

CONNECTION

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History Alive for a Day

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PHOTO: BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



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New School Chief for Fairfax City

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Denise Benedetto (in costume) tells people about this quilt depicting the story of the Underground Railroad. Fairfax History Day was April 23 at Historic Blenheim in Fairfax City.

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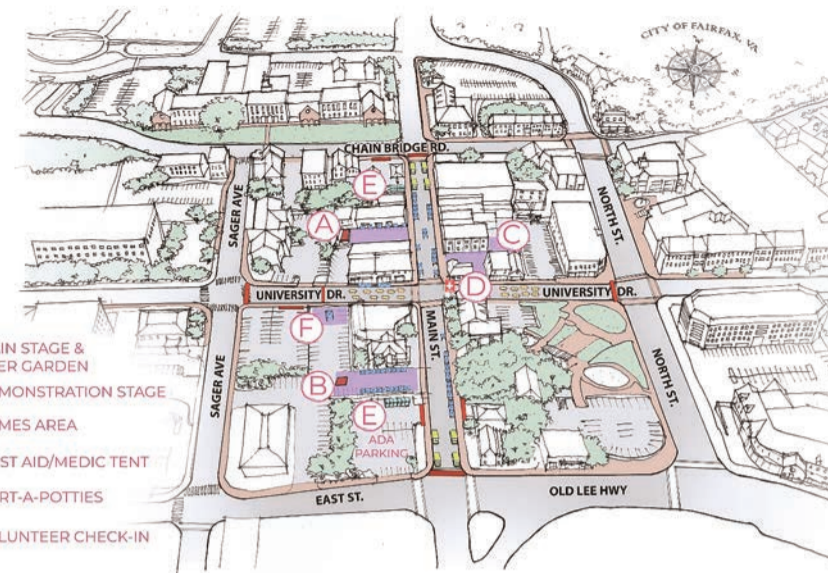
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COMMUNITY

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JINSON CHAN



The Choy Wun Lion Dance Troupe will return to wow the crowd.



Map of this year's Asian Festival on Main.

'Bring Families and Friends and Come Celebrate with Us'

Get ready for Fairfax City's second annual Asian Festival on Main.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Featuring colorful performances, delicious food and a full day of family fun, the 2nd annual Asian Festival on Main is set for Sunday, May 15, from noon-6 p.m., in Fairfax City. Rain date is Sunday, May 22.

This free, outdoor event will take place in the City's historic Old Town area, on Main Street between University Drive and Old Lee Highway/East Street. And the 2022 celebration has even more to offer than the previous one. It was also moved from July to May.

"We wanted to schedule this year's festival during Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month," said Festival Chair Jinson Chan. "And also, July is really hot! We had a huge success last year with more than 8,000 attendees, so this year we expanded the festival area to make it bigger and better."

The Old Town Fairfax Business Assn. is hosting the event, and the City is solidly in support. "Our Asian Festival celebrates the rich, cultural heritages of the many Asian and Pacific Islanders who live in the greater, Central Fairfax area," said Fairfax Mayor David Meyer. "Our community is strongest when all the unique and diverse traditions and histories of our residents are affirmed and enjoyed."

Chan, co-owner of High Side Craft Brews & Asian Street Food, and Wendy Wong, co-owner of The Standard Barbershop – both in downtown Fairfax – came up with the idea last year to hold this event as an Asian block party. That way, explained Chan, "We could celebrate Asian food, art, crafts, culture and heritage together with our neighbors."



The event logo

Pleased, Meyer said, "I'm proud and thankful for the local leadership of our business community, which has worked so diligently and creatively to host this festival. "I'm certain it will become one of our best, annual traditions in the City of Fairfax."

FOOD VENDORS

More than 30 Asian food vendors – including eight food trucks – will serve a wide variety of culinary delights. For example, Rice Culture will bring Taiyakis, popular Asian street food desserts with a focus on Filipino and Taiwanese flavors. Taiyakis are Japanese waffle that come in the shape of a fish and are made fresh to order, right in front of the customers.

Each is then topped with Asian-inspired fillings, and customers may mix and match flavors. Some popular flavors are Ube Jam, Vanilla Custard, Matcha Custard, Nutella and Black Sesame Custard. In addition, Rice Culture occasionally offers savory options such as Bacon Jalapeño Cream Cheese and Spam & Pork Floss.

