With help from Harrison, 6, and Jackson, 4, the Wise family shops regularly for items that will be transported weekly to the Polish border to help Ukrainian refugees. They also stock church aid stations visited by hundreds of refugees daily.
Take Control of Your Diabetes Risk

You Have Diabetes

Three words no one ever wants to hear, yet each year, over a million people in the United States do.

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From the Chief Medical Officer at WebMD, the world’s largest provider of trusted health information, learn how to reduce your diabetes risk and change your mindset from I hope I don’t get diabetes to I can prevent diabetes.

The Lamb Center Will Hold Spring Festival

The Lamb Center in Fairfax City is hosting its first-ever Spring Festival & Fundraiser. It’s slated for April 10, from 1-3 p.m., at Van Dyck Park, 3720 Old Lee Hwy, in Fairfax.

The family-friendly event is open to the public and will celebrate the arrival of spring with a live baby lamb petting area, Easter-egg decorating, face and mural painting, and a 1:30 p.m. Easter egg hunt.

The festival will also include a 50/50 raffle in which participants will vie for a cash prize and an “egg-stravagant” Easter basket. All proceeds will go directly to supporting the programs that provide hope and resources for Lamb Center guests. These resources include connecting them to housing, health care, transportation and even jobs. Festivities will take place under the large, picnic pavilion and in the adjacent field. The event is free, but attendees are asked to register on The Lamb Center’s website: https://www.thelambcenter.org/.

The event will be The Lamb Center’s first spring festival.

Environmental Expo Returns

The event will be The Lamb Center’s first spring festival.

Live Music by Billy B the Natural Science Song and Dance Guy. Since 1977 Bill Brennan (a.k.a. “Billy B.”) has electrified children, parents, and teachers alike with his exciting style of combining environmental education and entertainment. Billy B., a trained educator turned performer, uses songs and dances which he writes and choreographs himself to teach children of all ages about natural science, ecology and the environment.

Featured workshops include: Reptile Wonders, the Secret Garden, Birds & Bees, NPS Junior Ranger Program, bird and nature walks and more.

Check out solar cooking and CTV Robot Demonstrations. Join us next year to LEARN, ENGAGE and ACT to save our environment!


— Bonnie Hobbs
Changes Coming for Franconia Government Center

Request for Proposals put out to add affordable housing.

By Mike Salmon

The wheels are in motion for changes at the Franconia Government Center that include a request for proposals recently issued to build 120 units of affordable housing on the site.

If all goes as planned for the county, the Franconia Government Center would be razed and the Lee District Supervisor's office at the Franconia Station would be relocated to Beulah Street and Manchester Lakes Boulevard where a new facility will be built to hold a new library and senior center as well. Then the existing 3.26-acre site on Franconia Road would provide a home for 120 affordable housing units.

Last March, ownership of that property was turned over to the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority with little fanfare.

This new entity would be an improvement for the police and Lee District Supervisor because the current 28,000 square-foot Franconia Government Center building is old and obsolete, the county said. It was built in 1992 with limited parking and an interior lay-out ill-suited for modern police operations. These operations are scheduled to be relocated to a new governmental complex in the Kingstowne area, about two miles down Beulah Street.

Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D-Lee) thinks it's a good fit with all the transportation, schools and businesses in proximity.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for the County, and Lee District in particular, to reinforce our priority for affordable homes as a cornerstone in future development in our communities," he said.

The redevelopment of the site may require an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and rezoning to allow for a multifamily residential community on the property, the county said. This land use and zoning consideration will include many opportunities for public review and input in evaluating and shaping the vision for the future use of the property.

There have been four "widely attended" public meetings focusing on the new office location on Beulah Street, Lusk's office said.

Public engagement is expected to begin once a developer for the affordable housing project has been selected through a competitive Request for Proposal process in accordance with the Public-Private Educational Facilities and Infrastructure Act of 2002. The target completion date for this move is 2024, Lusk's office said.

In the event that the FCRHA does not pursue an affordable housing project on the site, ownership of the location will be transferred back to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors for further considerations, the county said.

The deadline for submissions pertaining to the RFP is April 14.

Reward Offered For Information On Murder Suspect

A $40,000 reward is now being offered through Crime Solvers for information that leads to the arrest of Joel Mosso Merino, 27, of Alexandria. The reward comes from Hannah Choi's family and community donations. Detectives from Fairfax County Fugitive Track and Apprehension Unit continue to investigate to determine Merino's whereabouts. Detectives learned that prior to the murder, Merino planned to fly to Los Angeles on March 5. Detectives were waiting for him to arrive at the airport, but he never arrived.

Detectives learned Merino traveled to Georgia instead.

Anyone with information about Merino's whereabouts is asked to contact detectives at 703-246-7800, option 2. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers – 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477).

Thursday morning, detectives from the Major Crimes Bureau were notified by the Charles County Sheriff's Office that a body was found in a wooded area in Piscataway Park. Officers had previously searched more than 800 acres of this wooded area. The Medical Examiner positively identified the body as Hannah Choi.

Choi, 35, was reported missing on Sunday, March 5. She was last seen on Saturday, March 4 at her home in the 5300 block of Jesmond Street in the Alexandria section of Fairfax County. Friends arrived at Choi's home on Sunday, but she did not answer the door. She missed several appointments and could not be reached. Her friends contacted police; police searched the house, and the house appeared to be in order except for bedding which appeared to be missing from a bedroom. Based on her sudden disappearance, detectives from our Major Crimes Bureau assumed the investigation.

Through interviews with friends and family, detectives discovered Choi spent significant time on Saturday, March 5 with her live-in ex-boyfriend, Joel Mosso Merino, 27, of Alexandria. Detectives said that during that time together Choi may have sustained a significant injury. Detectives believe Merino then removed Choi from the home and transported her to another location.

