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CONNECTION

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Fairfax County
MV Transit Driver
Poudel Laxman and
his son Sabal, 13
collect donations for
Stuff the Bus at the
Hunter Mill District
Office in Reston on
Saturday, March 19.

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



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the Peacemakers**
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**Donating Food
For Hungry Families**
PAGES 2 AND 5

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Released March 8, 2022

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COMMUNITY

Helping to Feed Hungry Families

Stuff the Bus event brings in much needed food donations.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

More than 86,000 people in Fairfax County are experiencing food insecurity according to the most recent Feeding America Impact of Coronavirus on Food Insecurity projections published March 29, 2021. The food insecurity rate in Fairfax County was at 7.4 percent in 2021.

On Saturday, March 19, 2022, residents in the county dropped off donations at the 18 Stuff the Bus locations, adding up to 14,273 pounds of food donated on that one day. This was less than the last two collection days, 15,415.68 pounds collected on Sept 11, 2021; and 14,526.36 pounds collected on Oct. 9, 2021. If you were unable to give in person, you can Stuff the Bus virtually by visiting Volunteer Fairfax's Stuff the Bus Donation Page, <https://www.volunteerfairfax.org/home/stuff-the-bus-virtual-food-drive/>

Items such as canned goods, pasta, beans and diapers supported various local nonprofit organizations including, LINK and SHARE of McLean at the Great Falls Library and McLean Government Center sites, and Cornerstones and Committee for Helping Others (CHO) at the Hunter Mill District Supervisor's Office.

Fairfax County Stuff the Bus is a collaboration between Fairfax County Government and local nonprofits. The event started in 2011 in response to a desperate need to assist local food pantries refilling their shelves after the holidays. Now in its 11th year, Stuff the Bus continues to support food assistance efforts for families and households.

"Stuff the Bus started well before the pandemic to combat hunger in our community. That need has only grown these past few years," said Chairman Jeffrey McKay (D-At-Large) Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. "I am so thankful for our nonprofit partners working tirelessly to distribute food to our residents, as well as the extraordinary generosity of our residents



MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County MV Transit Driver Poudel Laxman and his son Sabal, 13, collect donations at the Hunter Mill District Supervisor's Office. It is Mary Ciciarelli's first visit to the location.

who always make this event successful."

According to Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D- Hunter Mill), the Stuff the Bus is a proven and successful countywide food collection effort to assist the many nonprofits that are on the front lines in addressing food insecurity. "This includes two Hunter Mill District nonprofits – Cornerstones and CHO (Committee for Helping Others). Through the years our residents have generously donated literally tons of food," Alcorn said.

Financial contributions, according to the Fairfax County website, are good for a variety of reasons. Among other things, monetary gifts enable food banks to buy culturally appropriate items, allowing them to better fulfill the requirements of the different populations they serve.

Canned and dried food are essential components of food pantries, but a healthy diet also includes fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products, and lean proteins, which cannot be obtained via food drives. Having cash on hand also allows food pantries to keep their shelves stocked at times of year when contributions are low.

Stuff the Bus has gathered over 220 tons of food to serve Fairfax County residents facing food insecurity since its start.

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Four New Buildings Plus an Electrical Substation

Datacenter is proposed for Renaissance Technology Park.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

There's a proposal afoot to demolish several warehouses in Renaissance Technology Park in Oak Hill and redevelop their site with 2,300,200 square feet of datacenter uses. Details were presented at a recent meeting of the Sully District Council (SDC)/West Fairfax County Citizens Assn. (WFCCA) Joint Land-Use Committee.

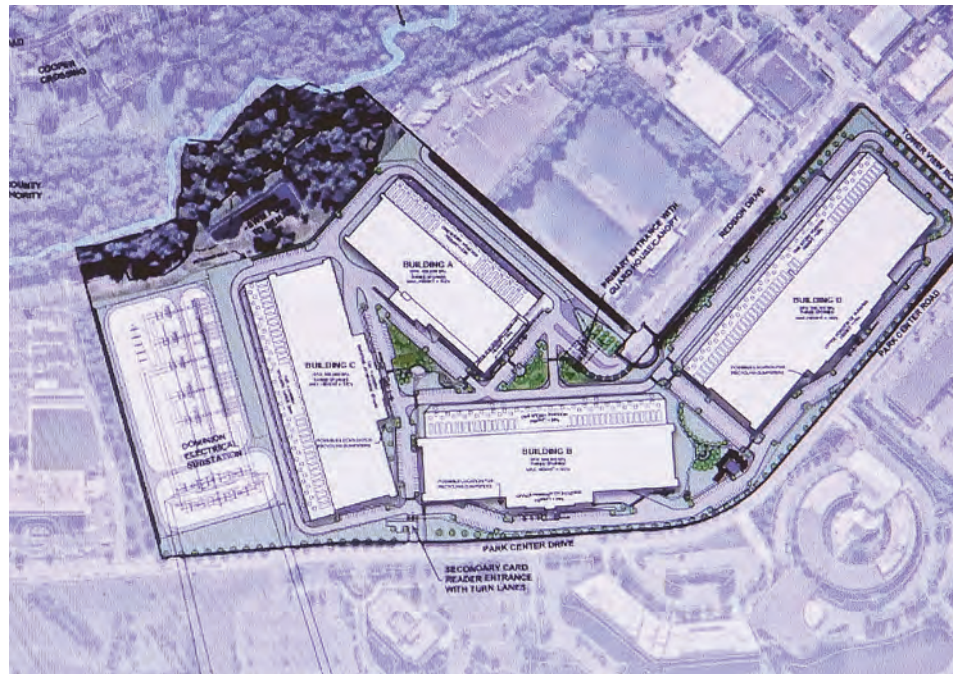
The property consists of four parcels, almost 60 acres total, on land zoned I-5 Industrial in the Route 28 Tax Corridor. It's east of Park Center Drive and close to Route 28, and the existing buildings are owned by Preston Gray.

