

Great Falls CONNECTION

Bluebell Philanthropy

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Stephanie Anderson, chair of the Women's Club of Great Falls Philanthropy Bluebells Tour (left), and June Kelly, philanthropy vice president, (carefully) stand amid the bluebells.

Kittens and Chickens Helping Sea Turtles

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Chocolate Festival!

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Students Protest Selection of School Chief

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Bioblitz Coming To Observatory Park

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APRIL 20-26, 2022

ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Stephanie Anderson, chair of the Women's Club of Great Falls Philanthropy Bluebells Tour (left), and June Kelly, philanthropy vice president, carefully stand amid the bluebells.

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS



Hugh Morrow III, president of the nonprofit Friends of Riverbend Park, Inc. (FORB), with a selection of the 400-500 pots of bluebells for sale. Proceeds support the park's programs.

Philanthropy Group of Women's Club Holds Benefit Tour

Sneak peek of Riverbend Park's bluebells, and bald eagles benefit FORB, Inc.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On April 6, 25 ticket holders, including children, were treated to early views of Riverbend Park's bluebells and bald eagles. The Great Falls Women's Club (GFWC) Philanthropy Group organized the tours led by naturalists. According to June Kelly, vice president of philanthropy for GFWC, funds from ticket sales and donations through their website will benefit the nonprofit organization Friends of Riverbend, Inc. (FORB).

Riverbend is tucked away in a remote location at 8700 Potomac Hill St., Great Falls. FORB supports the Park Authority's many programs at the park through activities and volunteerism. Funds from the GFWC philanthropy group will help support FORB's efforts in impacting children's scholarships programs, scout projects, and other needs.

The county park encompasses about 400 acres of forest, meadows, and ponds along the Potomac River. Virginia Bluebells have spread across the river's floodplains at Riverbend Park. Bluebells grow in low clumps, spreading by rhizomes and self-seeding. They have dark blue trumpet-shaped flowers nodding downward to meet the plant's dark green foliage.

"Everybody loves to see the bluebells. They are the Virginia State Flower," said Hugh Morrow III, president of FORB. He sat at a table outside the park's visitors center before Wednesday's tours, preparing to sell hundreds of potted bluebells purchased from a local nursery. Sale proceeds will also benefit FORB. Contributions to FORB are always welcome at www.forb.wildapricot.org.



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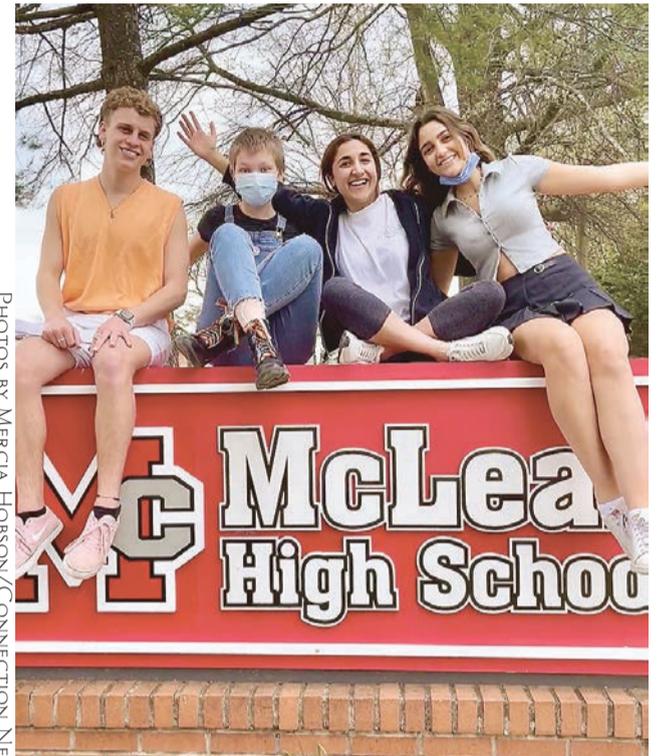
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Student protest over the superintendent selection process at McLean High School last week.



Students stages walk out protests at McLean, Westfield and Mount Vernon High Schools, among others.



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Protestors at McLean High School (from left): Atticus Gore, Sierra Balleisen, Ava Farivar, and Layla Bizri, climb up on the school sign after demonstrating to raise awareness, advocate for their rights, and for students to have a voice in the selection of the new FCPS superintendent.

No Stopping School Board Naming New Division Superintendent

Student protests, petition and NAACP objections fail to derail the endgame.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On April 14, 250 high school students in Fairfax County staged walkouts and protests at multiple schools, including Westfield, McLean, Oakton, and Mount Vernon high schools

organized by the Pride Liberation Project. It is a student-led coalition of queer and allied FCPS students who advocate for the rights of LGBTQIA students.

The Fairfax County School Board was scheduled to vote that evening naming Michelle Reid, Ed.D., as Fairfax County Public Schools' next superintendent. Reid

is currently the superintendent of the Northshore School District in Washington state.

Sierra Balleisen, a McLean High School student protestor, said, "I'm here as a neurodivergent student trying to advocate for our rights and allow the students to have a voice in the new superintendent ... There should be nothing about us

without us."

According to Pride Liberation Projects' Student Statement Supporting NAACP Letter Regarding Superintendent Search, outreach to the community during the search for new superintendents was limited to fifteen days in January. The only outreach to students was an 11-student panel, chosen

through a process not revealed to the general student body. "Though these 11 students are likely immensely qualified, they nonetheless cannot represent the views of a 180,000+ student body that attends 198 schools and centers, speaks 200+ languages, and belongs to a diverse range of socio-
SEE STUDENT PROTEST, PAGE 4

Fairfax School Board's Frustration Shows

Does the process diminish new superintendent's appointment?