Detectives identified a vehicle they believed Merino was operating the night of Choi's disappearance. The vehicle was located the following day, March 7, in Washington, D.C. A search warrant was executed on the vehicle, and although Choi was not found, detectives discovered evidence to suggest she was harmed prior to her disappearance.

Based on the evidence recovered from the vehicle and additional interviews, detectives obtained a warrant for Merino for second degree murder and the disposal of a body.

Detectives from our Fugitive Track and Apprehension Unit assumed the investigation and began tracking Merino's whereabouts. They determined Merino fled the state and notified the United States Marshals Service to aid in apprehending Merino.

This is the sixth homicide of the year in Fairfax County. Year to date, there were three homicides at this point in 2021.
In the weeks since Russia began its invasion of Ukraine, friends see, share, and respond to social media posts and other appeals for humanitarian support of Ukraine. Responding to the crisis conditions in Ukraine and in Ukrainian refugee areas, major charity organizations are delivering support, including UNICEF, Save the Children, the United Nations World Food Program (UNWFP), the Ukraine Red Cross, International Medical Corp and CARE.

Other groups whose mission is animal welfare are also at work, including the International Fund of Animal Welfare (IFAW), and the International Humane Society.

Feeling the call to add to the international efforts, many individuals are displaying the blue and yellow Ukrainian colors, or sharing personal efforts, inviting others to join them. There are many stories of local people giving, including the yogi who once lived in Kyiv pledging class proceeds, and candle makers, cheese sellers, and restaurateurs, with ties to Ukraine, holding special events, sending proceeds.

One Northern Virginia family now working at Ramstein Air Base in Germany also feels the call to help the refugees. Colby and Linsey Wise and their two young sons have called on their state-side friends and family, and joined their German neighbors, to donate supplies for Ukrainian refugees fleeing to nearby Poland or Germany. The Wises honed their aid activities supporting Afghan refugees who were transported to the air base when the United States military ended operations in Kabul in August 2021 (See Connection, Springfield, Nov 25, 2021, page 4-5 or www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2021/nov/24/northern-virginians-aid-afghan-evacuee-family/)

This month, raising well over $15,000 at the time of this writing, the Wises are shopping for those donors who are not geographically close to those with need; purchasing sleeping bags, fresh fruit and vegetables, diapers, first aid kits, pet food and other essentials.

Contributions from the Wise effort are adding to the efforts and donations of others collected by a nearby church in Germany, Agape, which makes twice weekly bus runs to the Polish border to deliver aid.

"The Agape Church store is 100% funded by donations, and I can tell you that the refugees that have come through are so gracious and humbled by our efforts," says Linsey Wise. "There is a group of about seven Ukrainian women refugees that keep coming back to the store day after day — not to shop, but to help organize, sort and assist as a way of giving back for the help they are receiving.

Hearing one aid center had only disposable blankets instigated a shopping run to buy more blankets.

The list of needed items changes as groups seek to meet the needs of those still in Ukraine and those who have made it out. Those at the border or still in Ukraine need sleeping bags, food, medicine, and pain relievers. The most requested items by Ukrainians there: canned meats, hard salami, and protein bars. Those who make it to Germany, but with few possessions, look for fresh food and clothing; also backpacks for children starting into German schools.

German village grocery stores have drop boxes for food staple donations. German churches near the Wise’s village have 80 to 200 refugees per day come for food, clothes, and even crayons and coloring books to occupy the youngest refugees. Germans are
By Bonnie Hobbs
The Connection

She did it! Fairfax High grad Emily Dillard won a College Television Award, last Saturday night for the immigration-themed film, “Our Side.” She shares this honor with her partner, Nico Rinciari, with whom she created the film while they attended the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD).

The 41st annual Television Academy Foundation’s College Television Awards recognize and reward excellence in student-produced programs from colleges and universities throughout the United States. Dillard and Rinciari were winners in the Scripted Series category; they wrote “Our Side” together, Rinciari directed the film and Dillard produced it.

“Wow, what a night! It really feels amazing,” said Dillard, 23, after the award announcement. “I’m so proud of the team that made ‘Our Side’ and truly grateful for everyone who trusted us with their own immigration and integration stories. This award is really for them.”

“Our Side” tells the story of Adillah, a woman in her mid-20s who immigrates to Italy from Ghana in search of a better life. She gets a job caring for an elderly, Italian man named Mimmo; but a new immigration law in Italy then nullifies her visa and driver’s license. And when Mimmo has a heart attack, Adillah risks being discovered by the authorities when she takes him to the hospital for treatment.

“The story is loosely based on a friend of ours with a similar journey,” said Dillard. “We wanted to tell it in a way that wouldn’t expose him but could bring attention to asylum seekers’ struggles.” And that real-life connection makes the award even more meaningful for her and Rinciari.

“I could not be happier that Nico and I got the chance to represent this story for the College TV Awards,” said Dillard. “I’m excited to see what comes next in our journey as storytellers and filmmakers.”

The March 26 ceremony was virtual, but Dillard and Rinciari will receive a trophy and $3,000 as their prize. They’ll also become members of the Television Academy Foundation’s alumni family, giving them access to networking opportunities, events and professional-development resources.

The pair lives in Los Angeles, where Rinciari works in layout for Disney Animation and Dillard is an assistant production manager for Warner Brothers Animation.
April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

T

his Friday, April 1st, begins National Child Abuse Prevention Month. This month recognizes the importance of families and communities working together to strengthen families to prevent child abuse and neglect. This year’s theme is “Words Matter”. Parents and caregivers are challenged to be intentional every day to speak encouraging words that build up children’s sense of worth. Please join me in wearing blue on April 1st to support survivors and bring attention to this critical issue.