"Currently, seven one-story warehouses are there, and the site is proposed for four new buildings, plus an electrical substation to serve them, in a secure, gated area," said attorney Lynne Strobel, representing Gray. "This is a special-exception application for additional building height."

"The buildings there now are 75 feet high, and the applicant wants to go to 102 feet high to accommodate the rooftop equipment – which will be screened," continued Strobel. "Primary access to the site is from Redskin Drive, with a secondary entrance from Park Center Drive."

She said 33 percent of the property would be landscaped, open space. And, she added, "We'll reduce the impervious area and will add a bio-retention pond. The buildings will have contemporary architecture and will be constructed of concrete, metal and glass."

Strobel noted that county staff "wanted



Site plan showing the four proposed buildings and electrical substation (at far left).

to make sure we're protecting the environment, and we are. We're not touching the Resource Protection Area on site."

The WFCCA's John Litzenger asked about the number of extra vehicle trips per day that would result from this new use. He also inquired what road improvements the applicant is proposing, if this plan is approved.

A consultant, D. Steigler, said there'd be an estimated 26 percent increase in vehicle trips per day, and Park Center Road would be re-stripped to create more lanes, as it currently has multiple access points.

Because there are homes to the east of this location, SDC's Lewis Grimm said, "Perhaps they should do a balloon test so nearby residents can see how high the new buildings will be – since they'd be 30-percent higher than the existing ones."

However, Strobel said there's a great distance between where the new buildings would be constructed and the nearest homes. "And because of the trees and the topography of the site, they'd have a hard time seeing these buildings," she added. "And on the north side, there's another building owned by someone else that's between this

site and the homes to the north – which are set lower, anyway."

After Grimm remarked that Route 28 is identified as a high-capacity transit corridor, SDC's Jeff Parnes told Strobel, "The county's Comprehensive Plan has a stop near that site connecting it to the Air and Space Museum Annex [in Chantilly] and on to Centreville, so you should be aware of it."

Furthermore, said Parnes, "Maybe you could encourage that connection to be built. And could you see if Redskin Drive could be renamed?" Strobel replied that they could look into it.

He also wondered if there's "a trail that goes along [nearby] Horsepen Run that people [eventually] working on this site could connect to." Strobel wasn't sure there was, but said she'd investigate.

Since this site is near Dulles International Airport, former Planning Commissioner Jim Hart said, "I want to make sure MWAA [Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority] knows about the higher buildings." But Strobel reassured him that the applicant already had to fill out a form telling MWAA about the increased height.

Strobel said there's a huge demand for datacenters today, with so many people using the cloud for data storage. But WFCCA's Steve Chulick told her, "I'm concerned about the energy center's effect on the environment, so I'd appreciate any green technology you could add to reduce the energy footprint."

The proposal is scheduled to go before the county Planning Commission on May 4, so Parnes asked Strobel to return to the joint land-use committee in April. At that time, the committee will hear any updates to the plan and give its official recommendation.

New Commercial Building Planned for Westone Plaza

If all goes well, there'll eventually be a new, commercial building in the Westone Plaza Shopping Center in Chantilly. Attorney Lynne Strobel, representing the applicant, explained the proposal during a recent meeting of the Sully District Council (SDC)/West Fairfax County Citizens Assn. (WFCCA) Joint Land-Use Committee.

She didn't say who the applicant was, but she said he's seeking a rezoning and proffered condition amendment for almost an acre near Route 28. The site is at 4700 Centreville Road in the Westfields area.

"We want to rezone it from its current I-3 [Industrial] and R-1 [Residential] to C-6 [Commercial] to bring it into the Westone Plaza Shopping Center," said Strobel. "We're proposing a single, commercial building of approximately 3,200 square feet."

The site would also contain 41 parking spaces

and 15 percent open space. "The building will probably be used for a veterinary clinic," said Strobel. Then, showing an artist's rendition of the proposed structure, she said its architecture would be compatible with the other buildings already in the shopping center.

She said the applicant plans to provide a trail easement on the property. But, she added, "The topography makes it difficult to connect to other trails."

At the conclusion of Strobel's presentation, Sully District Council President Jeff Parnes said his organization has no objections, and the WFCCA endorsed the proposal. Said Parnes: "You have our good will to go forth with this project, contingent upon [county] staff's approval."

This matter is scheduled to go before the county Board of Supervisors in early April.



Artist's rendition of the new, 3,200-square-foot commercial building.

— BONNIE HOBBS

Foregone Conclusion

DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM

The Governor Glenn Youngkin administration has been releasing a series of reports that purport to show that what was promised in their political campaign is really what is needed in Virginia. While the approach is not unique in the political world, reports that do not match with reality undermine confidence in whether the largely new-to-Virginia-government Governor and his staff are willing to listen and learn before plunging the state into new directions that might prove unworkable and could undercut the very success that the Commonwealth has been enjoying.

Virginia has for years been recognized as the best state in the nation for business. Its public schools have been ranked among the best in the country. Its system of higher education is second to none. The state runs on a balanced budget with healthy reserves to protect against economic shifts.

Can improvements be made? No question about it, but proposals for improvement must



be based on firm evidence of need. Political campaigns are filled with popular assertions that often do not match up to reality. The first task of a new governor is to match up the rhetoric of the political campaign with real-world evidence before moving forward. The current administration focus seems to be to cherry-pick information to support their speeches.