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

At its regular meeting on April 14, the Fairfax County School Board voted 9 to 3 to appoint Michelle Reid, Ed.D. as division superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools, effective July 1, 2022, and ending June 30, 2026, replacing Superintendent Scott Brabrand, who is stepping down. The appointment was accompanied by concern and angst by

school board members. Laura Jane Cohen (Springfield) described the board as "a collective group of 12 very different people."

Rachna Sizemore Heizer (Vice Chair and Member-at-Large) said that Reid performed consistently at the top of the candidates for superintendent of FCPS, impressing them with her "thoughtful, brilliant, and insightful analysis, her work around STEM, and strong academics for all students, and an understanding that our focus must also be on the whole child." Sizemore Heizer said she was

also impressed with Reid's work on racial and educational justice and inclusion, demonstrating support for and deep understanding of LGBTQIA students, students of color, students from various re-



Rachna Sizemore Heizer (Vice Chair and Member-at-Large)

ligious backgrounds, English language learner students, immigrants, students with disabilities, and those with different gender identity. "She was the only one to talk about ableism and demonstrate understanding of the concepts of neurodiversity."

Karen Keys-Gamarra (Member-at-Large) made a motion to delay the vote, seconded by Dr. Ricardy Anderson (Mason District). Keys-Gamarra addressed
SEE FAIRFAX SCHOOL, PAGE 6

Student Protests, Petition and NAACP Objections Fail to Derail the Endgame



Jaya Nachnani, Mount Vernon High School student, was an organizer of the protest.

FROM PAGE 3

economic backgrounds,” said PLP’s statement.

The student statement referenced Reid’s record on closing achievement gaps and protecting students’ free speech, describing it as “lackluster.” “Moreover, Northshore School District’s history on protecting neurodivergent and disabled students is poor. For example, community members raised concerns of the restraint and seclusion of disabled students.”

“The need to hear our voices is more important than ever given the various concerns that have emerged over Dr. Reid’s approach to student journalism, neurodivergent students, and students of color,” protest organizer and Westfield student Aaryan Rawal said.

Reid and Dr. Cheryl Logan, the superintendent of Omaha Public Schools, had been the two finalists for the FCPS superintendent position. A select community panel met with the two candidates on March 28 and 29.

According to the April 9 Fairfax County NAACP release, the panel was made up of “individual members of selected School Board Advisory Committees; a few chosen FCPS elementary, middle, and high school principals; five members from the Fairfax County Council of PTAs (FCCPTA) to represent the five FCPS geographic regions; a representative from Northern Virginia Community College; a representative of the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations (whose mission is to protect Homeowners Association interests); and the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce.”

The panel did not include representatives from the Fairfax NAACP or the Pride Liberation Project.

The Fairfax NAACP said that it had been “inundated with messages from whistleblowers (serving on the panel) sharing names and data points as well as overall impressions.”

The Fairfax NAACP said that many panelists were “shocked” that a superintendent (Reid) with only a \$400 million budget vs. a \$2.7 billion FCPS budget, 2,100 employees vs. 25,000 FCPS employees, and achievement gaps despite relatively high wealth and low poverty could have ended up as one of FCPS’s final two candidates.

The Fairfax NAACP reached out to school board members. While they received responses from a few, the members’ reactions were not about the data or comparative characteristics of the divisions but rather to express their dismay that whistleblowers reached out to Fairfax NAACP and Fairfax NAACP acted on their behalf.

“With so much at stake, we have determined to share this information with the public,” the Fairfax NAACP said.

The Omaha World-Herald reported on April 15 that Dr. Cheryl Logan informed the Omaha Public School board a week before that she had taken her name out of the FCPS superintendent search. Logan’s announcement and the NAACP’s release occurred on the same day. With Logan’s withdrawal, Reid was now the leading candidate to succeed Dr. Scott Brabrand, the current FCPS Superintendent.

In the 72 hours leading up to the protests and the school board’s pending confirmation vote for Reid, the Pride Liberation Project circulated amongst FCPS high school students its petition addressed to FCPS school board members and



Student protestors at Westfield High School.

GR Consulting. “FCPS cannot select a new Superintendent without thoroughly reaching out to students and addressing concerns,” the student group said.

In their petition, PLP requested that “FCPS conduct a public audit of the Superintendent search process and publicly release clear indications that the Superintendent was chosen for demonstrating success in key areas, including community outreach, closing achievement and opportunity gaps, mental health access for all students, and equitable school experiences for vulnerable student populations, such as neurodivergent, people of color, LGBTQIA+, and English language learner students.”

Westfield student Aaryan Rawal reported that over 500 students signed the petition requesting that GR Consulting and the school board do more to reach out to students during the final stages of the superintendent search. PLP proposed holding student town hall meetings during high school free (advisory) time to allow students to voice concerns and provide board members with “important context.”

Jaya Nachnani was the primary organizer of the Mount Vernon High School protest. On April 14, she tweeted that they had two protest goals: “to get more time to investigate the allegations made against Reid and raise concerns regarding the difference in demographics between the counties (FCPS and Northshore school districts).”

FCPS has an enrollment nearly



Student protestors at McLean High School



Student protest at Mount Vernon High School.



On Saturday, April 30 join Tamara Sheiffer, a Fairfax County Parks nature interpreter, on a nature walk.

Bioblitz At Observatory Park On Saturday, April 30

For family fun and nature awareness in our backyard.