Sadly, child abuse cuts across all boundaries of race, education levels, and income brackets. In 2021, there were more than 37,000 reports of child abuse in Northern Virginia alone (2,600 children in Fairfax County). There are 3.5 million reports annually in the United States. According to the Children’s Bureau’s 2020 Child Maltreatment Report, approximately 2 million children across the country received prevention services in 2020. 1.2 million children received post-response services (such as family preservation, family support, or foster care) because of needs discovered during an investigation or alternative response. During the Federal fiscal year 2020, fewer than one-quarter (21.8 percent) of confirmed maltreatment victims were from their homes because of an investigation or alternative response. As we learn more about how exposure to traumatic events affects a developing child’s brain, it has become clear that childhood trauma is one of the most critical public health concerns that we face today.

To combat these problems, organizations like SCAN of Northern Virginia and FACT (Family and Children’s Trust Fund) provide no-cost parenting support groups in English and Spanish, access to education and assistance resources, and provide grants to support trauma-informed practices throughout Virginia. FACT is the only organization in Virginia, and one of few nationally, that addresses trauma across the lifespan. Protective factors and adverse childhood experiences are frameworks utilized in prevention efforts to reduce the risk of maltreatment and prevent the recurrence of abuse or neglect by drawing upon the strengths of families and acknowledging traumatic events.

Protective factors are conditions or attributes in individuals, families, and communities that promote the health and well-being of children and families. By using a protective factors approach, child welfare professionals and others can help parents find resources and supports that emphasize their strengths while also identifying areas where they need assistance, thereby reducing the chances of child abuse and neglect.

Categories of Adverse Childhood Experiences.

**ABUSE**
- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual

**NEGLECT**
- Physical
- Emotional
- Substance Abuse

**HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION**
- Mental Illness
- Incarcerated Relative
- Mother treated violently
- Divorce

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‘Positive. Lasting Impact on Northern Virginia’

SAR honors Fairfax Mayor as its Good Citizen of the Year.

By Bonnie Hobbs 
The Connection

Fairfax City Mayor David Meyer has been honored by the Virginia Society of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) as its 2021 Good Citizen of the Year. All 30 SAR chapters across the state nominate one person for this award and, after a review process, one individual is selected.

Meyer’s nomination came from the Fairfax Resolves Chapter, which has some 180 members throughout Fairfax County. His award was presented March 16 at a chapter meeting at the Fairfax City Regional Library.

“I’m humbled by the recognition and consider it a great privilege to serve with these members,” said Meyer after receiving a crystal trophy from them. “This group is one of the best-organized and active chapters in Virginia. What impresses me is the professionalism and mature, civic approach you all exhibit. It’s a great tribute to our patriotic ancestors, and it’s an honor to be with you.”

In his nomination letter, Fairfax Resolves Chapter President David Cook said Meyer has served his community in leadership roles for many organizations, including:
- Church - At Fairfax United Methodist Church, he’s supported and participated in mission teams for the Appalachia Service Project to eradicate substandard housing in Appalachia. He also traveled to refugee camps in Lebanon with Helping Hand for Relief and Development.
- Scouting - Meyer is an assistant Scoutmaster and Eagle Advisor for Troop 187.
- School - He was on the Daniels Run Elementary design committee and served as President of Fairfax High’s PTA.
- Historical - Meyer created the William Watters Foundation, which raises funds to preserve the historic William Watters Cemetery in McLean. Watters was the first, American-born, itinerant Methodist minister in the American Colonies.
- Meyer also served on the Board of Directors of Historic Fairfax City Inc. and co-authored the book, “Fairfax, Virginia: A City Traveling through Time.”
- Veterans - Meyer strongly supports veteran and patriotic organizations. In June 2017, he commemorated the 73rd anniversary of D-Day by traveling to Omaha Beach Memorial Cemetery in France. While there, he paid tribute to two fallen soldiers from Fairfax who died during the Normandy invasion.

For the past three years, on Nov. 11, Meyer joined other state and local dignitaries by speaking at various Veterans Day commemorations. He signed a proclamation decreeing Fairfax Resolves Day in July and participated in many other veteran and patriotic-organization celebrations. Wrote Cook: “These actions show his character and love for history and patriotism.”

- Government – He’s served five terms on the Fairfax City Council and is currently in his third term as mayor. He’s worked for improvement in residential and business zones, as a method of attracting new businesses and their families to the City of Fairfax.
- Meyer has been on the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Board of Directors since 2014 and is also a member of its Transportation Planning Board. In addition, Meyer represents the City on the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority and serves on the Executive Committee of the Washington Area Transit Authority. Before retiring in 2016, he was a Senior Executive Service member of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

In Fairfax City, wrote Cook, “Meyer has led the City to embrace a new vision for our future and to position Fairfax as the best-in-class jurisdiction in our region. He understands the importance of retaining the best of our traditions while leading Fairfax to be a superior city, both regionally and globally.”

Cook also said Meyer “strengthened Fairfax’s tax base with over $650 million in new, private-capital investment. In 2019 alone, the City’s total assessment grew 3.94 percent – the largest increase in a decade. He’s intentionally focused on redevelopment of our commercial centers that will create new sources of income for the City and region for the long term.”

“In addition, David is passionately committed to support funding to keep our school facilities and programs distinctly superior. Education is the single, largest expenditure of the City, and David believes that investing in children is the best assurance that our community and nation will continue to thrive in the years ahead.”

Saying Meyer had a “positive, lasting impact on Northern Virginia and the City of Fairfax,” Cook concluded his letter by writing, “It is my honor on behalf of the Fairfax Resolves Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution, to nominate Mayor David L. Meyer for the VASSAR 2021 Citizen of the Year Award.”

After the ceremony, Meyer – a two-year member of the Fairfax Resolves – said he’s wanted to join this organization for 30 years, but life always got in the way. Now that he’s retired, though, he’s happy to be part of it. His father’s fourth-generation grandfather, Spencer Records, fought in the American Revolution.