A prime example is the disastrous report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction that supposedly found within the first month of operation that there are "widespread" instances of "inherently divisive concepts, including critical race theory and its progeny" in the schools. The response from educators I know has been to ask, what is she talking about? The response from superintendents through their state association has been to reject the findings and to ask why they were not at least consulted before such an off-base report was released. Hopefully the state Superintendent who is new to the Commonwealth will do a bit more meaningful research before issuing a report that has not received a passing grade from anyone except her

boss.

More recently the Department of Environmental Quality released a report to prove that their boss, the Governor, was correct in saying that the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) would not cut emissions, would raise the cost of energy, and that the Governor was correct and the state should withdraw from it. The virtual newsletter Virginia Mercury (March 18, 2022) found that, "Multiple environmental groups and state energy policy experts, however, say the document's conclusions are contradictory and fail to take into account how RGGI costs disincentivize the use of carbon-emitting units in the regional electric grid." Noting the advantages of RGGI, one expert is quoted in the newsletter as saying that, "there's a sense in which what this report does is it throws the baby out with the bathwater."

Virginia has been part of RGGI for only a year. The ten other states that are part of RGGI have, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, realized carbon emissions declined by 59 percent between 2005 and 2020.

Governor Youngkin clearly had good campaign speechwriters. Now he clearly needs more experienced report writers and policy leaders to deal with the realities of Virginia's needs.

Reston Town Center to Transform Exterior Spaces

Plans for rehabilitation and enhancements of the Fountain Plaza and Pavilion areas of Reston Town Center (RTC) are expected to begin soon, according to Boston Properties, owner of RTC. Originally built in the early 1990s, both areas have long been at the heart of many traditions and events at RTC. The renovation work will add to the year-round uses of both areas, while making needed structural and mechanical repairs. Improvements will reflect dynamic market demands while the spirit of the original design remains.

The design team for the project is led by Alan Ward, FASLA, principal at Sasaki Associates, who was also an integral member of the original landscape architecture team for RTC.

"As the community uses of Reston Town Center have evolved over time, these iconic spaces must be enhanced to meet the needs of today and into the future," said Ward. "Once completed, these newly activated spaces will continue to serve as destinations for our office and retail clients and the broader Reston community," said Jake Stroman, Executive Vice President and Co-Head of the Washington, DC Region, Boston Properties

Due to the scope of the project, many RTC events will be relocated or rescheduled during construction. "We are working with our event partners by providing alternate locations in 2022 for our annual events," said Sapna Yathiraj, Boston Properties marketing director.

Wooden fencing will enclose both areas for the duration of the project and directional signage will be enhanced to ensure that all guests are able to navigate during construction.

Work will begin in the Pavilion at the end of March and is scheduled to be completed in early Fall. The Fountain area work will begin in May with a late Fall completion date. www.restontowncenter.com/visit.

Pavilion Area Enhancements

The Pavilion is home to many annual events throughout the year including the beloved ice rink. Improvements in the Pavilion area include:

- ❖ Installation of two fire pits in front of the Pavilion adjacent to Market Street will add to the holiday and cooler months experience, and installation of large fans in the Pavilion will help cool the space during warmer months for both formal and informal gatherings

- ❖ Expansion of the Pavilion through the service street that is adjacent to the Hyatt to create more flexibility and space for programming, events, and daily activations

- ❖ Construction of a wooden deck that will serve as a seating area and a stage for smaller events and performances

- ❖ Addition of seating areas in the artificial turf area during warm months

The ice rink will continue to operate November through March.

Fountain Area Enhancements

Fountain Plaza will retain the beauty of the Mercury Fountain while landscaping, circulation, seating, and overall ambiance will be improved. The work in and around the Fountain Plaza will include:

- ❖ Renovation of the lower base area of the fountain and replacement of the entire outdated mechanical system. While the original design of the upper base and Mercury statue will remain unchanged, the lower base will feature new tiling, expanded seating and tiered landscaping.

- ❖ Addition of new trees and plantings to replace aged greenery and damaged root systems

- ❖ Expansion of outdoor seating including stadium style structures and traditional tables and chairs

Owned and managed by Boston Properties, Reston Town Center is home to over 50 retailers, 30 restaurants, over 2,000 residential homes and 3 million square feet of Class A office space. Since becoming one of the nation's first developments of its kind in 1990, Reston Town Center offers residents and visitors outdoor recreation spaces, and dynamic seasonal traditions and events. For information about shopping, dining, and events at Reston Town Center, please visit <https://restontowncenter.com/>.

Boston Properties (NYSE: BXP) is the largest publicly traded developer, owner, and manager of Class A office properties in the United States, concentrated in six markets - Boston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, DC.

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COMMUNITY



Volunteer Rosa Nguyen receives a bag of donated groceries from Rob Baxter of Chantilly Highlands.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



From left, Chantilly High and Virginia Tech grad Rosa Nguyen; her sister Hannah Nguyen, a Chantilly sophomore; Centreville High junior Jennie Chun and Fastran bus driver Idris Farah with some of the donated food items in the parking lot of the Sully District Governmental Center in Chantilly.

Stuff the Bus Provides for Neighbors in Need

Now in their 10th year, Stuff the Bus events help collect food for local Fairfax County families in need. This past Saturday, March 19, area residents donated food items at various collection points throughout the county. In Centreville and Chantilly, the donations went to Western Fairfax Christian Ministries' (WFCM) food pantry.