Capital Musubi will serve supersized Musubis (rice, nori and meat or vegetable sandwiches) and other foods highlighting the flavors of the Hawaiian Islands. And Kindi Thai Chicken Rice will bring entrees including Thai Crispy Crepes and its signature Thai Street Chicken Rice dish.



Chinese performers do the ribbon dance at last year's event.

Bun'd Up is offering its Taiwanese Steamed Bao Buns with an assortment of fillings, as well as rice bowls. And Himalayan Soul Food will serve momo dumplings filled with either meat or vegetables. Inspired by Tibetan dumplings, they're a popular Nepali street food.

For something sweet, Cakebee will be selling its cupcake jars in six different flavors – five of which are Asian-inspired. They are Cherry Blossom, Passion Fruit Matcha, Lychee Lemon, Chocolate Black Sesame, Almond Raspberry and Funfetti Oreo.

It will also offer a variety of cherry blossom-themed dessert boxes which will include a cherry blossom cupcake, two almond cookies and two cakes pops (in either Cherry Blossom, Blueberry Cheesecake or Green Tea flavors), all wrapped inside a gift box. In addition, Cakebee will also bring small, Japanese-themed cookie boxes, plus cake pops in Cherry Blossom, Matcha Green Tea, Chocolate or Blueberry flavors.

District Boba will offer Bubble/Boba Tea, iced tea, milk tea and lemonade, and Glassey will be serving South Indian street food and cocktails. There'll also be a beer garden, and several Old Town restaurants will be open, as well.

ENTERTAINMENT

Performances include the Chinese Lion Dance, Korean K-pop, Japanese dance, Chinese Ribbon Dance, Hawaiian Ukulele and Dancing, Traditional Indian Dance, Vietnamese singers and dancers and Chinese Traditional Dance,

Doing the crowd-pleasing Lion Dance will be the Choy Wun Lion Dance Troupe, a big hit during last year's festival. There'll also be Chinese drummers, the Srishti School of Dance will perform two Indian dances and Korean HeeSun Lee will sing hip-hop music.

The nonprofit Fairfax Chinese Dance Troupe is dedicated to sharing art and culture and promoting cross-cultural understanding. Dancers are students of all ages from the Washington Metropolitan area and Delaware. Through their movements, they'll vividly portray the life and culture of different Chinese ethnic groups in China and Taiwan.

Also slated are a yo-yo demonstration, origami folding, plus a cosplay costume contest in which people dress up as characters from popular movies, books, TV shows and video games. John Nolley will command his Japanese Papillion dog in Japanese to perform tricks while it wears a Japanese Kimono. This year's host and emcee will be Elaine Espinola Keltz, a Filipino and a former Mrs. District of Columbia.

"The most fun part for me last year was enjoying Asian street food on the streets of Old Town Fairfax City, while watching the performers and all the entertainment," said Chan. "The Lion Dance paraded up and down Main Street, and we passed out red envelopes to the children to 'feed' to the lion as food, for good luck. The drumming and the dance of the lion is right in front of you and is so amazing, and kids love it."

SEE ASIAN FESTIVAL, PAGE 15
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

NEWS

Pho Soup has Plenty of Noodles and Broth

Vietnamese pho could ease the common cold or late night partying, but it's different from ramen.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

It's full of rice noodles, beef, tripe, shards of vegetables, a beefy broth and comes with a pair of chopsticks. Wait a minute, chopsticks for soup?

"We give them chopsticks and a spoon, the broth is the good part," said Jessie Ngo, the hostess at Pho Ngon in Kingstowne where the most popular dish is the beef pho that comes with a variety of options, or the "Nem Nuong Cuon," which is a pork roll.

Ngo was born in Ho Chi Minh City, which might be known to some old timers as Saigon before 1975.

They are authentic at Pho Ngon though, and this is popular with the residents of Kingstowne. "In my country, it's the original food," added Tu Cam Luon, the manager at the Kingstowne location. They have another restaurant in Springfield. Back in the kitchen, they all speak Vietnamese.

At Pho Chateau in Lorton, the pho soup is a comfort food, or an ailment to late night partying, said manager Sonya Nguyen. "Pho season is when it's rainy and cold," she said. Nguyen, who is Vietnamese, sees a lot of young people come in and treat the pho like the chicken soup for the new generation. "We have a diverse crowd, this generation is so open to other things, soup is part of that," she said.