Pleased to receive the statewide honor, Meyer said the Fairfax Resolves members “take seriously their responsibilities to preserve history and historic sites – especially the graves of patriot ancestors. The SAR also has a long tradition of providing scholarships to young people to further their education and become productive citizens in our democracy.”

Help Feed Hungry Families in Fairfax County

Monetary donations allow pantries to purchase culturally appropriate foods, which better meet the needs of the diverse communities they serve.

- Fresh Food – Canned and dry food are a vital part of food pantries, but a healthy diet also requires fresh fruit and vegetables, low-fat dairy products and lean proteins – items that can’t be collected through food drives.
- Less Labor – Nonprofits often rely on the work of volunteers to sort and shelve donations.

Hunger Never Takes a Break – Having cash on hand helps food pantries keep their shelves stocked during times of the year when donations drop off.
Two years after the pandemic started, a survey from the fall of 2021 estimates a skyrocketing rate of need in Northern Virginia, with over half a million Northern Virginia adults, 545,000 with active symptoms of a mental health disorder, suffering from clinical anxiety or depression. The number is four times pre-pandemic.

“That is 28 percent of the adults right here in our community,” said Drew Wilder, emcee of the 2022 Shape of the Region Conference and a reporter with NBC4 Northern Virginia. There were 300 attendees at the March 15 conference put on by The Community Foundation of Northern Virginia with 17 regional partners.

Complex barriers hinder access to basic mental health care such as early intervention, outreach, and medication, Wilder said. The conference’s two presenters and panels of state and national experts expanded on the issues.

“Bottom line, we are all suffering.”
— Regina S. James, M.D., American Psychiatric Association

Keynote speaker Regina S. James, M.D., deputy medical director and chief, Division of Diversity and Health Equity for the American Psychiatric Association, said what worries her the most is that some of the over 500,000 individuals in Northern Virginia who are now suffering from depression and anxiety do not have access to the treatment they need. Mental illness and substance use disorders should be identified sooner than later. Early detection, diagnosis, and treatment, according to James, can improve productivity and attention at work and school. “It gives you the motivation to get up and do things... It allows you to overcome that,” James said.

The most important considerations in obtaining mental health care are cost and insurance coverage, James said. Shortage of practitioners who can recognize, diagnose, and treat the disease also results in lengthy waits for appointments. Difficulties navigating the system, lack of transportation, and stigma, are also issues.

Some people also do not recognize they need help. “It is not easy to identify markers to say that there is something wrong, so people find it difficult to grasp the concept that there is actually something wrong,” James said. Mental illness and substance use disorders are costly to society and individuals who do not get assistance. Mental and physical health are inextricably linked.

“For every dollar invested in scaled-up treatment for depression and anxiety, there’s a $4 return and better health and productivity,” James said. Personal repercussions of untreated mental illness include interference with daily activities, loss of productivity, and the capacity to build relationships and perform at work or school. Overdose and suicide are also risks.

When it comes to unmet mental health needs, certain communities or groups face a disproportionate share of the burden. “Those who are marginalized and disenfranchised,” James said. These groups include racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ people, people experiencing homelessness, people who are incarcerated, immigrants, and people with serious mental illnesses and drug addictions. Treatment for mental health and substance abuse issues varies widely among young people, especially those of color, in terms of availability and quality.

James went on to warn that the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting mental health and that the effects would last for years. Since the pandemic began, students have been four months behind in reading and five months behind in math. Among teenage girls, ER visits for attempted suicide rose 51 percent.

According to James, college-age people and those early in their careers have the highest unmet mental healthcare needs, with women having a substantially higher rate. The trend continues among individuals through mid-career and those beyond age 65.

“Bottom line, we are all suffering,” James said. However, navigating mental health services and receiving treatment may be challenging since it is difficult to know where to begin and how to seek out someone with whom the individual can relate.

James discussed methods and government policies for addressing unmet health needs. The collaborative care paradigm is the most cost-effective. It is holistic, encompassing both physical and mental components. “Once you tell your primary physician that you are having these mental health issues, there is a warm hand-off, so to speak, so that the psychiatrist can then take on the issues,” she said.

President Joe Biden’s Fiscal Year 23 budget proposes doubling funding for primary and behavioral health integration programs and authorizing Medicaid reimbursement of inter-professional consultations so that primary care providers can consult with a specialist. The Fiscal Year 23 Budget recommends improving rate parity. All health plans must require behavioral health treatments with a sufficient provider network and three behavioral health appointments each year at no cost to the individual receiving them.

Regarding the treatment of substance abuse disorders, James notes that the latest 2022 Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act Report to Congress indicates that companies continue to violate some of the act’s provisions for mental health and addiction. “The good news is that agencies are continuing to try and place more rigorous enforcement of this act,” James said. Treatments should be covered like other medical illnesses.

James said that addressing social needs like food insecurity, transportation, and housing can improve mental health. The Accountable Health Communities Innovation model aims to address a critical gap between clinical care and the health-related social needs of Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries.

Finally, James explained that as of July 1, 2022, new federal legislation mandates all states have a call number for individuals to seek quick and appropriate treatment for mental health or drug use emergencies. Similarly, to dial 911 for a local emergency, 988 will be a dedicated call-in line for dispatching trained personnel. They will respond to mental health and substance use emergencies, now handled chiefly by law enforcement.

Elizabeth Hughes, senior director, InSight Region for Community Foundation for Northern Virginia, presented a companion report to the day’s event. Before the pandemic, around 8 percent, 150,000 of the adult population in Northern Virginia experienced active symptoms of a mental health disorder. The rate rose to 39 percent, or approximately 600,000 adults, a year into the pandemic before leveling off at 545,000.