"We are thankful to our community for donating

578 pounds of food during Stuff the Bus," said WFCM Executive Director Harmonie Taddeo. "Donations of most-needed shelf stable items like cereal, canned vegetables, vegetable oil and canned meat help keep our shelves stocked. And that allows us to focus our spending on fresh food items like milk, eggs, yogurt and butter so that families in our community have access to all the items they need."

— BONNIE HOBBS

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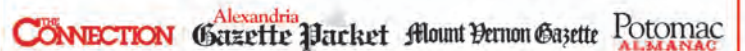
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Four members of the Fairfax County School Board appear in the group photos. From left, Karen Corbett Sanders, Mount Vernon District Representative; Rachna Sizemore Heizer, Vice-Chair, Member-at-Large; Laura Jane Cohen, Springfield District Representative; and Abrar Omeish Member-at-Large.

Peacemakers

Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County.

The Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County was begun in 2006 to encourage everyone to think more about peace as both a means and an end, and to recognize young people who work as peacemakers.

The program started with one school (Herndon High School) and one sponsor

(Herndon Friends Meeting) and gradually expanded from there. In 2013, for the first time, it was offered to every public high school in Fairfax County. Two private schools are also included. There are currently nineteen sponsoring organizations, listed at the end.

Peacemaking is vital in our world, and

students active in the pursuit of peace should be encouraged in every way possible.

The sponsors, family, and friends celebrate the accomplishments of the recipients at a public reception in early March. The award consists of a monetary gift for each recipient and for a peace-focused

charity of his or her choice, and a framed certificate, generally presented at each participating school's annual awards ceremony.

A reception to recognize the student winners was on Sunday, March 13, 2022 at Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax.

Sponsoring Organizations:

- Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church, Burke
- Alexandria Friends Meeting
- Alexandria South Rotary Club
- All Dulles Area Muslim Society, Sterling
- Cornerstone, Reston
- Daniles Run Peace Church, Fairfax
- First Church of Christ, Scientist, Fairfax
- George Mason University, Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution
- Herndon Friends Meeting
- Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Herndon
- Langley Hill Friends Meeting, McLean
- Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation, Reston
- Rotary Club of Annandale
- Rotary Club of Reston
- St. John Neumann Catholic Church, Reston
- St. Mark Catholic Church, Vienna
- Stewart R. Mott Foundation, Washington, D.C.
- United Christian Parish of Reston



2022 Recipients of the Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County



Jewel Coulter, Senior
Annandale High School

Jewel Coulter has volunteered for the National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC) which organizes Korean and Asian Americans to achieve social, economic, and racial justice. She also partnered with 2021 Peace Awards recipient Jimmy Lee to create the Annandale High School Equity Team. She has served as a Student Equity Ambassador Leader for the school division, working with students across Fairfax County to increase equity in schools. The equity team that they had established at Annandale was replicated across the division.



happy and successful lives in their newly adopted communities." The students have been raising money to purchase welcome packages for refugees coming to the greater metropolitan area. Other activities include a winter coat drive, a talent show fundraiser, and "Letters of Hope" postcards written to overseas refugees. As part of their effort to raise awareness of what it means to be a refugee, they plan to invite refugees to come and speak with students, share their experiences, and answer student questions.



Zilala Mamat, Senior
Chantilly High School

Zilala Mamat's extended family has suffered under China's policy of human rights abuses directed at Uyghur people. As a freshman, Zilala organized and led an optional assembly to educate students, who were shocked to learn that in this day and age, people were being sent to concentration camps in other parts of the world. As a sophomore, Zilala founded a human rights club at Chantilly High School that promotes activism and education on human rights issues. Outside of school, Zilala founded a non-profit, United Uyghur Youth (UUY), to spread awareness about the Uyghur human rights crisis, preserving Uyghur culture and empowering Uyghur youth. She has organized several demonstrations and protests about human rights abuses and has also organized and raised more than \$1,500 for UUY through a T-shirt campaign to fund future demonstrations and protests.



Rania Ali, Senior
Edison High School

Rania Ali has raised money for and worked at the Khartoum Cheshire Home, a rehabilitation center for disabled children in Sudan. She updated and translated the Home's website

STAR - Students Together Assisting Refugees

Centreville HS

The Centreville HS chapter of STAR (Students Together Assisting Refugees) is dedicated to "helping refugees realize

Four members of the Fairfax County School Board appear in the group photos. From left, Karen Corbett Sanders, Mount Vernon District Representative; Rachna Sizemore Heizer, Vice-Chair, Member-at-Large; Laura Jane Cohen, Springfield District Representative; and Abrar Omeish Member-at-Large.

Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County

FROM PAGE 6

into Arabic to help members of the Sudanese community access the information. Rania is an active member of Edison's Black Student Union and the Student Muslim Association. Last December she joined other Fairfax County Public School students at Edison High School in One Fairfax, a peaceful protest to call attention to an incident of Islamophobia at another area high school.



Alin Freitag, Senior
Fairfax High School

Alin Freitag

Alin Freitag was nominated last year to represent his school in a new county program called Student Equity Ambassador Leaders (SEALs). He believes that one of the best ways to promote peace and show respect for the gender and relationship choices of fellow students is by the day-to-day use of their self-selected inclusive pronouns – such as he, him, she, her, they and their. He designed a simple, short form for use in school that included prompts to indicate a student's pronoun preferences. He shared the newly designed form with a handful of teachers, who adapted it to their needs and began using it in their classes. By the start of this school year, the form was successfully included in teachers' beginning of the year forms for his school. Students report feeling encouraged to see it widely used in many of their classes.



