it can be assumed that the intended audience includes working parents and senior citizens, who may be faced with income insecurity. For the community and health center to function as intended it is critical that financial assistance is provided or that costs are limited for those utilizing the programs.

Jenna Bisson

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PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME

Centennial mural "Equality for All" celebrates the leaders of women's suffrage and passage of the 19th Amendment



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME

Suffragist mural permanently installed at Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton, depicts marching suffragist and yellow roses symbolizing victory of the movement

Recognizing Women's Suffrage

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Now, in March each year we recognize Women's History Month; the first enacted by Congress for 1987. Congress called on the President "to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such month with appropriate ceremonies and activities" in recognition of women's role in history, leadership, and often overlooked contributions. Starting as a weekly recognition, each March since 1987 has been designated to recognize women in history.

Much of women's progress toward equality can be traced to the decades long suffragist movement to win the right to vote for women in the United States. Passed by Congress on June 4, 1919, and ratified on Aug. 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment guarantees all American women the right to vote. Much of the work of that lengthy struggle went on in the nearby District of Columbia, with moments of significance even nearer, at the Workhouse in Lorton.

Known as 'Silent Sentinels' for picketing in front of the White House gates, 91 suffragists were jailed in 1917 in DC and Lorton for simply picketing quietly on the sidewalk. Of historical note, the Silent Sentiments were the first group ever to picket in front of the White House. Thirty-three suffragists from the National Woman's Party, arrested on Nov. 10, 1917, were clubbed, beaten, and tortured by guards while imprisoned at the Lorton Workhouse. Known as the 'Night of Terror', sympathy such treatment generated from the public was

a turning point for the movement.

Today, the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial, located on the grounds of the Occoquan Regional Park, 9751 Ox Road, Lorton, honors those who participated in the suffragist movement; providing "a visual symbol and educational tool intended to elevate these women to their proper place in history and recognize this bloodless revolution," as described by the memorial association.

Near the Turning Point Memorial, a museum is sited on the grounds of the former Lorton Workhouse, dedicated to Lucy Burns, a suffragist leader, who served more time in jail than any other suffragist in America. (Library of Congress). The Lucy Burns museum tells the story of the prison, operated for 91 years, and of the suffragists held there. Opened in 2018 as part of the Workhouse Art Center, the museum includes a restored section of the prisoner cells, and provides examples of the work the incarcerated performed to rehabilitate their lives.

Also on the quad at the Arts Center, visitors can view the newly installed mural, "Equality for All," by artist Sunny Mullarkey. Commissioned to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, by the national Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission, "The mural depicts suffrage leaders Carrie Chapman Catt, Mary Church Terrell, Alice Paul, and Ida B. Wells amid silhouettes of marching suffragists.



Lucy Burns, a leader in the suffragist movement, served more jail time than any other suffragist, including time at the Lorton prison where she was handcuffed with her arms above her and left overnight

The portraits of these trailblazing women are surrounded by 36 yellow roses, a symbol of the victory of the movement. At the center of the piece stands a mythological woman,

Thirty-three suffragists from the National Woman's Party, arrested on Nov. 10, 1917, were beaten, and tortured while imprisoned at the Lorton Workhouse.

inspired by historic suffrage artwork, holding a banner with the words, "Equality for All."

The mural can be viewed in building W-16 at the Workhouse Arts Center.

These nearby commemorations of women's struggle for suffrage: the Turning Point Suffragists Memorial, the Lucy Burns Museum, and the Equality for All mural, create

an opportunity to steep oneself in the history of the women's movement, appropriate for the March recognition of women.

CALENDAR

NOW THRU MARCH 30

Fiber Optics. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At McLean Textile Gallery, 6819 Elm Street, McLean. Philadelphia printmaker 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.

NOW THRU APRIL 30

The Friends of Frying Pan Farm Park invite the public to participate in its 2022 photo contest. Help celebrate all that is special about the farm with the second “Focus on the Farm” fundraiser. Open to photographers of all ages and abilities, capture the beauty and farm life at Frying Pan Farm Park. The categories include nature, landscape and scenery, and farm animals. Photos must be taken, and entries submitted between March 1 and April 30, 2022. You can enter up to 10 photos. The fee is \$7 per entry for adults, and \$5 per entry for children up to age 16. The fees will directly support the park and care and feeding of the animals at the farm. Go to the Friends of Frying Pan Farm Park website for detailed instructions and submission information; or email the Friends of Frying Pan Farm Park at friends@fryingpanpark.org. Frying Pan Park is located at 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon. Call 703-437-9101.