Around 1 million persons in Northern Virginia, or more than half of the local adult population, reported feeling tension in the recent two weeks, with 14 percent feeling that way daily. Worry is slightly less, 870,000 adults, which is 45 percent of our population, felt worried, and 11 percent felt this way daily. All told, those symptoms together, 24 percent are experiencing clinical anxiety levels, Hughes reported.

Loss of interest or pleasure, coupled with
Beloved Cancel Culture

By Michael Lee Pope
The Connection

Don’t Say away from and is notpery slope is a slip-
that our bill

The legislation was communicated to the
governor on March 9, which means that
Youngkin has until April 11 to make a final
determination. That means the governor is
poised to deliver on his campaign promise of
signing the bill that McAuliffe vetoed. That
requires schools to notify parents when they
plan on teaching “sexually explicit content.” This
time, two Senate Democrats crossed
government lines to vote with the Republicans and
summon the bill to the governor’s这款: Sen.
Lynwood Lewis (D-6) and Sen. Monty
Mason (D-1).

“We have this wonderful Pulitzer-prize winning
fabulous Black female writer who has received
her accolades for obvious reasons. I can’t help
but wonder what the real concern is about.”
— School Board Chairwoman Meagan Alderton

Beloved novel prompts legislation that has critics worried about book bans.

Toni Morrison’s Pulitzer-prize winning book “Be-

l” over a wedge against the former governor who was
attempting to return to the Executive Mansión. During a heated debate be-
tween McAuliffe and Youngkin at the
Schlesinger Center in Alexandria.
Youngkin repeatedly needled the for-
ermer governor until McAuliffe stuck his foot in his mouth.

“I don’t think parents should be tell-
ing schools what they should teach,”
said McAuliffe in a moment that was
effectively repeated in Republican cam-
paign commercials.

FLASH FORWARD to 2022. Youngkin
is now governor, and he’s poised to
sign Senate Bill 656, which was intro-
duced by Sen. Siobhan Dunnivant (R-
12) as a sort of sequel to the Beloved
Bill. Like the previous incarnation, it
has raised alarm bells for people who worry
that notifying parents of “sexually explicit
content” would have a chilling effect among
teachers who might avoid teaching “Bel-
oved” in favor of something more anodyne.

“We think there are some racist undertones
to the conversations about her novel, and
that concerns me,” said Alexandria School
Board Chairwoman Meagan Alderton. “We
have this wonderful Pulitzer-prize winning
fabulous Black female writer who has re-
cived her accolades for obvious reasons. I

ACROSS THE COUNTRY, efforts to ban
books from school libraries have intensified
in recent years. A Texas lawmaker identified
850 books last year he fears “might make
students feel discomfort, guilt, anguish or
any other form of psychological distress be-
cause of their race or sex.” Here in Virgin-
ia, a Chesterfield parent with Sen.
Amanda Chase (R-11) to advocate against
books celebrating LGBT relationships or
examining drug use, specifically “Eleanor
and Park” by Rainbow Rowell, “Dope Sick”
by Walter Dean Myers and “Tyrell” by Cole
Booth.

Most parents, if they actually read ex-
cerpts, would have grave concerns,” Chase
told the Chesterfield Observer. “As a parent,
that’s not something that I want my kids
reading.”

In several cases, school boards across
Virginia have taken quick action only to re-
verse course later. The Spotsylvania County
School Board was forced to reverse its de-
cision to remove a list of sexually explicit
books from its schools after intense push-
back from the community. And the Fairfax
County School Board removed two books
from its library shelves then put them back
after hearing concerns about censorship or
suppression. The Alexandria School Board
has not yet had a similar controversy erupt,
but some are concerned the Beloved Bill has
similarities to a bill in Florida outlawing dis-
cussions about sexual orientation or gender
identity in primary schools.

“I think that our bill is a slippery slope and is not
too far away from Florida’s ‘Don’t Say
Gay’ bill,” said School Board member Kelly
Carmichael Booz.

During the General Assembly debate over the Beloved Bill, Del. Marcus
Simon (D-53) put together a Little Banned Book Library outside his office
in the Pocahontas Building.

See Beloved Cancel, Page 15

March 31 - April 6, 2022

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See Beloved Cancel. Page 15
News

2022 Shape of the Region Conference

FROM PAGE 8

sadness and feeling down, represents a positive screen for depression. “In Northern Virginia, 270,000 adults reported feeling one or both of these feelings, and around 18 percent met the clinical threshold for depression,” Hughes said. “Together, anxiety plus depression is what we are talking about when we say a mental health disorder.”

According to Hughes, one in every two NOVA residents between the ages of 18 and 30 shows clinical levels of anxiety and depression. The same goes for LGBTQ+ people. About one in two is experiencing clinical levels of anxiety and depression. By race and ethnicity, the rates are closer to one-third of Hispanics.

There is a positive visual relationship between income and mental health. Those with resources that are not having trouble paying their monthly bills are still not fine, but they are better off than the population experiencing acute financial need. Hughes said, “Among those who reported it was very difficult to pay their monthly expenses, two-thirds are experiencing a mental health disorder. It is very, very high.”