Maya Yona, Senior
Ryan Kiefer, Senior
Hayfield Secondary School

Maya Yona, and Ryan Kiefer

Maya Yonas and Ryan Kiefer responded to pandemic-related stress among students by creating a Guided Meditation Group for Hayfield. The group has continued to meet online and as of February of this year had thirty-two participants, including four faculty members. Maya and Ryan both believe that meditation helps achieve peace by promoting mindfulness and clearing the mind to allow for self-reflection and thoughts to be processed in a more positive and healthy manner. They believe those benefits don't stop when the meditation session is over, and that by adopting a more peaceful lifestyle, people will spread that inner peace throughout their community.

Justin Tetelman, Senior
Justice High School

Justice High School is one of six schools in Fairfax County Public Schools to implement the Restorative Justice Community Schools program. Because of Justin's advocacy, Jus-



Justin Tetelman

Justice is the only school in the county to launch a student-led youth pilot program. Justin serves as the lead student restorative ambassador. In this role, he facilitates student-led restorative circles within classrooms. Justin also has advocated for gender equity, economic accessibility and increased diversity within the athletics department, mentors other students, and is an active member of the Fairfax County Human Rights Commission.



Deema Osman, Junior
King Abdullah Academy

Deema Osman

Deema Osman is the current CEO of LeadPeace, a NOVA student-led organization with the mission to cultivate youth leaders and peacebuilders. LeadPeace sponsors online lectures and workshops through which students can learn from leaders in the fields of peacemaking, peacekeeping, and conflict resolution. In June of 2020, LeadPeace held a virtual community dialog to examine systemic racism, institutionalized racism, and the Black Lives Matter Movement. Since joining LeadPeace, Deema has mentored six KAA students to become members of the LeadPeace team and encouraged fellow students to learn leadership and peace building skills as well as conflict resolution to support peace within their own communities. A video about their work can be seen on YouTube.



Bethel Tessera, Senior
Lake Braddock Secondary School

Bethel Tessera

Bethel Tessera took training through Dosomething.org, a non-profit that supports young people engaging in volunteer, social change, and civil action campaigns. With another student, she devised a campaign they called "It's (Not) All In Your Head." to encourage high school students to seek help for mental health prob-

lems and to decrease stigma around this issue. They started with the idea that students are more likely to access resources if access is easy. Her team's work was developed into an on-line flyer that was downloaded 4,846 times by students across the nation. Bethel also co-wrote a paper detailing the challenges facing prisoners with mental illness, advocating for increased mental health awareness and intervention for those incarcerated, and sent it to her state Senator.



Caroline Martell, Junior
Langley High School

Caroline Martell

During her freshman year, Caroline Martell took training on advocacy through Team ENOUGH, a national youth organization dedicated to ending gun violence. She has lobbied members of Congress and the state legislature as well as a presidential candidate. She started a chapter at Langley High School of March For Our Lives, the student-led group initiated after Parkland in support of gun violence prevention legislation. She collaborated with her former Civics teacher at Cooper Middle School to develop advocacy training webinars, and she is currently working on organizing a Langley High School club to educate students about activism.

UNICEF Club

John R. Lewis High School

The Lewis High School UNICEF Club supports education, advocacy, and events centered on a broad range of issues including climate change, mental health awareness, women's empowerment, people with disabilities, and much more. Club meetings include planned activities, video presentations, discussions, or Q&As with a different biweekly focus. In response to the stresses of online learning, they initiated a "sticky note" project, writing positive messages to teachers and to other students. They worked with the Key Club to

SEE STUDENT PEACE AWARDS, PAGE 8

Four members of the Fairfax County School Board appear in the group photos. From left, Karen Corbett Sanders, Mount Vernon District Representative; Rachna Sizemore Heizer, Vice-Chair, Member-at-Large; Laura Jane Cohen, Springfield District Representative; and Abrar Omeish Member-at-Large.

Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County

FROM PAGE 7



hold a mug decorating contest and fundraiser for UNICEF's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Project. The club also set up a conference with the Lewis Muslim Student Association on the oppression of Muslims in the United States and abroad.



**Junior Civitan Club
Madison High School**

Madison's Junior Civitan Club is associated with the national Junior Civitan International, which supports people with disabilities. In past years this has primarily entailed sending cards and gift baskets to VA hospitals and nursing homes.

This year the club collected needed items for Afghan refugees. They found local businesses willing to house their donation bins and created posters to encourage all Madison students to participate. The effort was a success, and they were able to donate many necessities to Afghan refugees in the area. The club is currently working with other Madison High School clubs to participate in Project Linus, a national organization that makes blankets for ill, traumatized, and displaced children.



**Maya Kanaan, Senior
George C. Marshall High School**

Maya started the Peace in the Middle East club at Marshall



Maya Kanaan

High School her sophomore year. Now with about 30 members of many ethnicities, the Peace in the Middle East club meets regularly to learn about a variety of Middle Eastern countries. Maya prepares informational slide-shows on each country, focusing on how conflict there is affecting children's lives. Recently, the club obtained the sponsorship of a local restaurant to help raise money for children in Lebanon. They were able to provide five teachers with remote-learning supplies, increasing access to quality education. This past fall, they raised money for Afghani children's school supplies, distributing the money through the Save the Children Fund. The club is planning additional fundraising activities for this spring.



**Olivia Zhang, Junior
McLean High School**



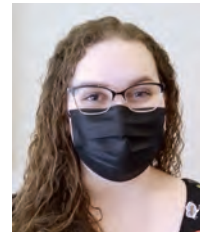
Olivia Zhang

Olivia Zhang is the founder and CEO of the non-profit organization, Cancer Kids First which has thousands of volunteers in chapters around the world sending toys, books and care packages to over 50 pediatric hospitals. Olivia heads the management team with oversight over matters such as planning, policy, and finance. She manages their website which includes milestones of achievement, awards and a variety of events including virtual movies, speakers, volunteer team building, and fund raisers. Olivia is also the president of McLean's Student Government Association, where she launched the Be a Good Neighbor Initiative -- monthly service events such as a toy drive, a blood drive, and writing letters to the elderly.