The walk will coincide with City Nature Challenge, a worldwide challenge for people to explore nature and identify plants and animals. <https://citynaturechallengedc.org/> Cities around the world compete for the greatest number of participants, greatest number of species observed, and greatest number of observations. Observations in Fairfax County will help the Washington, D.C. metro area compete against other cities. Participants use iNaturalist, a free app, to take pictures of plants and animals with their phone. The app suggests an identification of the species, and other users confirm or correct the identifications. City Nature Challenge is a fun way to participate in citizen science and begin to learn to identify plant and animal species.

Tamara Sheiffer will demonstrate how to use the iNaturalist app to make observations, for anyone who wants to participate in the City Nature Challenge. Participants may still join the nature walk even without using the app or participating in the challenge. Children will have the opportunity to learn about plants and animals through games. All participants will learn easy tips for protecting nature at home.

WHAT: Great Falls Nature Walk as part of the City Nature Challenge
WHERE: Turner Farm Park Observatory, 925 Springvale Rd, Great Falls, VA 22066
WHEN: Saturday, April 30th from 10 - 11:30 am
PARKING: on site and restroom available

On Saturday, April 30 join Tamara Sheiffer, a Fairfax County Parks nature interpreter, on a nature walk at Turner Farm Observatory Park. Discover the plants and animals that live around you. This family-friendly event is hosted by the Great Falls Citizens Association and the Fairfax County Park Authority. The event is a community outreach program called Watch the Green Grow. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/nature-history/watch-green-grow> There will be children's activities and a guided nature walk. Come join the fun.

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Sara O'Connor

Fairfax School Board's Frustration Shows

FROM PAGE 3

Reid, who sat in the audience, saying that what she was about to say had little to do with Reid but with the process. "As many people know, our community has expressed some outrage. I can't blame them," Keys-Gamarra said. The people who reached out were community members, according to Keys-Gamarra. "It is our job to hear them. For a public school system, our school system belongs to the public. So, my objection today has to do with the fact that we seem to be rushing this decision ... This is their community, and they care. It's our responsibility to listen and not to jam this vote through. In my opinion, it is sending them a message that they don't matter."



Karen Keys-Gamarra
(Member-at-Large)

Dr. Ricardy Anderson (Mason District) concurred, saying that the community bombarded them with emails and phone calls. "They have asked to be heard. I strongly believe that we should afford ourselves the gift of time to reach out to those who have expressed their concerns and to listen more closely before finalizing our decision."



Dr. Ricardy Anderson
(Mason District)

Laura Jane Cohen (Springfield) said she respected how Keys-Gamarra and Anderson felt and would not pretend to say that she understood their hurt. She said the system was imperfect, run by human beings. "There's not a person up here who does not understand how high the stakes are ... I'm proud of who we chose, and I trust you to get us to where we need to be. I hope that we're all going to do our best to work together and figure out how in the heck we got here."



Laura Jane Cohen
(Springfield)

Elaine Tholen (Dranesville) said she struggled with this as the board worked for months and held public sessions. "We tried to hear from the public. I am really hurt people feel disenfranchised ... All I can say is I worked in good faith. I have read resumes. I have interviewed people over and over and over. What we put these candidates through

was so intense. We got to a point where we had two incredible, incredible people. As we slowly went through the interview process, the decision was tough ... We voted as the board, and Dr. Michelle Reid came out on top, fair and square."



Elaine Tholen
(Dranesville)

Megan McLaughlin (Braddock) expressed empathy for her colleagues and the public, who felt hurt and concerned about the process. She reaffirmed that the board was transparent in publishing the calendar and the process. It would be a confidential search because the board was trying to attract the best candidate, and they didn't necessarily want to leave their districts. She said that the recruiting company had found strong candidates, and she wanted to celebrate the board's incredible finalist. "I don't believe that we are discounting the people who we were elected to represent. I don't feel that we've rushed this process or had a lack of transparency. Our calendar, our timeline, our entire process was all published ... I believe all 12 of us care deeply, and we recognize that, sadly, there are hurt members in our community."



Megan McLaughlin
(Braddock)

Tamara Derenak Kaufax (Lee) welcomed Reid as the board's top candidate. "We knew that when we extended the offer to you on April 2, we were getting a visionary educator who was known both regionally and nationally for your outstanding instructional leadership." Kaufax said that FCPS is not without its challenges, but Reid had described herself as a "visionary, as an incurable optimist."



Tamara Derenak Kaufax
(Lee)

"You will need that here," Kaufax said. "I look forward to working with you to build community trust and to bring our community together."

Melanie K. Meren (Hunter Mill) described Reid as a "thought leader," saying it is an accomplishment few people can obtain because it demands discipline of curiosity, investigation of data, and the calculated

risk of innovation. Meren said Dr. Reid demonstrated intimate knowledge of data about Fairfax, and she heard in her voice the eagerness to see and experience for herself that data as it comes to life through the county's students, staff, and communities. Meren appreciated how Reid understood the value of play. "I believe that Dr. Reid will lead Fairfax County into fulfilling the birthright that is public education in America."



Melanie K. Meren
(Hunter Mill)

Karen Corbett Sanders (Mount Vernon) said that this had been a difficult decision for this whole board. "It impacts everything FCPS does as a system and each student in ways that the school board knows and ways that they do not yet know. ... As stewards of a \$3.3 billion entity, we know that FCPS is both a complex business entity and an academic center of excellence," Sanders said. She knew the application process had been extensive, yet FCPS's needs were vast and differed from those of the district Reid currently serves as superintendent. "My decision to vote no tonight is a difficult one, and it is based on my concerns that center around the ability to scale up from a small school system ... to a system the size of Fairfax County with 180,000 students, (and) the absence of experience in a large, diverse district."