The Annual Kids' Trout Fishing Derby will take place Saturday, March 19, 2022 in Herndon.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 16

Unruly Theatre Project Improv Show. 7 p.m. At the Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Rd., McLean. The area's hottest professional teen improv troupe brings you a hilarious night of comedy. Come help spread some joy while being wildly entertained by these young performers.

MARCH 18-20

Super Pet Expo. At Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. Dogs, cats, Champion Trainer, hermit crabs and reptiles will highlight this show. Cool Zoo, an interactive and educational wildlife travel exhibit, which features hands-on encounters with exotic animals, will be featured. Their exhibit features a variety of activities like learning about rescued Hermit Crabs, strolling through a Butterfly Exhibit, interacting with a giant tortoise, and watching an educational exotic bird show. Friday, March 18 – 3-8 p.m.; Saturday, March 19 - 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sunday, March 20 - 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Admission: Adults \$15; Children aged 4-12; \$10, age 3 and under, free. Visit: <http://coolzoo.org/> Tickets: www.superpetexpo.com.

www.superpetexpo.com.

SATURDAY/MARCH 19

Annual Kids' Trout Fishing Derby. 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Behind Herndon Police Station, 397 Herndon Parkway at the Sugarland Run Trail Stream, Herndon. Join this annual tradition at Sugarland Run Trail behind the Herndon Police Station, where the stream will be stocked with Rainbow Trout just for this event. Limited fishing poles and bait will be available for use. Trout Unlimited will be on site to help clean and store your catch. Teens and adults, age 16 & up, must have a valid Virginia State Fishing License to fish if they wish to fish after the event (12:00 p.m.). Visit herndon-va.gov/recreation or call 703-787-7300.

MARCH 19, 20

Dionysian Play Festival. At Traveling Players Studio, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, in Tysons Corner. Ariadne's Thread – 11 a.m.; The Odyssey – 3 p.m. and Hecuba – 7:30 p.m. Tickets are

now available for Traveling Players' Dionysian Play Festival, which runs weekends at their Studio in Tysons Corner Center. Performed by Traveling Players' students, the festival will travel back in time to the beginning of Western Theatre, in ancient Greece, with three modern twists on classic myths.

SUNDAY/MARCH 20

Lunasa. 3 and 7 p.m. At Reston Community Theater's CenterStage. Named for an ancient Celtic harvest festival in honor of the Irish god Lugh, patron of the arts, Lúnasa is a gathering of some of the top musical talents in Ireland. Cost is \$25 Reston/\$35 Non-Reston. Visit www.restoncommunitycenter.com.

MARCH 25-27

Capital Art & Craft Festival. At Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly. The Spring Capital Art & Craft Festival will feature art in more than a dozen mediums including glass, jewelry, leather, paintings, prints, photography, pottery, wearable art and wood. Friday, March

25: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Saturday, March 26: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Sunday, March 27: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tickets: \$10 in advance; \$12 at the door Senior discount available; children under 12 free. Ticket information: www.CapitalArtAndCraftFestivals.com.

SATURDAY/MARCH 26

Spectacular Falls, A Slippery Solo Musical. 8 p.m. Featuring Anita Hollander. At Reston Community Theater's CenterStage. Come share a humorous, edgy, moving and somewhat slippery exploration of how we all fall, how the world can fall apart and how we rise again. Cost is \$15 Reston/\$20 Non-Reston. Visit www.restoncommunitycenter.com.

SUNDAY/MARCH 27

Chatham Rabbits Concert. 7 p.m. At Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E, Vienna. NC Bluegrass + Americana husband/wife duo Chatham Rabbits will perform a concert of their original material and share stories from the stage. Cost is \$10. Visit the website: <https://www.jamminjava.com/shows/chatham-rabbits/>

SUNDAY/MARCH 27

The Judy Carmichael Trio. 2 p.m. At The Alden at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Maybe you know her from 20 years on National Public Radio's "Jazz Inspired" or as one of the world's best stride pianists. But until you experience her brilliant combo of musicianship on the Great American Songbook, sultry vocals, comedic stories and interplay with her saxophonist/ guitarist, you don't really know Judy Carmichael. Visit www.mcleancenter.org.