**Ava Belmont, Senior
Mount Vernon High School**

As president of the Our Minds Matter Teen Advisory and of Mount Vernon High School's Our Minds Matter Club, Ava

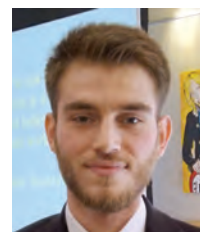


Ava Belmont

Belmont helps raise awareness of mental health issues. She leads meetings to discuss mental wellness, organizes awareness months, creates videos to decrease stigma around mental illness, and works to create an open dialogue regarding mental health at the school. She recently received a grant to fund a wellness room at Mount Vernon HS to create a safe space for students to relax and take a break during the day. Ava also serves as a representative with the Fairfax County Public Schools Student-Led Mental Health Working Group and has advocated for greater virtual support in schools for children and adolescents seeking mental health support.



**Tariq Aldalou, Senior
Mountain View
Alternative High School**



Tariq Aldalou

The war in Syria led Tariq Aldalou to move to Lebanon, where he worked as a volunteer teacher and administrator for LOYAC, a nonprofit organization that designs and develops programs which help support underprivileged and vulnerable communities. When Tariq started working for LOYAC, he packed and delivered food boxes to people living in refugee camps. After 2 months, he started teaching math to young students.

This led to additional classes teaching Arabic and English, not just to children but also to their parents, developing curricula for varying age groups. He also worked with adults to help develop their business skills. At Mountain View, Tariq voices his concerns for human rights by publishing in the school newspaper, The Mirror. Topics he has written about include water scarcity, education for all, and terrorism around the world.

**Sara Boddie, Senior
Oakton High School**

Sara Boddie founded a social justice club called "Be the Change" to create an environment for Oakton students to talk about topical issues of interest and inspire them to become community leaders and activists. The club began hosting regular meetings to discuss a variety of issues including the prison industry complex, LGBTQ rights, climate change, and racism within existing institutions such as school systems and the health care field.

They also organized a food drive and collected clothing for the needy. Sara attended a local protest in Vienna and delivered a speech

to 200 people that day. She spoke about the stereotyping of young Black children and what she and her brothers experienced as African Americans, knowing that she doesn't

SEE STUDENT PEACE AWARDS, PAGE 9

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Four members of the Fairfax County School Board appear in the group photos. From left, Karen Corbett Sanders, Mount Vernon District Representative; Rachna Sizemore Heizer, Vice-Chair, Member-at-Large; Laura Jane Cohen, Springfield District Representative; and Abrar Omeish Member-at-Large.

Student Peace Awards of Fairfax County

FROM PAGE 8

want these things to happen to her own children in the future.

high school with an ongoing blog, *Our Lives, A Different Kind of Crochet*. The blog discusses culture, biographical stories and the African Diaspora, and includes her award-winning poem, "Prolific."

Through podcasts and interviews, Christopher also advocates for Hispanic equity across Virginia.

As president of TJ's Black Student Union, Damilola guided its members to join the Minority Mentors Program alongside Hispanic Community Club members. This fostered cooperation between the two groups because they had similar goals: for upperclassmen to provide support to younger students. Damilola also represents TJ as one of Fairfax County's Student Equity Ambassador Leaders.



Owen (Vivian) Fuchs-Dubuque, Senior
Quander Road School

Owen Fuchs-Dubuque is a member of Quander Road's service club, Blossoming Beauties. She assisted with clothing and food drives, toy collections, hurricane relief, and their annual Thanksgiving outreaches.

She is also the lead in the EFE (Education for Employment) Road Café. She keeps their books, ensures that appropriate inventory is maintained, and keeps the Café clean and sanitized. The goal of the Road Café is to teach students good work ethics and to provide them with job skills to enable them to earn internships at local businesses. As an active member of the LGBTQ+ community, she makes it a point to accept others. She is currently completing an internship at an animal hospital and has rescued many animals.



Niyat Asefaw, Senior
South County High School

Niyat Asefaw volunteered at Amen Charitable Organization in Ethiopia, teaching math, physics, and English to grade school children at an orphanage in Ethiopia. She believes strongly in civic action to address economic, social and gender inequalities and discrimination, particularly concerning women, the elderly and refugees. She broadcasts her own sit-down talk show, "The Candid Hour," where she addresses and tackles uncomfortable topics within the Ethiopian community and the world. She also has been actively involved in the Model UN program at South County and became Secretary-General of the club in her junior year.

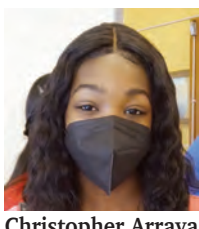
Loza Markos, Junior
West Potomac High School

Loza Markos raised money for gift packages for Ethiopian students with disabilities and volunteered last year at a hospital in Addis Ababa to assist and teach children with chronic disabilities and illnesses. She also served at a school for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, teaching math and English and assuring their access to clean water by purchasing and delivering bottled water to the students and their families. Her homeroom teacher, Allyn Howe, noted that "Loza's work in teaching and charity in both Ethiopia and in the Alexandria area reflect her generosity and eagerness to improve the lives of those around her."