Karen Corbett Sanders
(Mount Vernon)

Karl Frisch (Providence) said he was thrilled when the school system received dozens of "amazing, qualified, and impressive applicants." "Through round after round of interviews, with tough, probing questions, I was always impressed with Dr. Reid's answers, not only for the clarity and detail with which she described her work as superintendent, but with her insights about Fairfax County Public Schools," Frisch said. According to Frisch, Dr. Reid "routinely spoke unprompted about the ways she addressed the equity needs of her student body: LGBTQ students, Muslim students, students of color, English language learners, students with special needs, and more." Her commitment to eq-



Karl Frisch
(Providence)

uity was woven through her answers and accomplishments, he said.

Abrar Omeish (Member-at-Large) said, "Today, I am asking for a rare commodity in our public arena, and all I can offer you is good faith, hard work, thoughtful consideration, and a track record of sincerity, dedication, and advocacy for equity and inclusion. I'm not here to dismiss anyone's feelings nor discredit the multitude of perspectives, and insights community members have around how we experienced today." Omeish added that she agreed that there were concerns. She had her own reservations. But the reality was that "the work of democracy is always messy to bring 12 people behind one decision. I'm supporting Dr. Reid today for several exciting reasons, one of which is because she had the most holistic equity responses we've encountered."



Abrar Omeish
(Member-at-Large)

Stella Pekarsky (Chair, Sully) spoke directly to Reid. "Nothing is easy in Fairfax. But I am sorry, I am sorry because you deserve a much warmer, better welcome than we were able to give you tonight. And it is my opinion that none of this has to do with you. You are an exceptional educator-exceptional; and those who strive for excellence, never settle for anything else."



Stella Pekarsky
(Chair, Sully)

Pekarsky said she was honored to have Reid present, selected by the school board, as it begins writing the next chapter for Fairfax County Public Schools in partnership with the community.

"Dr. Michelle Reed exemplifies the critical characteristics of servant leadership in every way and is driven by a vision for public schools that is resolutely student-centered, a vision not for what education is today, but what it could be, what it must be for kids who will be the leaders of tomorrow."



Michelle Reid, incoming superintendent

Reid received her doctorate in Educational Leadership from the University of Washington, master's degree in educational administration from University of Washington, and her bachelor's degree in natural science and chemistry from the University of Puget Sound.

Student Protests, Petition And NAACP Objections Fail to Derail the Endgame

FROM PAGE 4

ten times larger than Northshore (20K v.180K students). According to a demographic and program comparison released by the Fairfax County NAACP on April 9, 2022, FCPS has five times the percentage of Black students, slightly more than twice the percentage of Hispanic students, more than twice the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced priced meals, and nearly three times the number of English Language Learners. The differences in actual numbers of students in each category are vast.

In one of its final attempts to be heard, Pride Liberation Project issued an April 14 release, stating: "Don't confirm Dr. Reid or any other candidate on Thursday, April 14 ... until students and community members are allowed to participate in the process through student town-halls in each of FCPS' regions during advisory periods, along with community panels open to any organization."

On the evening of April 14, student Aaryan Rawal said, as the Fairfax County School Board was preparing to vote on Reid's confirmation. that PLP sent its petition to school board members and GR Consulting that evening.

When asked what response they received, Rawal said that the only response from FCPS was a call from someone in the division's communications office who "pressured us not to criticize Dr. Reid until after tonight's meeting."

Following nearly two hours of discussion, the FCSB voted 9 to 3 naming Michelle Reid, Ed.D., as the next division superintendent of Fairfax County Public Schools, effective July 1, 2022, and ending June 30, 2026.

"Dr. Michelle Reid, incoming superintendent exemplifies the critical characteristics of servant leadership in every way and is driven by a vision for public schools that is resolutely student-centered, a vision not for what education is today, but what it could be, what it must be for kids who will be the leaders of tomorrow."

— Stella Pekarsky (Chair, Sully)

School Board members Melanie K. Meren, Elaine V. Tholen, Megan McLaughlin, Tamara D. Kaufax, Rachna S. Heizer - vice chair, Stella Pekarsky - chair, Laura Jane H. Cohen, Karl V. Frisch, and Abrar Omeish all voted in favor. Ricardy J. Anderson, Karen A. Keys-Gamarra, and Karen Corbett Sanders voted no.

Westfield student Aaryan Rawal followed up in a second email, "We are incredibly disappointed that the school board ignored the voices of student protestors, petitioners, and the countless others who were simply never given the needed information by our schools to participate in this process ... We will continue to organize and advocate for our community ... It's up to the county to acknowledge our voice. We sincerely hope Dr. Reid proves us wrong."

Fairfax County NAACP tweeted, "We are appalled that despite community outcry, the @fcpsnews SB has chosen to plow through a superintendent vote tonight. Revelations regarding Special Education practices make the Northshore candidate (Reid) even less suitable than we knew." The following day, Jaya Nachnani, a student protestor at Mount Vernon High School, tweeted, "Today we met with Dr. Reid and members of the school board. Here's what I have to say: this entire protest is not against Dr. Reid (but) rather FCPS. FCPS chose not to listen to the students and the teachers, and I'm highly disappointed."

According to NSD.org, Reid was unanimously chosen as superintendent by the Northshore School District Board of Directors in June 2016. Before Northshore, Reid was the superintendent of South Kitsap School District, her first position as superintendent. The South Kitsap school board unanimously approved Reid as superintendent in February 2013, reported the Kitsap Sun.