MAY 21-22

Girls on the Run Spring Registration. GOTR NOVA will be offering an in-person, 10-week curriculum for the Spring 2022 season. Two in-person 5Ks presented by Cigna will be held on May 21st and 22nd in Sterling and Ballston, respectively. Teams will continue to be school and community-based to further our outreach efforts in being accessible to every girl across Northern Virginia. Currently, 105 teams throughout Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Falls Church, Loudoun, Manassas, Manassas Park, and Prince William are open for Spring 2022 registration through March 1, 2022. For more information about spring registration and sites for Girls on the Run of NOVA, visit www.gotrnova.org.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

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.

ONGOING

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.

org, during the 2019-20 school year. Contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488 or donaldrea@aol.com. 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.

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. Sunrise at Reston Town Center offers a monthly Caregiver Support Group on the fourth Wednesday of the month, 6:30-8 p.m. Monthly support group offers a safe place for family caregivers, to meet and develop a mutual support system and to exchange practical information and possible solutions. Learn about resources available in the commu-

nity and how to manage caregiver related stress. Call 703-956-8930 or email Reston.ED@sunriseseniorliving.com to RSVP. Exercise for Parkinson's. Every Monday, 1:15-2:15 p.m. Reston Sport&Health, 11445 Isaac Newton Square, Reston. This program brings together people impacted by Parkinson's Disease to participate in various physical exercises aimed at improving posture, balance and circulation and increasing strength, muscle control and mobility. Free. parkinsonfoundation.org. Call Natalie McCall nmccall@onelifefitness.com 703-904-7600 for more. 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. Over-40 Softball League. A Fairfax-based league is looking for players. Players must be at least 40 years of age to be eligible. All

games are doubleheaders - played on Sundays at Bready Park in Herndon between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Email skeduman@aol.com for more. Hypothermia Prevention: An Emergency Program for People Experiencing Homelessness Fairfax County provides overnight shelter with a "no turn-away" policy at all emergency homeless shelters during freezing weather. Through the coldest months of the winter, the Hypothermia Prevention Program is in place, a countywide community network of 45 overnight shelters. Through this program last winter, nonprofit and faith-based community partners served almost 1,000 men and women with a safe, warm place to sleep. If you see someone at night who is unsheltered and you think could be at risk of hypothermia, call the county's non-emergency phone line at 703-691-2131, TTY 711.

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Obituary

Barbara Lissner Rueckert, 93, of Reston, Virginia died peacefully in her sleep on 3/7/2022



Barbara was born in Brooklyn, New York on 11/12/1928 to Marcus Earle de Witt Lissner, a mechanical engineer, and Martha Alice Sanders Lissner, a poet and actress. The family, which included Barbara's younger sister, Cornelia (Connie) lived in Fairlawn, New Jersey. As a teenager Barbara was a counselor at a summer camp in Maine, where she taught sailing, and a tap dancer who performed between movies at local theaters.

Barbara earned a B.A. in History from Cedar Crest College. She attended graduate school at the University of Chicago, where she met her first husband, William Fields (né William Emanuel Feigenbaum), a psychologist. The couple had three children, Scott, Kathryn, and Jacqueline. Barbara was an enthusiastic parent, sewing Halloween costumes, serving as a Cub Scout and Brownie den mother, and working at the Circle Pines summer camp, which her children attended.

Her professional career included key roles in the University of Chicago Hospitals' personnel office, Executive Assistant to the Director of the Adlai Stevenson Institute, where she also gave visiting architecture students tours of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Robie House, which housed the Institute, and finally Personnel Director at the University of Rochester's Laboratory for Laser Energetics.

Barbara was married to her second husband, William H. Rueckert, for 26 years, until his death in 2006. William, an English professor at the State University of New York at Geneseo, was a respected authority on the American poet Kenneth Burke. Barbara was an active member of the Kenneth Burke Society. Among her many duties was transcribing Burke's letters.

The couple divided their time between a home in Fairport, New York and a house on Grindstone Island, in the Thousand Islands. After retirement, Barbara volunteered for the Nature Conservancy, the Thousand Island Land Trust, the Antique Boat Museum, Meals on Wheels, and the Phelps Community Historical Society. She supported numerous charities including Planned Parenthood, Wounded Warriors, and the Audubon Society.

Barbara is survived by her son Scott Fields, of Cologne, Germany, her daughter, Kathryn Brooks and son-in-law Dale, of Scarborough, Maine, her daughter, Jacqueline Gevercer and son-in-law David, of Chicago, her four stepsons, Theron, Quentin, Jordan, and Morgan Rueckert, and two granddaughters, Kristen Allocca and Zoe Naima Fields.