"I love it," said Victoria Grygorian who is a frequent customer, and admits to slurping her pho. "It's soup, you are supposed to slurp," she added.

What's in the Pho?

Pho or pho is a Vietnamese soup dish consisting of broth, rice noodles, herbs, and meat, and a popular food in Vietnam where

it is served in households, street stalls and restaurants countrywide. Pho is considered Vietnam's national dish but it's not to be confused with ramen, which can be bought in the local supermarket in a dried, square form that is just plopped in boiling water. There is still a lot of noodles but not much else.

Ramen is a Japanese noodle soup that consists of rice or wheat noodles served in a meat-based broth, often flavored with soy sauce or miso, and uses toppings such as sliced pork, nori, mame, and scallions.

In Hawaii, their noodle soup is called saimin and is similar but has little differences that only a local would know. At Pho Ngon, the rice noodles are the big seller, but they do have egg noodles if requested.

When the two soups are compared side by side, the noodles in pho are soft and translucent, and the noodles in ramen are firm and chewy. At Pho Chateau, nutrition is a factor too. "My soup is healthy, easy to digest," Nguyen said.

Although pho is not on the American Heart Association's radar, they do point out that ingredients like sodium and portion size are always a factor in a healthy diet, and pho is salty like some other soups. But at the same time, AHA has also released many studies regarding the benefits of a plant based diet and pho has a lot of vegetables, rice noodles and water-based broth. "The American Heart Association Diet and Lifestyle Recommendations suggest an overall healthy dietary pattern that emphasizes a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, skinless poultry and fish, nuts and legumes and non-tropical vegetable oils," said Roxana Hoveyda, the regional Vice President of Communications and Marketing at the American Heart Association.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION



Pho is Vietnamese.



At Pho Ngon, other raw vegetables are served on the side but are meant to be mixed in according to taste.



At Pho Chateau, customers fill the place up on Saturday and Sunday.

New Playground Offers Fun with Benefits

Fun and learning combine at Laurel Hill Park.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Local children have an added place for spinning, climbing, sliding and romping in the fresh air at Laurel Hill Park's Central Green in Lorton. The new playground area that will celebrate an official on-site opening ceremony on May 7 at 2 p.m. is open now to the active and curious. Appropriate for children ages two to

twelve years old, but fascinating to view in use for all ages, the new playground holds equipment not commonly seen in area playground offerings.

The Global Motion is a visually striking large globe with red coloring that matches nearby picnic shelters. The spin-capable equipment, an Americans with Disabilities Act accessible structure, has two levels and multiple entrances. Kids can climb, explore and rotate the globe safely due to

the progressive resistance mechanics that make it easy to turn the globe at slower speeds, but prevent it from being turned too quickly. With 14 nets that can be climbed on the inside or outside and two multi-person seating areas, Global Motion allows many kids to use the equipment at once.

The Crab Trap is another innovative net climbing structure. It offers tons of opportunities to climb, crawl and hang out from within the ample interior space to the top of the net structure. Several interior play options for crawling, climbing and balance

allow room for up to 65 kids to maneuver from one challenge to the next and meets accessibility needs.

The third structure incorporates the ever popular and iconic piece of playground equipment, the slide. Along with the slide, are balance discs for building core strengths and moving art pieces.

Both the Global Motion and the Crab Trap pieces are "designed to keep kids engaged with limitless climbing routes, different climbing challenges inside and out, and mul-

SEE LAUREL HILL PARK, PAGE 12



Abortion in the Balance

Opponents of abortion rights poised to restrict access to reproductive health.

By MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

The right to an abortion in Virginia is hanging by a thread, and the result of next year's election in Virginia may end up being the most consequential moment for reproductive freedom since the landmark 1973 Supreme Court decision on *Roe v. Wade*. In 2023, voters will elect all 100 members of the Virginia House of Delegates and all 40 members of the state Senate. At stake is control of the General Assembly at a time when the court appears to be poised to overturn the federal protections for abortion rights.

"Virginia has the potential of being a safe haven in a post-Roe world," said Tarina Keene, executive director of Pro-Choice Virginia. "But despite our successes over the last couple of years, we now have different political fortunes and our rights actually hang by a one-vote thread."