BULLETIN BOARD

FRIDAY/APRIL 22

5th Annual Scam Jam. 9-11:30 a.m. Virtual. AARP Virginia and Fairfax County's Silver Shield Task Force are working together to empower consumers to spot and avoid scams, and to provide support and guidance to victims and their families when fraud happens. For more information and to RSVP, visit aarp.org/FairfaxScamJam

FRIDAY/APRIL 22

McLean Art Society Meeting. 10 a.m. to noon. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Anna Katalina, President of the McLean Art Society will be the featured presenter at an on-site meeting of the McLean Art Society.

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

Ms. Katalina was born in St. Petersburg and after residing in the U.S. studied painting and drawing at the University of Alabama and the Corcoran College of Art and Design. She uses a classical painting approach involving monochromatic underpainting and layers of glazing. The glazing layers mix optically to reflect light and create luminosity and depth. Guests are welcome to join.

SUNDAY/APRIL 24

Hunger Conversation Project. 5-6:30 p.m. At Andrew Chapel United Methodist Church, 1301 Trap Road, Vienna. Conversation with Ramona Carroll from the Fairfax

County Department of Neighborhood/Community Services about hunger in Vienna and the surrounding community. Stay to pack care bags for those in need. Free. Visit the website: andrewchapelumc.org

TUESDAY/APRIL 26

Julie Lythcott-Haims. 7-9 p.m. At Temple Rodef Shalom, 2100 Westmoreland Street, Falls Church. NYT best-selling author Julie Lythcott-Haims presents "Throw Out the Checklisted Childhood: Tips and Strategies for Raising Successful Kids." Brought to the communi-

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Taste the specialties of area chocolatiers and enjoy fun for the whole family. Our youngest attendees can enjoy a children's game room!

The McLean Chocolate Festival is a fundraiser for McLean Rotary, with proceeds benefiting many schools and local organizations.

Visit the website at: www.mcleanchocolatefestival.com

CALENDAR

NOW THRU APRIL 28

A collection of paintings by Layla Gray and Coty Dickson entitled "The Four Seasons" is on display at the Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, VA 22066. The public can view this collection of favorite seasonal paintings in the library's large meeting room from now through Thursday, April 28, 2022 during regular library hours. Contact Coty Dickson at coty dickson@gmail.com for additional information.

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. Go to the Friends of Frying Pan Farm Park website for 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.

NOW THRU MAY 8

"The Mamalogues." Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 and 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons. In this satirical comedy, three friends share the joys, challenges, and anxieties of being middle class single Black mothers in predominantly white suburbs. The story celebrates motherhood and community while exploring racial profiling on the playground

and supporting your kid who is perpetually the Only Black Child (OBC). Follow their journey as they lean in and steer their children from pampers to college while navigating their own road toward retirement. Visit www.1ststage.org.

APRIL 22 TO MAY 7

"Death of a Salesman." Presented by Vienna Theatre Company. At 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. Show times are: 8 p.m.: Fridays and Saturdays: April 22, 23, 29, 30; May 6, 7, 2022; 2 p.m.: Sundays: May 1, May 8, 2022. Arthur Miller's 1949 Pulitzer Prize-winning drama about the tragic shortcomings of an American dreamer, is widely considered to be one of the greatest plays of the 20th century. Purchase tickets at viennatheatrecompany.com or webtrac, in person at the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St. SE during open hours, or before each performance if available. Visit www.viennatheatrecompany.org.

APRIL 22-24

ValeArts Show. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Old Vale Schoolhouse, 3124 Fox Mill Road, Oakton. The exhibit, Colorful Journeys, will be bursting in springtime colors at this historic venue. Admirers of all ages are welcome to view paintings in oil, watercolor, mixed media, encaustic, and acrylic to delight the eye and stir the senses. All paintings are for sale. Visit <https://www.valearts.com> for more information.

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

Clifton Lions Club Family Pancake Breakfast. 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. At Clifton Presbyterian Church, 12748 Richards Lane, Clifton. Cost is \$10 per adult; \$5 per child. Proceeds go to charity.

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

Earth Day McLean—Act Locally. 9 a.m.–noon. At McLean Community Center, McLean. Free admission for MCC district residents; registration is required. This drive-through, outdoor, environmental action event provides a convenient way for McLean residents to better the planet. Several local community businesses and organizations will provide four key facets of environmental health in the spirit of shredding, reusing, recycling and planting.

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

Parks and Sugarland Run Cleanup Day. 9 a.m. to noon. At Runnymede Park, 195 Herndon Parkway, Herndon. Join your fellow community members and help cleanup parks, Sugarland Run watershed, and stream locations. Meet at Runnymede Park for supplies and assignments, then work on your own to help care for one of the eleven parks or three trails in Herndon. They'll be picking up litter, removing non-native invasive plants, and otherwise refreshing our parks as we head into spring. Visit herndon-va.gov/recreation, or call 703-787-7300.

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

Roomful of Blues. 8 p.m. At Jammin' Java, 227 Maple Ave. E, Vienna. A Roomful Of Blues is filled with soaring blues, zydeco twists, late-night ballads, Latin-tinged funk and a touch of vintage, fifth-gear rock 'n' roll. Tickets are \$25-\$35. Website: www.jamminjava.com.