Employment

Employment

Manager, Marketing & Sales Analytics (Herndon, VA) Coord rsrch/proces'g of new leads entered into DB for regional sales teams. Drive strong sales/mrkt'g alignment w/ processes support'g workflow automat'n/lead mgmt/lead quality/enhanced data. Update/optimize CTA CRM syst. Dvlp queries for mrkt'g campaigns. Track ROI/KPIs. Reqs Bach mrkt rsrch, stats, mrkt'g analytics, data sci, or rtd analytical field + 1 yr exp in quant data or mrkt'g analysis role. Func knwl of rsrch'g/proces'g sales leads; dvlp'g syst arch for lead segmentat'n/proces'g/scor'g/data hygiene; dvlp'g queries for segment contacts; & Microsoft Excel. Func knwl may be gained thru any combo of exp/edu crswrk/internship/train'g. Res China Telecom (Americas) Corporation, jobsatcta@ctamericas.com, ref 11104

ABSOLUTE LAND AUCTION Fri, Apr.8, 12:30pm at Hampton Inn, 5103 Plaza Dr, Hopewell, VA

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Employment

Project Manager, Reston VA: Advanced Design Solutions Inc; multiple openings: Oversee, Support, Assist, Monitor, Manage & ensure the quality of construction admin on-site at client projects. Mail resume & position to Principal, Advanced Design Solutions Inc -1889 Preston White, Suite 104, Reston VA,20191.

Employment

VeriSign Inc. has openings in Reston, VA: **Senior Site Reliability Engineer (Req #V1907)** Maintain, monitor, operate and develop distributed computing infrastructures targeted at Big Data processing and based on open source distributions, may require up to 5% of international travel; **Engineer - Network Engineer (Req #V0116)** Implement network security policies and standards and provide operational maintenance and patching of network devices and troubleshoots complex network issues involving various factors; **Technical Business Systems Analyst (Req #V0420)** Administer, configure, and maintain Verisign's USU (formerly Aspera) Software Asset Management (SAM) platform, telecommuting available. Mail resume to Attn: Dave Carney, 12061 Bluemont Way, Reston, VA 20190. Must include Req # to be considered.

Employment

Strategic Account Manager (Herndon, VA) Primary tech liaison for sales mngrs/clients/pric'g team/prjct mngrs/netwrk ops. Aggregate client tech reqs & dsgn solut'ns. Keep teams aware of tech updates/reqs. Conduct prdct/resource checks. Negotiate internal cost of service/contract reqs & ensure services delivered/supported. ID new bsns opportunities. Reqs MS IT, comp sci, SW eng'g, electrical eng'g, telecoms, or sim tech field such as robotics tech + 2 yrs IT or sales exp in mobile comms indust. Exp w/ general IP prdcts/services incl IP Access/MPLS/PN/IT Security for Enterprise; w/ dvlp'g/rsrch'g/present'g formal presentat'ns to end users; w/ telecom tech/commercials incl Digital Logic Circuit/TCP+IP principles & application/comm systs; w/ client rtins in telecom indust; eval'g/recommend'g netwrk prdcts based on exist'g client infrastruct/reqs; test'g/analyz'g netwrk facilities incl netwrk ctrl SW/routers/switches/lines/modems/adapters/servers; ID'g/diagnos'g/resolv'g netwrk tech problems/telecom HW/SW. Mandarin lang fluency. Freq domestic trvl. Res China Telecom (Americas) Corporation, jobsatcta@ctamericas.com, ref code 11103

Employment

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Real Estate Tax Rate ‘Ceiling’

Lower tax rate expected, but homeowners will still pay more.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay recommended advertising a \$1.14 advertised real estate tax rate per \$100 of assessed value, “which reflects no change from the current real estate tax rate and is consistent with the County Executive’s proposed budget.”

“We are advertising a ceiling here, not the actual tax rate,” said McKay, at the Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, March 8, 2022.

Keeping the same tax rate would result in an increase of more than \$600 for the average Fairfax County homeowner because of rising real estate values and assessments.

“As I have said repeatedly, I expect and I will only be voting for and supporting a budget that is a lower tax rate than this,” he said.

The Board will adopt a budget, with the year’s actual tax rate, in approximately two months.

“This is a floor, we cannot increase it above this rate, but we can decrease it to any amount,” said McKay.

“I want to make it clear to the public that I in no way shape or form intend to support a budget at this rate, but this does give us the flexibility should anything occur between now and then,” he said.

McKay and Hunter Mill Supervisor Walter Alcorn iterated the uncertainty of the world, replete with the pandemic, war, and economic uncertainty, making it prudent to leave open the ability to deal with the unexpected.