Democrats control the Virginia Senate with a 21-to-19 majority, although Sen. Joe Morrissey (D-16) opposes abortion rights. That means when bills about abortion are considered on the Senate floor, the vote would be theoretically be tied 20 to 20 with Republican Lt. Gov. Winsome Sears breaking the tie in opposition to abortion rights. But because Democrats control the committee process, Senate leaders have been able to prevent abortion legislation from reaching the floor.

"That's a true challenge," said Victoria Cobb, president of the Family Foundation. "We saw this session that they will go to great extremes to make sure that a bill never gets to the floor."

RESTRICTIONS ON ABORTION were a hallmark of the G.O.P. era of Virginia politics that started in the late 1990s, and many Republicans entered politics based on their opposition to abortion rights. Perhaps most infamously in 2012, Republicans were pushing a bill that would have required people seeking abortions to undergo a transvaginal sonogram, a procedure in which a wand is inserted into the vagina to get an image of the fetus. Critics said this procedure was invasive, especially considering the alternative possibility of requiring a less-invasive abdominal ultrasound. The bill became a punch line for late night comedians.

"Transvaginal is my favorite airline," cracked Amy Poehler on *Saturday Night Live*. "I have so many miles on Transvaginal that they upgraded me to ladybusiness."



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL LEE POPE/THE CONNECTION

Opponents of abortion rights rally at the Capitol in 2019.

"Virginia has the potential of being a safe haven in a post-Roe world. But despite our successes over the last couple of years, we now have different political fortunes and our rights actually hang by a one-vote thread."

— Tarina Keene, executive director of Pro-Choice Virginia

"Oh man! Transvaginal ultrasound?" joked Jon Stewart of the *Daily Show* on Comedy Central. "The 15-member jazz fusion chorus band? Those guys are awesome! I saw them at the Beacon in '94. They were amazing!"

When Democrats took control of the General Assembly in 2020, one of their top priorities was stripping away all the restrictions Republicans put in place over the last 20 years. The new majorities in the House and Senate took swift action to remove a requirement for an ultrasound test, eliminate a waiting period and expand the eligibility of clinics to perform the procedure. They also removed hospital construction standards for abortion clinics, strict requirements for how wide the hallways needed to be or how much parking was available.

"The bottom line here is once a woman decides to have an abortion, it should be

safe, it should be affordable and it should be free of punishment or judgement," said state Sen. Jennifer Boysko (D-33) at a press conference in January 2020.

ABORTION RIGHTS became a flashpoint in the election for governor last year when then-candidate Glenn Youngkin was caught on surreptitiously recorded audio admitting that he planned to limit his comments on abortion. The recording was made in Loudoun County by a liberal activist and posted online by the liberal news outlet *The American Independent* then aired on "The ReidOut" on MSNBC. In the recording, the first-time candidate told an antiabortion activist he planned to remain silent about his agenda during the campaign.

"When I'm governor and I have a majority in the House, we can start going on offense," said Youngkin. "But as a campaign topic,

sadly, that in fact won't win my independent votes that I have to get."

Youngkin spent the duration of the campaign refusing to take a position on things like an ultrasound requirement or hospital construction standards. Democrats believed they had a winning campaign issue, especially after Texas enacted a new law banning abortion after six weeks of pregnancy. Democrats campaigned on the issue and lost control of the House of Delegates and all three statewide offices.

"I'm pro-life," declared Youngkin at a Republican Governors Association meeting shortly after the election. "I believe in exceptions in the case of rape, incest and when the mother's life is in jeopardy."

THE POLITICS OF ABORTION isn't always as predictable as expected. Back in 2019, then-Gov. Ralph Northam appeared on WTOP and seemed to suggest that late-term abortions might be carried after an infant is delivered. Antiabortion activists were certain this would be a campaign issue in 2019, but that was the year Democrats swept into power. Then, last year, Democrats were certain the surreptitiously recorded audio of Youngkin would help them but instead Republicans swept all three statewide races and seized control of the House of Delegates.

"This time is different," said former Republican Delegate David Ramadan, now a professor at the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University. "The distinction now is if the Supreme Court is going to overturn *Roe versus Wade*, now the issue becomes truly an election issue in November, not just a brochure issue or a litmus test issue."