SATURDAY/APRIL 23

Doodle POP 4 p.m. At McLean Community Center, McLean. A mischievous duo starts to doodle... and ends up creating a whole imaginative world! They invite the audience along on their sea adventure with a tiny little turtle. What will happen as we follow their vivid drawings into this beautiful watery world, and will they return the turtle to the sea safely? Doodle POP is a touching and playful non-verbal show that uses live musicians to perform the accompanying score and sound effects. Created by BRUSH Theatre of South Korea. Visit: www.aldentheatre.org

APRIL 23-24

Yard Sale and Giveaway Day. Gate Post Estates is will be coupling a Giveaway Day with their annual yard sale. The yard sale will take place on Saturday, April 23, beginning at 8 a.m., and the Giveaway Day will be the following day, on Sunday, April 24, beginning at 10 a.m. For the Giveaway Day, residents will place any items they wish to donate to the community in front of their homes and mark them with a "Giveaway" or "Free" sign. Gate Post Estates is located off of Route 29, across from the Centreville Baptist Church.

APRIL 23-24

Spring Book Sale. At Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Dr., Centreville. Saturday, April 23 and Sunday, April 24, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Children's books, teen and adult fiction, classics, poetry & literature, nonfiction, DVDs, audio books and CDs. No scanners or other electronic price-checking allowed. Cash, check and credit cards accepted.

SUNDAY/APRIL 24

Vocal Quartet Concert. 4-5:30 p.m. At Church of the Holy Comforter, 543 Beulah Road, NE, Vienna. Concert by the vocal quartet Third Practice, featuring the Hermit Songs of Samuel Barber and other works from the Renaissance to the present day that express longing for both solitude and connection. Visit the website: <https://holyccomforter.com/music/>

SUNDAY/APRIL 24

10th Annual McLean Chocolate Festival. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At the McLean Community Center, McLean. Taste the specialties of area chocolatiers and enjoy fun for the whole family. The youngest attendees can enjoy a children's game room. The McLean Chocolate Festival is a fundraiser for the McLean Rotary, with proceeds benefiting many local organizations. Cost: \$2 admission. Visit: www.mcleanchocolatefestival.com.

SUNDAY/APRIL 24

Reduced Shakespeare Company's Hamlet Big Adventure. 3 and 7 p.m. At Reston Community Theater's CenterStage. The Reduced Shakespeare Company returns to Reston with the Washington, DC premiere of this hilarious (and completely fictional) prequel to Hamlet. Visit www.restoncommunitycenter.com.

SUNDAY/APRIL 24

Fairfax Veg Fest. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. In

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 9

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Public Hearings



Funding the Right Transportation Projects

You are invited to share comments on transportation projects that have been recommended for funding in the FY2023-2028 Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). Additionally, pursuant to §33.2-202, comments will be accepted for new projects valued in excess of \$25 million. The Commonwealth Transportation Board will take your comments into consideration as it develops the FY2023-2028 SYIP. The program allocates public funds to highway, road, bridge, rail, bicycle, pedestrian and public transportation projects. All federally eligible projects in the SYIP will be included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program to document how Virginia will obligate its federal funds.

Meeting materials will be available <https://www.ctb.virginia.gov/planning/springmeetings2022/default.asp> before April 25, 2022.

Public meetings begin at 4 p.m. in each of the locations except as noted below:
A formal comment period will be held at these meetings.

<p>Monday, April 25 Fredericksburg District James Monroe High School 2300 Washington Avenue Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401</p>	<p>Tuesday, April 26 Culpeper District Culpeper District Auditorium 1601 Orange Road Culpeper, Virginia 22701</p>	<p>Thursday, April 28 Richmond District Richmond District Auditorium 2430 Pine Forest Drive Colonial Heights, Virginia 23834</p>
<p>Monday, May 2 Staunton District Blue Ridge Community College Plecker Center 1 College Lane Weyers Cave, Virginia 24486</p>	<p>Tuesday, May 3 Lynchburg District Virginian Hotel, 712 Church Street Lynchburg, Virginia 24504</p>	<p>Wednesday, May 4 *Northern Virginia District Northern Virginia District Office Potomac Conference Room 4975 Alliance Drive Fairfax, Virginia 22030 <i>*meeting begins at 5:30 p.m.</i></p>
<p>Monday, May 9 Hampton Roads District Hampton Roads District Auditorium 7511 Burbage Drive, Suffolk, Virginia 23435</p>	<p>Wednesday, May 11 Bristol District Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center One Partnership Circle Abingdon, Virginia 24210</p>	<p>Thursday, May 12 Salem District Holiday Inn Valley View 3315 Ordway Drive NW Roanoke, Virginia 24017</p>

*The Northern Virginia District meeting will serve as the required joint public meeting with the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, the Virginia Railway Express, and the CTB per § 33.2-214.3 of the Code of Virginia.

You can submit comments by email or mail by May 23, 2022.

For roads and highways: Six-YearProgram@VDOT.Virginia.gov, or Infrastructure Investment Director, Virginia Department of Transportation 1401 East Broad St., Richmond, VA 23219.

For rail and public transportation: DRPTPR@drpt.virginia.gov, Public Information Office, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation 600 East Main Street, Suite 2102, Richmond VA, 23219.

The Commonwealth is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its services on the basis of race, color or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on these policies or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Compliance Officer at 804-786-2730 or the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's Title VI Compliance Officer at 804-786-4440 (TTY users call 711).

CALENDAR



Doodle POP will perform on Saturday, April 23 at the McLean Community Center in McLean.