“Given the situation in the world and the economy, I think it’s prudent, but I would just remind us that as we talk about these really critical compensation issues, we have to remember that they have to be paid for,” said Hunter Mill Supervisor Walter L. Alcorn. “I too will be looking at the tax rate and tax relief this year.”

“It’s the fiscal responsible thing to do with what is going on in the world today, what we’ve been through certainly over the last two years, the uncertainty of our economy, world affairs, inflation, all the other things that are affecting us,” said McKay.

County officials have been holding public meetings to explain the budget and gather public input. See sidebar for upcoming meetings.

The Board of Supervisors will hold budget policy committee meetings on March 15, 2022 and March 29, 2022, from 1:30 to 3 p.m.

The Board will hold public hearings on the budget on April 12-14, 2022.

The budget markup will be on April 26, 2022 and the board will adopt the final budget on May 10. The School Board follows with adopting its budget on May 26, 2022.

“My intention is to see that tax rate come down a bit,” said Lee Supervisor Rodney L.

BUDGET TIMELINE

April 12-14, 2022 Public Hearings at Board of Supervisors on FY 2023

April 26, 2022 Board of Supervisors marks-up FY 2023 Budget, adopts FY 2023- FY 2027 Capital Improvement Program

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

Upcoming Budget Town Halls

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/budget/fy-2023-budget-town-hall-meetings>

THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2022, 7 PM

Lee District

Budget Town Hall

The Budget Town Hall will be televised on Channel 16 (Cox Channel 1016; Verizon/Comcast Channel 16) and streamed online

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2022, 6 PM

Providence District Budget Town Hall

The Budget Town Hall will be televised on Channel 16 (Cox Channel 1016; Verizon/Comcast Channel 16) and streamed online

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2022, 6 PM

Mount Vernon District Budget Town Hall

Zoom. Or call 602-333-0032 or 888-270-9936 (toll free.) Conference code: 711201

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 2022, 7 PM

Hunter Mill District Budget Town Hall

Use this link to attend and participate. You will be prompted to register with your email address and ZIP code before logging in. Or listen to the meeting by phone, by calling 844-621-3956, access code: 2334 051 4882. Watch the meeting on YouTube Live.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 2022, 7 PM

Springfield District Budget Town Hall

Springfield Governmental Center, 6140 Rolling Road, Community Room, Springfield

THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2022, 7 PM

Dranesville District Budget Town Hall

The Budget Town Hall will be televised on Channel 16 (Cox Channel 1016; Verizon/Comcast Channel 16) and streamed online

Lusk, “and also on the personal property tax as well. I think both of them are going to be difficult in light of the increases that we have seen both in the values of cars and the values of homes.”

Springfield Supervisor Pat Herrity, the Board’s sole Republican, was the only supervisor to reject the proposed real estate tax rate.

“For many years I have been saying that this Board’s spending is out of control and unsustainable for taxpayers as the Board, over my objection, approved new spending initiatives and used one-time funds and federal pandemic funds to pay for new positions while neglecting priorities like public safety and employee compensation,” said Herrity. “Residents cannot afford any kind of tax increase this year as we are facing record inflation, rising gas prices and an economy recovering from the pandemic.”

The challenge remains that sources of revenue are limited in Virginia, forcing localities to fund operations with property taxes alone.

“Until the General Assembly and the Commonwealth of Virginia give us additional opportunities to diversify our revenues, we are stuck. We have been talking about diversification of revenues for well over a decade, probably two decades,” said Mason Supervisor and Vice Chair Penelope “Penny” Gross.

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Nothing Sensational Here



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Can I admit to a lack of sensation? It might sound a bit odd, but I don’t feel like I have cancer. Furthermore, when I go to a medical facility to have one thing or another done, I never feel as if I’m on a slippery slope, health wise. Naively or not, what I most think and feel about whatever procedure or diagnostic scan I’m having or prescription drug I’m ordering, is that I’m at a certain age, over age 65, where some of the parts don’t work as well as they used to, and a tune-up, so to speak, is merely the cost of doing business, if you know what I mean? The older one gets, the more difficulties there are getting from here to there – and everywhere in between; with varying hurdles at almost every step (more so if there’s a bend-over involved). For some inexplicable reason, I don’t see the cancer issue as the extremely serious and complicated problem that it is. I just see it as another day alive and in semi paradise (especially considering my original two-year prognosis).