Hughes qualified that not everyone with anxiety or depression needs or wants to access to care and mental health equity at the intersectionality, and ensuring that the care we provide allows for all that intersectionality, authenticity, and realism to show up in care. - Dr. Alliree M. Breland-Noble, founder, AAKOMA

Q: Shouldn’t teachers and school counselors be better trained for serving and referring actions? They are the ones on the front edge of this.
A: As a pediatrician, we need to think about how to help children where they are. They may be in the pediatrician’s office for 15 minutes an hour, but they are in school eight to 10 hours a day. - Sandy L. Chung, M.D., FAAP, FACHE, AAP President 2022, CEO, Trusted Doctors

Q: I can tell you that for certain of our patients that we have had admitted to the institute, having some partnership with their priest, pastor, or community leader has been effective in certain cases. We will have them come to the hospital, meet with the treatment team, meet with the family. It can decrease stigma, like taking medications or receiving mental health care in a socially acceptable or spiritually acceptable context to the patient and their family. - Navid Raschid, M.D., FAPA, medical director, Northern Virginia Mental Health Institute

Q: What do we mean by mental health equity, and why is engaging in a discussion around mental health equity important?
A: When we think about equitable access to care and mental health equity at the AAKOMA Project, one of the things that we say is that every child, inclusive of all aspects of identity, race, culture, immigration status, if they are LGBTQ, if they have a disability, deserves the opportunity to live authentically and unapologetically as the best version of themselves. Equitable health care and equity in mental health are about understanding all those nuances, all the intersectionality, and ensuring that the care we provide allows for all that intersectionality, authenticity, and realism to show up in care. - Dr. Alliree M. Breland-Noble, founder, AAKOMA

Q: If we increase the raw number of licensed mental health professionals, do you think it will address this issue of cultural fit meaningfully?
A: Let us think about whom to train. We will not solve the mental health crisis in the country with M.D.s, Ph.Ds, or even, quite frankly, more masters. It is not scalable… You do not have to train for six, seven years… People who do some entry-level stuff with folks who are also trained to identify when people need more. Then they kick them up to a slightly higher level of care… maybe your master’s level trained person. - Keith D. Renshaw, Ph.D. Department Chair and Professor of Psychology, College of Humanities and Social Studies, George Mason University

Ides of Bark Brings Out the Dogs

Mount Vernon pets ruled at this fourth annual event.

By Mike Salmon
The Connection

Although there haven’t been any bomb incidents in the southern part of Fairfax County recently, the police do have Paisley, a trained bomb sniffing dog who was busy sniffing everything at the fourth annual Ides of Bark event in Mount Vernon.

Paisley hangs out with Detective Brian Storm who was happy with the lack of calls. “I have yet to use her on an active call,” Storm said, but notes that bombs are just one of the things she can sniff out. “They can help look for shell casings,” he added.

The Ides event at Grist Mill park brought out all sorts of dogs to enjoy the sunshine and the brisk March weather. This is an event Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) organized and he had to cancel it the last two years because of the pandemic, but he liked the look of all the smiling dog owners this year. Paws out, four rounds and break out of the covid funk,” he said.

Storck estimated there were a couple of hundred dogs each year. “People love it,” added his Chief of Staff Christine Morin.

Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck with Reasa Currier, the new Director of the Fairfax County Animal Shelters, and her daughter Evelyn.

A newcomer to the scene was Reasa Currier who recently took over as Director of Fairfax County Animal Shelters. She noted the animal projects in the county including the new shelter that’s being built in Lorton that’s scheduled to open in the summer of 2023. “It’s exciting,” Currier said.

Ides of Bark was set up at the Grist Mill Park where there’s also a dog park. The Fairfax County Police Department had about eight officers on duty, directing traffic and parking. The Humane Society was there along with a Doberman Pinscher Rescue Group, McGruff the Crime Dog and others handing out dog treats to all the participants.

One nearby resident had a Greyhound rescue dog from one of the few dog race tracks left in the country. “Blue,” was the dog’s name and his fur had a blue brindle pattern. “He retired from West Virginia,” his owner said.

Dog racing has been on the decline due to concerns about the treatment of the racing dogs. According to the Humane Society, racing greyhounds endure lives of confine-

Jackson Dumais with his dog Milo.

Photos by Mike Salmon/The Connection
Americans Show Love for Ukraine

The Wise family effort with Agape Church may not be at the level of the $35 million contribution by celebrity couple Mila Kunis (born in Ukraine) and Ashton Kutcher, which prompted a thank you call from Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky.

However every contribution, regardless of the size, matters to the Ukrainian families they touch when their homes, possessions, and livelihoods, even the very certainty of their futures, have been taken from so many. Wise tells donors, “Donations keep on growing and we are beyond excited to be doing good things on your behalf. Thank you all for your generosity and your trust to help support the people of Ukraine.”

Wise explained she’s helping because of the enormity of the need right now. “Major charities are meeting immediate needs and helping right now, and their missions will also serve to help during the years and years of getting the country back to some semblance of order.” She worries that too many will forget how very very long it takes to recover from losses as large as these.

Hallway sorting and storage for relief items at Agape Church in Germany soon became too small an area to accommodate donated items.

A colorful array of basic clothing items await needy Ukrainians who were forced to leave their homes with only a few possessions.
Second Saturday Art Walk at Workhouse Arts Center April 9

Workhouse Arts Center Second Saturday Art Walk April 2022, 5 - 9 p.m. 9518 Workhouse Way Lorton, VA 22079

Come out and visit the Workhouse Monthly Featured Artists. The Workhouse Arts Center has over 60 resident visual artists throughout its artist buildings as well as the Arches Gallery. Each month, the Workhouse Arts Center features individual artists or a group of artists from each building to exhibit a current body of work. During our Second Saturday Art Walk, they are onsite to speak about their work. All campus studio buildings will be open from 6pm - 9pm and the artists there will be available to chat about their works and processes. Galleries, gift shop and Lucy Burns Museum are open extended hours. https://www.workhousearts.org/

No More Glass in Curbside Recycling

Beginning this Friday, April 1, residents receiving Fairfax City recycling services may no longer place glass in their curbside recycling. Residents should reuse glass containers or bring them to one of the Purple Can Club glass-only, drop-off containers. One is the purple dumpster on Judicial Drive, across from the Fairfax City Post Office, and others are at the Fairfax County Government Center and the I-66 Transfer Station on West Ox Road. Otherwise, residents may dispose of glass in their trash.