FROM PAGE 8

the parking lot of the Northwest Federal Credit Union, 200 Spring St., Herndon. The fourth annual Fairfax Veg Fest will take place in Herndon with more than 80 exhibitors focused on healthy food, wellness programs, green products, and animal welfare. Attendees at this free event will hear a lineup of world-famous speakers including:

- T. Colin Campbell, PhD – best-selling author of *The China Study*, *Whole*, and *The Low Carb Fraud*; and star of the documentary *Forks Over Knives*

- Neal Barnard, MD -- President of the Physician's Committee for Responsible Medicine (PCRM), author of 18 books detailing the benefits of the plant-based diet

- Gene Baur -- expert on the abuses of industrialized factory farming, called "the conscience of the food movement" by *Time* magazine

- Jim Loomis, MD -- Director of the Barnard Medical Center and former team internist for the St. Louis Rams football team and the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team

- Gwyn Whittaker – CEO of the educational GreenFare Organic Café, and GreenFare Health and Wellness

- Baxter Montgomery, MD – Houston Cardiologist, Montgomery Heart and Wellness Director

- James Wilks – Director of the most widely viewed documentary in the world *The Game Changers*, and Mixed Marshall artist

- Courtland Milloy – Columnist at the *Washington Post* since 1975

- Brian Clement, PhD – Co-Director Hippocrates Institute and author

For more information about the event, and to apply to be a vendor or sponsor, go to <http://fairfaxvegfest.org/> or contact Gwyn Whittaker at gwyn@greenfare.org.

WEDNESDAY/APRIL 27

Sensory Awareness Day. 2:30-6 p.m. At the Old Firehouse in McLean. Challenge your senses at the Old Firehouse! This unique and fun event, supporting Autism Aware-

ness Month, will provide ALL who attend a sensory exploration (taste, smell, sound, sight and touch). This event is free and open to all.

THURSDAY/APRIL 28

Green Expo. 7 to 9 p.m. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. Green Expo Showcases Sustainable Ways of Living The Town of Vienna and the Conservation and Sustainability Commission are teaming up once again for this year's Green Expo at the Vienna Community Center. The annual event features nearly two dozen exhibitors offering information about topics including: composting, recycling, beekeeping, pollinators and native gardens, green landscaping, home energy efficiency, Solarize Vienna, ways to reduce plastic usage, citizen science, volunteer opportunities, sustainable businesses in Vienna, and much more. Attendees can enjoy a live raptor exhibit and ask questions of the Town's arborist. Email CSC@viennava.gov or call 703-255-6300.

SATURDAY/MAY 7

Celebrate Pilates Day. At RTR Pilates, 9849 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Register for one of three free trial reformer classes at RTRPilates.com/PilatesDay. Check out the studio, shop great retail, sip champagne and meet our community.

MAY 21-22

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

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McLean Chocolate Festival is Back

The 10th annual McLean Chocolate Festival, sponsored by the Rotary Club of McLean, is scheduled to take place on Sunday, April 24, 2022, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the McLean Community Center. This is the Club's signature fundraising event. Proceeds will benefit many needs domestically and overseas.

A major sponsor is Mars, Inc., a multinational, global company headquartered in McLean, and the world's leading manufacturer of chocolate, chewing gum, mints, and fruity confections.

Due to Covid-19, no Festival was held last year. However, in 2020 the Festival drew almost 3,000 visitors. A similar number is expected for this year. In addition to vendors of chocolates and chocolate-themed items, the Festival will also feature a children's game room, Colonial chocolate-making demonstration by American Heritage, and over a dozen exhibitors, raffles of chocolate items, and a Rotary information booth.

For additional information about this year's Festival, please see the Festival webpage at www.mclean-chocolatefestival.com. This webpage will be updated as needed.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 7

ty by co-hosts The Potomac School and the Safe Community Coalition. For more information and to register, visit the Safe Community Coalition website <https://mclean-sec.org>.

STARTING APRIL 19
Caregiver Support Group Meets. 10 to 11:30 a.m. Online. A Zoom support group for caregivers of family members with dementia is held the first and third Tuesday of each month using Zoom. Times are 10 to 11:30 a.m. A link will be sent to you. The group is sponsored by the Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia and is free. For info: Jack Tarr: jtarr5@verizon.net. Visit the website: <https://scnova.org/services/services-caregivers-support-group/>

SHEPHERD'S CENTER SPRING CLASSES

The Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia will hold Spring classes from April 21 to June 9, 2022. All Classes will be held virtually on Zoom and in person at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Registration: April 4-19, 2022. The Spring 2022 semester schedule includes 40-plus classes with a wide range of subjects -- from a Health and Wellness series to National and World Affairs.

The following classes are but a few of the classes to choose from:

- ❖ April 28 – "Sorting Fact from Fiction" – Larry Lipman, AARP
- ❖ May 5 – "Monarch Butterflies – Life Cycle and Migration" – Scott Schroth

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Kitten Farm

The first time I helped release sea turtle hatchlings into the Atlantic Ocean, I knew I had to protect all 7 species of endangered sea turtles. Luckily, I am a Jr. Scientist and Drone Engineer at the Kashmir World Foundation based in Great Falls. The mission of the foundation is to design and develop custom drones with computer vision or A.I. to protect endangered species worldwide. One of the projects I am involved with is MiSHELL, a custom drone that can detect and identify sea turtle tracks, nests, and poachers and then report back to the biologists in real-time. The project helps teach biologists how to build, program, and operate their drones, which can save time, money, and provide accurate data to biologists.

Now a 5th-grade homeschooler, I founded Kitten Farms to raise funds to help save more endangered sea turtles. My backyard chickens lay delicious colored eggs, which are fresh and healthy! I thought why not let animals help animals with the help of humans. I started selling eggs door-to-door and carrying my cat Cupid in a cat pack. Even though it was really nice to meet my neighbors, I wanted to expand my awareness campaign and raise



ANIMALS HELPING ANIMALS with the help of humans

FRESH EGGS

Hi, my name is Kashmir, I am a 5th grade homeschool student living in Great Falls. I am also a Jr. Scientist and Drone Engineer at Kashmir World Foundation.