Since the draft opinion was leaked to Politico earlier this week, the issue has galvanized many supporters of abortion rights. Here in Virginia, it's crystallized the importance of the 2023 election and what it would mean for reproductive rights in Virginia. Democrats issued a flurry of written statements urging Congress to codify the right to abortion into the federal code while Republicans are trying to punish the leaker.

"Democrats are raising a lot of money. A lot of women are getting mobilized. There's a lot of energy and anger from women about this," said Democratic strategist Ben Tribbett. "But that will all either snowball to something larger or disappear depending on what the Supreme Court actually does when the opinion comes out."

NEWS

'A Wealth of Hands-on Knowledge of Facilities'

Platenberg to become new Fairfax City Schools superintendent.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Jeff Platenberg is slated to become the next superintendent of the City of Fairfax Schools. He will replace current superintendent, Phyllis Pajardo, who'll be retiring on June 30.

The City of Fairfax School Board made the announcement Monday night, May 2, that it's offered him the post and he's accepted. The Board will officially vote on his appointment when contract negotiations are completed. Meanwhile, he's scheduled to take the helm in July.

"Jeff Platenberg will bring a wealth of hands-on knowledge of facilities, school renovations and budget leadership to the City of Fairfax Schools," said Carolyn Pitches, chair of the City of Fairfax School Board. "I look forward to working with him as we seek to modernize our facilities and increase opportunities for all of our City school students."

Platenberg is currently the assistant superintendent for facilities and transportation services for Fairfax County Public Schools. Now in his 31st year in public education, he'll be inducted into the FCPS Hall of Fame this month for his longtime service to the school district.

Before joining FCPS, he was the assistant superintendent for support services with Loudoun County Public Schools. Prior to that position, he served as assistant superintendent for accountability and information communication technologies for Lexington County School District One in Lexington, S.C.

Earlier, Platenberg was deputy superintendent of support services for Savannah-Chatham County (Ga.) Public Schools. He's also provided services to the U.S. Department of State, Office of Overseas Schools.

He was a fellow in the Institute for Educational Leadership, Education Policy Fellowship and completed the School Leader Executive Institute, Center for Creative Leadership program. He's served on the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee and is currently a member of the Fairfax County Economic Advisory Commission, the Successful Children and Youth Policy Team and the Fairfax County



Platenberg

Revitalization Committee Building Repositioning work group.

Platenberg has also garnered several honors during his long career. He received Outstanding Performance Awards from both the Richland County School District One Chairman and Fairfax County Public Schools. He was also selected as the 2012 Association of School Business Officials International Eagle Award recipient, the 2013 Education Week Leader to Learn From, and the 2015 Bammy Award Recipient for "What is Right in Education."

Platenberg is also a licensed general contractor, certified educational facility planner by the Council of Educational Facility Planners International, registered school business official by the Virginia Association of School Business Officials, and registered school business administrator by the Association of School Business Officials International.

He earned an academic certification in educational facility planning from San Diego State University, a master's in human resource development from Webster University, and a bachelor's in public administration from George Mason University. In addition, Platenberg has been a presenter at state, national and international conferences and has also been a presenter at TED Talks.

— CARRIE DORSEY CONTRIBUTED TO THIS STORY.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

VRE TO CONTINUE TO ALLOW BICYCLES ON ALL TRAINS

The Virginia Railway Express Operations Board has made permanent a policy implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic to allow full-size bicycles on every VRE railcar each weekday. VRE's bicycle policy has several requirements

to protect the safety of passengers and crew. Cyclists must tether their bike to a railcar's south end bench seats with a bungee cord and may not ride the bicycle on platforms or trains. Learn more at www.vre.org.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 9

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Overturning Settled Law

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK

Like so many of you, I was alarmed and dismayed by last night's news from the Supreme Court. In a draft decision of the court case challenging the right to abortion care – Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization – the Supreme Court intends to overrule Roe v. Wade, dismantling the fundamental right to abortion and overturning nearly 50 years of settled law. While this leaked draft may not represent the final positions of the Justices, this draft gives us an idea of the reality we could soon be faced with if this fundamental right is overturned. At this moment in time, one thing remains clear: abortion is still legal federally as we do not have an official Supreme Court ruling and access to healthcare remains unchanged.