Donate Coats, Blankets, Hats for Ukrainian Refugees

Elected leaders from Northern Virginia have launched an aid program to collect coats, blankets, heavy socks and gloves for the more than 3 million refugees who’ve had to flee from their homes in Ukraine. Residents and businesses may drop off donations until April 15 at Fairfax City Hall, 10455 Armstrong St, in Fairfax.
Inmate Dies at Fairfax County Adult Detention Center

Detectives from Fairfax County Police Major Crimes Bureau are investigating the in-custody death of 65-year-old inmate George Redmond. The investigation originated on March 28, 2022 at approximately 9:20 a.m., a Sheriff’s deputy found Redmond unresponsive in his single cell in the Adult Detention Center (ADC). The deputy rendered aid until relieved by another ADC medical personnel, according to the Sheriff’s Office. Rescue arrived, continuing lifesaving measures and transported Redmond to the hospital, where he was pronounced deceased. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will conduct an autopsy, but preliminarily, there are no signs of foul play, according to police.

Redmond had been in the custody of the Fairfax County Sheriff’s Office and in the Adult Detention Center (ADC) since March 25. On that date, he was originally arrested by Alexandria City Police, FPD said. Custody was transferred to FCPD officers, and Redmond was taken to the Fairfax County ADC.

He was arrested for a failure to appear warrant related to an original charge of trespassing and destruction of property. Our detectives are coordinating with the Alexandria Police and Fairfax County Sheriff’s Office to gather the facts and circumstances surrounding this death.

Fairfax County Sheriff’s Office policy dictates that an in-custody death must be investigated by the Fairfax County Police Department. The investigation is underway.

2nd In-Custody Death Being Investigated

Detectives from Major Crimes Bureau are also investigating a second in-custody death of Kyung Pil Chang. Officers responded at 4:49 p.m. today to the Adult Detention Center (ADC) for an inmate found unresponsive in his single cell. Fire and Rescue personnel responded and pronounced the inmate deceased. This morning, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner conducted an autopsy. Preliminarily, there are no signs of foul play.

On March 29, 2022, at approximately 4:25 p.m., a Sheriff’s deputy found the inmate unresponsive in his quarantine housing cell in the Detention Center. Medical staff and other deputies responded to the scene and rendered aid. Resuscitation was unsuccessful and life-saving efforts were terminated. The City of Fairfax Fire and Rescue pronounced the inmate deceased at 4:49 p.m.

Chang was charged on March 25 with three counts of aggravated sexual battery, object sexual penetration, and practicing as an unlicensed psychologist. He was booked into custody of the Fairfax County Sheriff’s Office and incarcerated at the ADC since his arrest. Detectives are coordinating with the Fairfax County Sheriff’s Office to gather the facts and circumstances surrounding this death.

By policy, FCPD investigates all Fairfax County Sheriff’s Office in-custody deaths.

To Advertise In This Paper, Call Monday 11:00 Am 703-778-9411

City of Fairfax, Virginia

Public Notice

Disposal of Private Property Taken Into Possession

Pursuant to Section 50-33, 50-35 and 50-36 of the Code of the City of Fairfax, the City of Fairfax Police Department will be disposing of the below listed unclaimed property, by public auction conducted by an independent auction service, converted to department use or generally disposed of. Any person who feels they have a legal claim, with reasonable proof of ownership, should contact Property Officer Steven Baig of the City of Fairfax Police Department at 703-385-7629 between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday - Thursday. Deadline for claims will be on April 23, 2022.

Auctioned on the first and third Saturday of the month in October.

CASE # ITEM SERIAL #
2013-9198 Fugi Bike *******0600
2018-1013 Tiffany Bike *******0016
2018-4620 Genesis Bike *******0625
2021-5514 Huffy Bike *******0049
2018-5663 BCA Bike *******4WM4
2017-10450 Ambush Bike Unknown
2018-8048 Avalon Bike *******6925
2018-6383 Mongoose Bike Unknown
2018-8554 Hard Rock Bike *******3529
2018-9337 Roadmaster Bike *******5950
2018-10222 Kent Bike Unknown
2018-13116 Roadmaster Bike Unknown
2018-15233 Mongoose Bike *******2002
2018-15870 Roadmaster Bike *******0615
2018-16055 Next Bike *******1145
2017-17887 Pacific Bike Unknown
2017-19484 Next Bike Unknown
2017-3450 Diamondback Bike Unknown
2019-851 Genesis Bike *******2WM4
2019-1923 Skip Scooter *******3334
2018-4026 Ambush Bike *******0183
2019-5520 Novara Bike *******4410
2019-6768 Avio Bike *******1968
2017-6768 Diamondback Bike *******0677
2018-8451 Genesis Bike *******4WM4
2019-11703 Kent Bike Unknown
2019-12579 Giant Bike Unknown
2017-11661 Kent Bike *******816R
2017-14851 Magna Bike *******7857
2017-15487 Mongoose Bike Unknown
2017-16016 Power Climber Bike Unknown
2019-18200 Red Bike *******0101
2017-19421 Trek Bike *******1163
2019-7947 BCA Bike *******9954
2019-11387 Grand Prix Bike *******4475
2019-16401 Hard Rock Bike *******4909
2019-12968 Girl’s Bike *******4183
2018-18038 Huffy Bike *******2185
2019-18264 Purple Bike *******2311
2018-19397 Fugi Bike Unknown
2018-20011 Purple Scooter *******0367
2019-18048 Green Scooter *******1986
2019-19744 Mongoose Bike *******7677
2018-20437 Trek Bike *******0698
2018-8551 Next Bike *******9946
2019-10616 Schwinn Bike Unknown
2018-15652 Mongoose Bike *******1060
2019-13726 Roadmaster Bike *******8289
2018-14472 Trek Bike Unknown
2021-379 Roadmaster Bike *******8328
2020-434 Hyper Bike *******0832
2021-434 Hyper Bike *******0890
2021-5551 Magna Bike *******2020
2018-8978 Guardian Bike Unknown
2021-8584 Ambush Bike *******6470
2019-111746 Power Climber Bike *******9036
2019-13471 Diamondback Bike Unknown
2009-8898 Silver Necklace N/A
2009-8898 Men’s Invicta Watch N/A
2009-8898 Diamond Earrings N/A
2009-8898 Men’s Diamond Ring N/A
2009-8898 Watch (Unknown Brand) N/A
2009-8898 Diamond Bracelet N/A
2009-8898 Silver Ring N/A
2009-8898 Earrings N/A