In partnership with Katie's Coffee, my kittens are selling my backyard chickens' colored eggs to raise funds so we can help save endangered sea turtles. You can help too by buying fresh eggs or donating to the cause.



With Katie's Coffee House & The Old, Brogue We
SUPPORT LOCAL, IMPACT GLOBAL

more funds so I can help teach more Fly for Conservation workshops.

So, I reached out to Mr. Mike Kearney at Katie's Coffee House. Mr. Kearney has had a long history of helping the community in Great Falls. So together we launched our "Support Local & Impact Global" campaign. Through a partnership between Kittens Farms and Katie's Coffee, you can purchase fresh local eggs and help us raise the funds to protect sea turtle nests globally. Follow us on instagram @kittenfarms

— KASHMIR PADOLFI

Lane Closures on 495 This Weekend

The I-495 (Capital Beltway) general purpose lanes and 495 Express Lanes will have nightly lane closures Friday, April 22 and Saturday, April 23 to allow crews to set the new pedestrian bridge truss in place as part of the Tysons/Old Meadow Road Bike/Ped Improvements project, according to the Virginia Department of Transportation.

The lane closures will occur according to the following schedule, weather permitting:

Friday night, April 22: The three left southbound I-495 general purpose lanes (Outer Loop) between Route 123 and Route 7 will be closed from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m., with full stoppages of up to 20 minutes each occurring between midnight and 5 a.m. On the southbound 495 Express Lanes from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m., the right lane will be closed between the Jones Branch Connector (Scotts Crossing Road) and Route 123, and all lanes will be closed at Westpark Drive with traffic being detoured via the Westpark Drive off- and on-ramps.

Saturday night, April 23: The three left northbound I-495 general purpose lanes

(Inner Loop) between Route 7 and Route 123 will be closed from 10 p.m. to 8 a.m., with full stoppages of up to 20 minutes each occurring between midnight and 5 a.m. On the northbound 495 Express Lanes from 10 p.m. to 8 a.m., the right lane will be closed between Route 7 and Westpark Drive, with full stoppages of up to 20 minutes each occurring between midnight and 5 a.m.

This work is part of the Tysons/Old Meadow Road Bike/Pedestrian Improvements to enhance bicycle and pedestrian safety and connectivity in the Tysons area. The improvements include building a new bicycle and pedestrian bridge over I-495 along with a ten-foot-wide shared-use path from Tysons One Place and Fashion Boulevard to Old Meadow Road and Provincial Drive via the bridge. The bridge, as well as the path from the bridge to Provincial Drive, are scheduled for completion in late summer.

Visit the VDOT project page for more https://www.virginiadot.org/projects/northernvirginia/bike-ped_improvements.asp

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The Cancer Effect



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

From February 28th until April 9th, approximately 40 days – and nights, I had 19 medical commitments; among them being pre- and post-surgery/procedure, actual procedure and separate surgery, lab tests, infusions, covid tests, diagnostic scans, nuclear medicine; and telephone and video appointments. This was hardly a normal month. It was abnormal and not necessarily cancer related but most likely cancer affected.

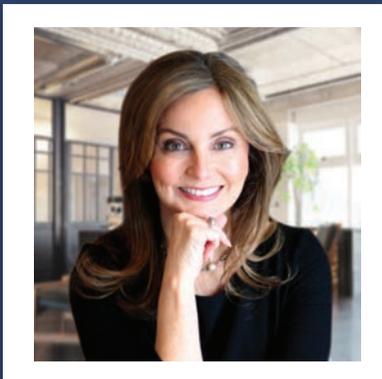
As you might imagine, being infused for nearly 10 years with extremely toxic substances will wear and tear the recipient's body, inside and out. Consider further that said recipient (yours truly) began this cancer business at age 54 and a half and over this 10-year period, I have not been getting any younger. And what you end up with is a perfect storm of an age and an immune-compromised patient succumbing to the cumulative side effects of cancer treatment, direct and indirect.

Nevertheless, having some kind of medical appointment every other day – on average, over 40 days is likely to make a Kenny a very dull boy. Not that I wasn't in control of my time or had to adhere to a schedule not of my own choosing; on the contrary, I was very much in control as I set my own appointments and times and places convenient to me. Still, the commitment of time and energy – and the anxiety associated with all these appointments, especially given my underlying medical diagnosis, was unpleasant and unsettling but thankfully very uncharacteristic of my previous cancer life, which was overall, unremarkable medically speaking, other than I didn't die within the "13 month to two years" prognosis I was initially given by my oncologist.

Typically, my cancer life has been very similar to my non-cancer life. There are things I must do, things I can't do, things I wish I could do and finally things that others require me to do. The only difference: the original stage IV non-small cell lung cancer "terminal" diagnosis I received in late February 2009. That kind of news puts a damper on any scenario, real or imagined. Moreover, a scenario which offered no guarantees other than the presumptive normal life expectancy I anticipated was no longer normal. In summary, your future is in doubt, your present is in crisis and your past hopes and dreams are fading fast unless you find a safety valve to help manage the emotional, physical, and spiritual upheaval dominating your life. Or the more likely you are to suffer at the hands of your disease and become another casualty of the cancer wars.

So, I had a lousy month. So what? I'm alive, aren't I? Thirteen-plus years later. Granted, fulfilling all these medical obligations of the last 40 days wouldn't have been my first choice of how I wanted to spend part of my retirement. However, given that I had no choice – after my diagnosis, to live my life as a cancer patient/survivor, as my friend Frank would say: "I'm in pretty good shape for the shape I'm in."

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



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