Andrea Agola, Senior
Robinson Secondary School

Andre Agola founded a club at Robinson called R.E.A.D. (Representation in English Allows for Dialogue), whose mission is "to collaborate with English teachers to increase POC (person of color) representation in the English curriculum." The club's intention is to cultivate awareness of the importance of diversity and inclusion in education, and to inspire new perspectives on social issues and the experiences faced by the POC community. Andrea also helped organize a Fairfax County chapter of Diversify Our Narrative, a national non-profit organization that seeks to address the imbalances of materials taught in schools, especially in the areas of racial justice and history. Andrea started sharing her creative ideas before entering



Damilola Awofisayo and Christopher Arraya, Seniors
Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology

Damilola Awofisayo and Christopher Arraya are active members of the Student Equity Coalition, a student organization whose mission is to affirm, empower and elevate the diversity of TJ's school community. The Student Equity Coalition provides a forum for students to discuss issues, see other perspectives, and provide a voice for under-represented groups while creating a closer-knit community among students whose families come from different countries, cultures and religious backgrounds.



Vy Nguyen, Junior
W.T. Woodson High School

As a former Miss Northern Virginia Teen USA, Vy Nguyen volunteered for One Love Foundation, an organization that empowers young people from all backgrounds with the knowledge to identify and avoid abusive relationships. Vy has served as a Teen Ambassador, Workshop Facilitator, and Regional Social Media Team Leader. She has spoken on many panels and served on One Love's Film Fellowship Youth Council, which selects recipients of grants to create feature films on relationship abuse for classroom use. Vy is determined to help others avoid or, if necessary, surmount relationship abuse.

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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.

FRIDAY/MARCH 25
Elizabeth Vismans, an artist and Life Purpose Coach, will be the featured presenter at the meeting of the McLean Art Society, 10 a.m.-noon. The meeting will take place on Zoom with the demonstration at 11 a.m. following a general meeting. Guests are invited. To participate in this meeting, contact M.A.S. President Anna Katakina at annakatakina@aol.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
Diva Central Formal Dress Event. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. At RCC Lake Anne, 1609-A Washington Plaza, Reston. This one-day event is the perfect shopping experience for any current high school or middle school student who needs a dress, shoes, jewelry and other accessories. Everything is absolutely free, and shoppers may choose up to two outfits. The event will also feature exciting door prizes and raffle giveaways. Register online through myRCC. The registration number is 8C1008-2A. Patrons who need assistance creating a household account may call 703-476-4500 and press "8" for assistance. For additional information, please contact LaTanja Snelling, RCC Collaboration and Outreach Director, at 703-390-6158.

ROUNDUPS

Virtual Public Meeting for Route 50 STARS Study

VDOT will hold a second virtual public-information meeting for the Route 50 STARS Safety and Operational Improvements Study in Chantilly. It's set for Wednesday, March 30, at 7 p.m. To register, go to <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/1470899588820002061>.

The STARS (Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions) study's first phase assessed potential safety and operational improvements for nearly two miles of Route 50 between Route 28 and Stringfellow Road. Based on public feedback from the first phase, the second phase is further examining potential innovative intersection improvements – including partial median U-turns at Lees Corner Road and Stringfellow Road. This phase will also consider potential safety improvements for side-street intersections along the Route 50 service road.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

SATURDAY/MARCH 26

Washington Sinfonietta. 7:30 p.m. At Falls Church Episcopal Church, 166 E. Broad Street, Falls Church. The Sinfonietta will perform "Three S's": Andante Festivo by Sibelius, Cello Concerto No. 1 by Saint-Saens featuring cello soloist Eric Kutz, and Schubert's Symphony No. 2. A link to purchase tickets to the concert in advance can be found here: <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/5388499>. Visit www.washingtonsinfonietta.org.

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 Ingle-side 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.

TUESDAY/MARCH 29

Celebrate Chaitra Navratri (Spring Navratri) Workshop. 6 p.m. Virtual. With the arrival of the Indian heat, comes the festival of Chaitra

Police Warn: Beware of Vehicle-Parts Thieves

The Fair Oaks District Police Station is alerting community members about a recent increase in the larceny of vehicle parts – especially catalytic converters. They say the Toyota Prius, Ford trucks and Econoline vans have been frequent targets, although not exclusively.

The Fairfax County Police Department is working hard to solve these crimes, and the public is encouraged to report any suspicious activities near vehicles by calling 703-691-2131, or 911 if it's an emergency.

Police also advise residents to park their cars in a garage or secured area. And if that's not possible, they should park in a well-lit area in the sight line of a video doorbell. Fair Oaks police also encourage people to always lock their car doors. Another prevention measure is to apply a commercial catalytic converter theft-prevention device.

While not all thefts are preventable, these steps can make people's vehicles less prone to being targeted. However, if their catalytic converter does get stolen, they're urged to call police immediately at the above phone numbers to report the incident.



Kevin Thorne stars in "Nat Turner in Jerusalem," which will be presented at NextStop Theatre Company in Herndon from April 1-17, 2022.

Navratri, a nine-day Hindu festival that marks the transition from spring to summer. The festivals of Navratri in general occur at times of seasonal change, with both Chaitra Navratri and Sharad Navratri (the one that occurs in the fall) happening when the length of the day and night are similar. Both are times of eating particular foods, fasting, and/or eating smaller quantities of food to support our bodies through seasonal changes. For more information, call the Center at 703-790-0123, TTY: 711, or visit the website, www.mcleancenter.org. For Old Firehouse activities, call 703-448-8336. For The Alden Box Office, call 571-296-8385.