Previous issues of this publication are available at http://connectionnewspapers.com/PDF

Burke / Fairfax / Fairfax Station / Clifton / Lorton / Springfield • March 31 • April 5, 2022 • 13

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com
Thursday, April 7
- Mason Arts at Home – Visual Voices Lectures with Mario Rossero. 7:30 p.m. In-person event. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Mario Rossero is the Executive Director of the National Association for the Arts of America (NAA), the leading professional membership organization that champions visual arts directors, design, and media arts education. He is an experienced art educator with roles as a museum educator, classroom art teacher, and adjunct professor and has held a number of supervision/administration roles in Pittsburgh and Chicago school systems. As Director of Arts for Chicago Public Schools, Mario spearheaded the first strategic arts education plan for the city aimed at increasing access and equity to arts education for all students. Prior to his current role, he was the Senior Vice President of Education at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.

Friday, April 8
- Jazz Violin Performance. 8-10 p.m. At George Mason University Drive, Fairfax. Sought after performer Natalya Merekshu brings her beautiful classical tone to the world of hot jazz and swing! Join in an evening of music in the heart of historic Fairfax City. Free. Visit the website: https://www.fairfaxva.gov/government/parks-recreation/cultural-arts

Saturday, April 9
- Everybody at GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. The University Chorale presents a series of Broadway classics for their 2022 spring showcase. The concert will feature a number of feature performances. Information on the nomination process for the spring showcase is available on the website: workhousearts.org

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Sunday, April 10
- Tabletop (TTRAK) model train events at Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. The Museum is located at 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Admission: Museum members and seniors 55+ free; ages 12-17; $3; ages 13 and older: $6. Seniors and military, active and retired. $4. www.fairfax-station.org or visit www.fairfax-station.org

SUNDAY, APRIL 10
- 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. For more information about the program and to register, please contact the Museum at 703-945-7483.

WASHINGTON, DC - The Museum's location at 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Admission: Museum members and seniors 55+ free; ages 12-17; $3; ages 13 and older: $6. Seniors and military, active and retired. $4. www.fairfax-station.org or visit www.fairfax-station.org

MARCH 31-APRIL 6
- Ongoing at GMU Center for the Arts, Lorton. At Workhouse Arts Center Second Saturday Art Walk April 2022, 6 - 9 p.m. To showcase the works of individual artists or a group of artists from each building to exhibit a current, upcoming or future collection. During the Second Saturday Art Walk, artists are onsite to speak about their work. All campus studio buildings will be open from 6 pm - 9 pm and the artists there will be available to chat about their works and processes. Galleries, gift shop and Library Bookshop will be open extended hours. https://workhousearts.org/

MARCH 31-APRIL 6
- 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. For more information about the program and to register, please contact the Museum at 703-945-7483.

SUNDAY, APRIL 3
- 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. For more information about the program and to register, please contact the Museum at 703-945-7483.

VIRGINIA – Rockville Police in Montgomery County are asking residents to take extra precautions when going about their daily activities as they investigate the possibility of several package thefts that have occurred near the intersection of Old Lee Highway and Old Dominion Drive.

SUNDAY, APRIL 3
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As we learn to live with the COVID-19 virus, we need to be prepared for the emergence of new variants, the county report said. Keeping up to date on vaccinations is the single most effective way to protect yourself since immunity gained from natural infection or vaccination is known to wane over time.

Current CDC guidance recommends a booster shot at least five months after completing the primary mRNA series, or at least two months after receiving a J&J vaccine. While the vast majority of Fairfax residents have received at least one dose of vaccine, only 52 percent of those eligible for boosters are up to date on their vaccinations.

Although the COVID-19 Community Level for the Fairfax Health District remains low, it is anticipated that BA.2 will likely continue to increase. The Health Department recommends that individuals who are concerned or who are at risk of more severe illness continue to choose a mask, avoid crowded indoor locations and use other layered mitigation measures to reduce their risk. In settings where masks are worn primarily for personal protection rather than source control (i.e., capturing droplets when we breathe, talk and cough to protect others), wearing a well-fitting mask that filters out particles more effectively is important. This includes N95 respirators, and KN-95, and KF-94 masks. Free N95 respirators are available at many sites in the community. https://fairfaxcountymd.gov/covid-masking.

If you experienced childhood abuse it was not your fault. Childhood abuse is preventable and children can recover. There are ways you can help stop child maltreatment if you suspect or know that a child is being abused or neglected. If you or someone else is in immediate and serious danger, you should call 911.

Child Abuse Prevention Month
FROM PAGE 6
Protective Factor 6: Social and emotional competence of children
Adverse childhood experiences are traumatic events that occur before a child reaches the age of 18. Adverse childhood experiences include all types of abuse and neglect, such as parental substance use, incarceration, and domestic violence. A landmark study in the 1990s found a significant relationship between the number of adverse childhood experiences a person experienced and a variety of negative outcomes in adulthood, including poor physical and mental health, substance use, and risky behaviors. The more adverse childhood experiences a person experiences, the greater the risk for these outcomes.

For more information and resources on protective factors, adverse childhood experiences, and supporting family resiliency, please visit childcare.gov and scanva.org.