And though I joke when referring to being in paradise, compared to the “terminal” diagnosis I was initially given by my oncologist, specifically: “13 months to two years,” in late February 2009, it’s impossible for me to consider any blip on my health radar now as anything but amazing good fortune that I’m still even blipping. As in I’m still alive being able to experience any blips/symptoms. (The presumption being that one doesn’t feel symptoms when they’re dead, so my thinking is, if I’m still feeling; then I’m still in the game, and it’s a game I very much want to continue to play.) Honestly though, none of it really bothers me, too much.

For a while, back in early 2009 when Team Lourie was trying to assimilate the “terminal” diagnosis I received: (stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer), it was difficult to see a future. Heck, it was difficult to see a present – which by the way, had just been taken away. But my attitude then, as it remains so today, is a kind of blissful ignorance while respecting and adhering to the many medical steps I regularly take. I mean it’s serious, of course, very serious. Still, I do my best to compartmentalize the bad and try to live my good life going forward; as if nothing has been taken away.

Thinking back, thirteen years ago, when I was initially diagnosed, seems like an eternity, another lifetime, one might say. Considering I’m now living in year 14 after being told I might not make it to year two, and perhaps you can appreciate how little – and even some big things, don’t bother me nearly as much as one might imagine. Having dodged a bullet (a hail of bullets, actually), I don’t feel as if I’m on shaky ground. Quite the contrary. I feel like I’m on hallowed ground. I’ve not been to the mountain top or seen a burning bush, but I have lived a life I had no expectation of living.

I may not be “The Iron Horse” (Lou Gehrig), but I feel very fortunate, nonetheless. Life has gone on. Amazing.

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

Late-Winter Snowstorm Offers Reflection by the Fire

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Nature picked Saturday March 12, the eve of Daylight Savings Time, to throw what many hoped would be winter's last pitch at Fairfax County. On Friday, gardeners rushed out to protect new seedling growth and emerging buds on bushes from the forecasted raging sleet and snowstorm. They covered them with fabric, plastic, and anything else they could find to avoid loss of life.

Fairfax County Public Schools canceled all Saturday programs and events, including SAT testing.

The Great Falls Grange Foundation canceled their long-awaited Great Falls Grange Foundation/Fairfax County Park Authority Signing Ceremony slated for March 12. The non-profit organization undertook to run and manage the Grange Hall, Forestville School House, and Pavilion in a public-private partnership with the Park Authority. GFGF announced on its website that the event had been canceled owing to "blizzard-like conditions and out of concern for the safety of all residents and event participants. We plan to reschedule and hope everyone can join us for a future celebration."

Mother Nature unleashed a torrent of rapidly deteriorating weather on Fairfax County, neighboring jurisdictions, and beyond on Saturday. Residents awoke to freezing rain pelting their windows and rooftops, which quickly turned to snow. It fell at one to two inches per hour, just as temperatures dropped below freezing, creating perfect conditions for accidents.

Instead of spending Saturday relaxing in the bright spring weather, maybe dining al fresco on a patio, residents and business owners grudgingly pulled out their snow shovels. They began clearing sidewalks, making them passable and safe for others.

Public work departments unleashed their snowplows in force. Despite temperatures in the 60s on Friday, the snow stuck on the ground and the roads. Strong northwest winds of 45 to 55 miles per hour swept the loose snow powder into the air, reducing visibility and making driving dangerous.

On the other hand, Saturday's weather provided an unapologetically compelling excuse to remain indoors. There would be no hustling youngsters to activities or in-person meetings—hot drinks by the fire, munchies, and a good read substituted in their place. The snow, and the inherent dangers of heading out into it, provided an opportunity to take a deep breath, pause, and think on the last two years. Reflect on where we were and how far we have come or have not come.

By mid-afternoon on March 12, the snow and high winds stopped in Fairfax County. By 5:12, the sun strongly shone as dusk approached. A man unasked to do so, shoveled his neighbors' long sidewalk, making it passable for all.



Snow in March provides another chance to curl up by the fire, boots on, hot drink in hand, and a good book nearby.



The crimson berries of a holly shrub stand out against its evergreen leaves and sparkle with snow.



Unasked, a man shovels snow off a neighbor's lengthy sidewalk in Herndon so that no one slips.



During the March 12 ice and snowstorm, daffodils cower, not exposing their faces.



Turned upside down and top-loaded with bricks, twenty-quart feed and water buckets for horses are ideal for protecting fragile plants during cold temperatures and harsh weather. A greenhouse and floating row coverings are other options.