Should we see Roe overturned this June and the end of federal protections of abortion rights, abortion will remain legal here in Virginia. However, the Guttmacher Institute predicts that 26 states will immediately ban or severely restrict abortion due to "trigger laws" already on the books, which we do not have in Virginia.



Those most at risk from these bans remain people of color, trans and nonbinary individuals, those with low incomes, and people who live in rural communities where healthcare may be far away and difficult to access. Sadly, this is nothing new. We've seen efforts to restrict abortion access across the country for decades now. These efforts to restrict abortion are counter-productive, for studies have shown that abortion rates are highest in countries that legally restrict them.

Unfortunately, too many anti-abortion proponents also oppose solutions that reduce the rate of unplanned pregnancies such as free contraceptives, comprehensive sex education, and expanded health care. People with access to these resources are less likely to experience an unplanned pregnancy. So, we should be doing more to support women and their families, as well as promoting reproductive autonomy at all levels.

Nearly 80% of Virginians believe access to abortion should be legal within the framework of Roe v. Wade. So, now, with a stark and uncertain future ahead, the right to an abortion

will be decided at the state level, where we will depend on our elected officials in Richmond to protect our rights. Just this year we saw attempts made in the General Assembly to restrict abortion access.

Fortunately, House Democrats were united as we voted against abortion restrictions, and Senate Democrats blocked attempts to ban abortion. But remember, these dangerous restrictions were blocked from becoming law by a one-seat majority in the State Senate. It would not take much to lose that Senate seat or to prevent my Democratic colleagues in the House from picking up the three seats needed to take back the House of Delegates and ensure that these rights are preserved.

Indeed, if Democrats don't prevail in the next election it is no exaggeration to say that we could lose the right to make our own decisions on something as personal and complex as to when and whether to become a parent.

The right to conceive, carry, or end a pregnancy should always remain a private decision between a pregnant person and their healthcare provider. I remain a committed advocate for reproductive freedom and will fight to ensure the right to a safe and legal abortion in Virginia.

Keeping an Eye on Government

BY DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) is the oversight agency of the Virginia General Assembly charged with the responsibility of reviewing and evaluating the operation and operations of state agencies and programs. The Com-



mission consists of 14 legislative members and a staff of non-political professional researchers, analysts, lawyers, and auditors who conduct studies and make recommendations for Commission approval. Some of the most professional work of the legislature is done by the JLARC staff. A high percentage of JLARC recommendations

become bills that are introduced into and passed by the General Assembly.

For the past two years I was chair of the Commission but with the loss of a majority of Democrats in the House and the rotation of the chair between the two houses, I will be continuing as a member but not chair. My colleague and friend Senator Janet Howell will be serving as chair.

Each year JLARC adopts a work plan guiding its activities for the year. Topics for its work come from the Commission and from resolutions that are passed by the legislature. At its meeting this week

JLARC will announce its work plans for this year with most of the activities planned already underway. It takes on the most difficult issues facing the legislature to define in a well-researched and factual way the substance of the issues and a well-defined range of policy recommendations for the General Assembly to consider.

Among the topics to be studied this year include the level of need for more affordable housing in the state and the effectiveness of the current efforts to stimulate the growth of more affordable hous-

SEE GOVERNMENT, PAGE 14

Be a Part of Mother's Day Photo Gallery

As usual every year at this time, The Connection calls for submissions to our Mother's Day photo gallery. Mother's Day is Sunday, May 8. This year we will continue to publish submissions through the May 18th edition. Photo submissions are due by Monday, May 16, but now is the right time to submit your photos.

Send photos of mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, with children or without children in the photos. Please name everyone in the photo, the approximate date, describe what is happening in the photo and include your name, address, email address and phone number. We will not print your full address or contact information.

You can upload photos and information directly using the form at <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday/> or email to editors@connectionnewspapers.com.

This is also a fine time for submissions for our annual Father's Day galleries. Submit them online HERE <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/fathersday/>

Let Us Know Your View

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

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HISTORY

Stepping Back in Time at Fairfax's Historic Blenheim

Fairfax History Day was April 23 at Historic Blenheim in Fairfax City.



Calvin Earl sings "One More River to Cross," an African American song from the Civil War era.