WEDNESDAY/MARCH 30

Michael Oppenheimer Speaks. 7:30 p.m. Via Zoom. Topic is: Climate Change: What You Need to Know. Sponsored by the Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation. Visit the website: <https://nvhc.shulcloud.com/form/speaker-series-3/30/2022.html>

MARCH 30-APRIL 3

Used Book Sale. At Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive, Reston. Sale of gently used books for children, young adults, and educators. Shop over 10,000 items. Hours are: Thursday, March 30 - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Friday, April 1 - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, April 2 - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, April 3 - 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Contact the Friends of the Reston Regional Library at 703-829-5467.

APRIL 1-17

"Nat Turner in Jerusalem." Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m., Sunday at 2 p.m. At NextStop Theatre Company, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. This powerful play delves into an important moment in American history, which has continued to shake the conscience of the nation for almost two centuries. Through powerful performances, audiences are invited to take part in a deep exploration of human morality and the grim reality of the past. Visit the website: <https://www.nextstoptheatre.org/nat-turner-in-jerusalem>

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Cause for Concern?



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

If you've read any of my columns, you might be able to guess the answer. In my mind, it's not so much cause for concern as it is a topic for conversation. The topic being the side effects of cancer medicine/treatment. I remember hearing/reading that as it relates to cancer patients, sometimes the side effects of the medicine so severe/so debilitating that the patient must stop the treatment (which I never have). And in stopping what's managing – so to speak, the tumors, the tumors start growing and the cancer starts spreading and then shortening your life. In the past when I've asked my oncologist what would happen to my stable tumors if I were to stop treatment, he unequivocally stated: "I know what will happen. The tumors will grow." And as you might imagine, tumors growing has been my greatest fear.

Per my last series of diagnostic scans in late Dec. and early March, tumors are stable, and life goes on. I had been anxious about these scans because previously we had reduced the dosage of my thyroid cancer medicine down to 10 mg from the initial 24 mg. We had to do this because the side effects from the medicine was adversely affecting my ability to perform my activities of daily living. Walking upstairs or even a modest incline would take my breath away; as would bending over or even standing over the commode. However, this original maximum dose was keeping the tumors stable. Why risk that just so I can breathe easier?

In talking with my oncologist over the years, I've learned – and experienced, that cancer medicine is constantly adjusted and changed your body reacts negatively. The goal, according to my oncologist is to try and find that "sweet spot" as I call it. That's the spot where the minimum amount of medicine tolerated by the patient is doing the maximum good, and of course, when the side effects are the least impactful. Which is where I've been for the past six months or so: reduced dose, less side effects, while still having "stable" results on my quarterly scans.

Recently however, my breathing has become more labored, even while performing less arduous tasks. My wife, Dina, asked me today, after she saw me pull over in the house and sit down to catch my breath, if I thought I should contact my oncologist and tell him of my recent difficulties because it's new-ish and any new symptoms need to be reported to the doctor.

But lowering my dose yet again really scares me. At some point/dosage, the medicine stops being effective. And I'm not sure if one can experiment with a lower dose and if there are complications/disappointments, simply revert to the higher dose and return to the previous abnormal? My oncologist has also said that he can try to keep me from going down, but once down, he can't likely bring me back up. Ergo, my dilemma.

Obviously, it's prudent to keep the oncologist in my loop; he does kind of have my life in the speaker of his stethoscope and should be apprised of all changes in my health. Nevertheless, a reduction in my medicine could be a turning point in the wrong direction, and one quite frankly from which I might never recover.

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

TROUT FISHING

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS



Stocked trout should live in Sugarland Run until the water temperature reaches 75 to 77 degrees for a time.



Carlos Aparicio, 10, of Reston, displays his trout.



Carlos Aparicio, 10, of Reston, prepares to pass his fish to his friend Inti Tellez, 10, also of Reston.

Breaking Records at Kids' Trout Fishing Derby

Looks like an all-time high for participating anglers.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Town of Herndon Kids' Fishing Derby reeled in youngsters from 8 a.m. to noon on Saturday, March 19. The children, accompanied by adults, angled their way down to Sugarland Run behind the Herndon Police Department, 397 Herndon Parkway. They hooked up with poles and bait before making a line to the stream banks.

Lured by the prospect of trophy rainbow trout, the youngsters made runs from shallows to ripples to still ponds searching for a shoal.

Carlos Aparicio, 10, of Reston, snagged one of the first trout of the day. His friend Inti Tellez, 10, of Reston said, "I came to hang out with my friend, Carlos and go fishing."

What could be more appropriate on the eve of the first day of spring, except for warm sunny weather, no school, and a buddy who allows you to hold his catch. The anglers were not "fin"-ished yet. They cast their gaze to the shoals, hoping for tight lines and a strike.

Trout Unlimited offered a fish filleting station. Volunteers were on hand to teach the children how to bait, cast, hook, and cook their fresh catch.

To fish, teenagers, and adults aged 16 and above needed to hold a valid Virginia State Fishing License. Adults were not permitted to fish during the derby.

Cool weather should keep the fish alive until the water temperature rises to 75-77 degrees for an extended time, rendering the



Some anglers leave the fishing derby as others cross the Sugarland Run bridge. The event attracted a possible record number of youngsters.



Herndon Fishing Derby.

run lethal to trout. Tim Lander, Herndon Parks and Recreation reported 193 children registered to fish that day.

If you missed Herndon's fishing derby, Saturday, March 26 is the Reston Associa-

tion Kids Trout Fishing Day at the Snakeden Branch Stream off Soapstone Drive. For registration assistance, contact naturecenter@reston.org or 703-476-9689 ext. 5. This is an outdoor event with staggered

arrival times. Face masks are recommended for adults and children when distancing cannot be maintained. Contact Trout Unlimited for other fishing opportunities in the state at NOVATU.org.