Marcella and Gary Peyre-Ferry are with the Civil War Dance Foundation.



Denise Benedetto (in costume) tells people about this quilt depicting the story of the Underground Railroad.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



The Totolos brothers (from left) Atlas, 9; Artemis, 7 and Ares, 12, got to wear Union soldier uniforms.



Displaying natural-history collections of the mid-18th century are Dean Howarth and Rachel O'Connell.



These Civil War reenactors represent the 28th Massachusetts Co. B Infantry, part of the Irish Brigade.



Proudly showing the quilt square she made is Pranavi Palikala, 7.



Dressed as Confederate soldiers with the 17th Virginia Infantry are (from left) John Thomas, Andrew Ledman and Bryan Harrison.



Wearing uniforms inspired by the Union soldiers' First Sharpshooter Regiment are some members of GMU's Green Machine musical ensembles.

NEWS

Local Media Connection Wins Multiple Awards

Top writing prize; in depth/investigative; column writing; combination photos and story; education writing; ongoing coverage all garner praise.

The Alexandria Gazette Packet, the Mount Vernon Gazette, the Arlington Connection and Fairfax County editions of the Connection Newspapers won multiple Virginia Press Association awards, announced last week for work produced in 2021.

The Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association judged the entries.

Michael Lee Pope won the top writing award for nondaily publications with his entry for Government Writing which also won first place for the Alexandria Gazette Packet in that category.

"2021 was an especially difficult year for Local Media Connection and these papers, continuing to

benefit the community in the face of the pandemic, economic crisis and an onslaught of challenges for local news, said Editor and Publisher Mary Kimm. "Our ability to have an impact in the communities we cover was dependent entirely on the quality and commitment of our writers and photographers, and I am grateful for their amazing work."

In the words of the judge on Michael Lee Pope's Best in Show writing award, "Virginia is blessed to have such excellent community journalism and talented writers."

(We won't say 2021 was the most difficult year ever because in 1862 the Alexandria Gazette Packet building was burned down by the U.S. Army.)

Alexandria Gazette Packet

SEVING ALEXANDRIA FOR OVER 200 YEARS • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER



Campaign Center president and CEO... Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson and his wife Alex... Alexandria Acting Chief of Police Don Hayes... Parade Grand Marshal Sen. Mark Warner...

Plaid Tidings Scottish Walk returns to celebrate 50th anniversary.

The sound of bagpipes returned to the streets of Old Town as the annual Scottish Walk Parade returned to celebrate its 50th anniversary Dec. 4 following last year's pandemic-induced hiatus.

Janet Barnett and Jeanne Theismann won second place for combination picture and story for their coverage of "Scottish Walk Returns."

ENTERTAINMENT

St. Elmo's Comes to Old Town (with Cocktails)

Just in time for a January cold snap, Old Town North has gotten a little bit warmer. Del Ray staple St. Elmo's opened its doors at 529 Montgomery Street earlier this month... "We developed some fantastic cocktails. I highly recommend the espresso martini and the old fashioned," Christine Ponzzi said.



Some sandwich favorites from @market2market-delray are featured at St. Elmo's Old Town North. For instance the 116: prosciutto di parma, genoa

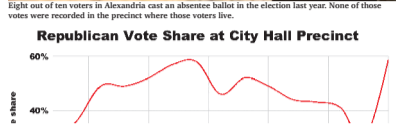
Hope Nelson won third place for Column Writing for her food column, "Appetite."

NEWS

Absentee Minded Lawmakers consider bill to assign ballots to precincts where voter:

By MICHAEL LEE POPE GAZETTE PACKET

On election night, Democrats were shocked by how well Donald Trump was performing in Alexandria. As returns were posted online, concerns were rising among supporters of Joe Biden as the incumbent was outperforming expectations at precinct after precinct.



Michael Lee Pope won Best in Show for nondaily writing and first place for Governmental Writing for his stories in the Alexandria Gazette Packet.

The Arlington Connection Why We Rescue



Ashley Claire Simpson won first place for her animal columns in the Arlington Connection, "ArPets."

Alexandria Gazette Packet SENIOR LIVING

SEVING ALEXANDRIA FOR OVER 200 YEARS • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

Earl Lloyd Statue Unveiled Trailblazer broke the color barrier of the NBA.



Jeanne Theismann won second place for sports writing in the Alexandria Gazette Packet.

Snakeheads Are Thriving in Area Waters

They lurk in the murky depths of the Potomac River, waiting for the unsuspecting fisherman to take the bait. Snakeheads are thriving in the area waters, according to a report from the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

Glenda Booth won third place in Health, Science and Environmental writing for her reporting in the Mount Vernon Gazette.

SUMMER FOOD Spring Brings Fresh Produce to Arlington Needy

Spring brings fresh produce to Arlington Needy, a program that provides fresh vegetables to those in need. The program includes lettuce, spinach, collards, kale, carrots, and radishes.

Shirley Ruhe won third place for her coverage in the Arlington Connection of food and feeding the hungry during the pandemic.

NEWS

An Afghan Family Struggles here, and the family left behind.

By SHIRLEY RUHE GAZETTE PACKET

Ahmed and his wife Suraya and their two sons came to the U.S. from Afghanistan in August 2017 on a special immigrant visa program for Afghans who worked for the American government.

"I couldn't go see my parents and had received threats but I didn't take them seriously until my uncle was very brutally murdered when he was shot in the back."

Ahmed and Suraya have both worked for the U.S. government. But their parents and siblings didn't qualify for the program at the time. They are still in Afghanistan and desperate to get out.

"They are in hiding. Everyone in the neighborhood knows we live in the U.S.," Ahmed says his parents are retired and not in good health and are barely able to feed themselves. Food prices are rising.

Shirley Ruhe won first place for in-depth, investigative writing in the Alexandria Gazette Packet for her extensive coverage of refugees from Afghanistan.

SCHOOL BUSES AND SITES PROVIDE FREE GRAB AND GO 7-DAY MEAL KITS

No questions asked, no IDs needed - County children under 18 and all FCXO students eligible.



Mercia Hobson won second place for education writing in the Fairfax County Connection newspapers.

Children fill 7-day meal kits, prepared by registered dietitians and prepared daily by trained food service professionals at a Fairfax County Public School bus lot for the Bus Home Meal Service, Summer 2021.

Mercia Hobson won second place for education writing in the Fairfax County Connection newspapers.

NEWS

Memorial to Suffragist Women Dedicated

To educate, inspire, empower present and future generations. The memorial to suffragist women was dedicated in front of the White House, marking the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment.



Susan Laume won third place for her ongoing coverage in the Fairfax County Connection of the creation of the The Turning Point Suffragist Memorial.

The Truth About Lies

During mental health awareness month local therapists discuss how the web we weave is linked to one's well-being.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

He lived with his wife and four children in a sprawling home in Fairfax County. He was also maintaining a six-year relationship with his fiancé and their 9-month-old daughter in Alaska.

Hiding the fact that she was drowning in more than \$30,000 in credit card debt, she walked down the aisle at her wedding to marry her fiancé who thought she was financially stable.

These are examples of the extreme and long lasting lies that Natalie Martinez, an Alexandria based certified life transformation coach, has witnessed.

Throughout the month of May, designated by the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) as Mental Health Awareness Month, local therapists look at the factors that lead to significant and habitual lying and therapies that can correct it.

While habitual lying is not a diagnosable mental health issue, it can be a manifestation of other challenges. "It normally goes along with compulsive addictive behavior [like] substance abuse, compulsive spending or is a sign of some other psychiatric issue," said Bethesda therapist Carol Barnaby, LCSW.

Children might resort to dishonesty to avoid a parent's anger or other unpleasant situations and can become a learned coping skill. "I believe such deception starts in childhood and becomes a habitual way of restoring one's low self-esteem," said Linda McKenna Gulyn, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology Marymount University.

"All of us often lie to preserve our self-esteem. Once children are old enough to take the perspective of another person, in early elementary school, they have the skills to manipulate another's belief. It often takes the form of exaggeration. ... For example, my grandpa used to play on the New York Yankees," McKenna said.

"Spouses may have developed a hypersensitivity to criticism, potentially from a very critical or hostile upbringing," added Kevin Coleman, Woodbridge Marriage and Family Therapist. "So, after years of hearing people imply, you're not good enough, they simply want to present an image of themselves that is acceptable to others."

As one ages, deceit can become habit forming. "In order to avoid confrontation, they don't tell their spouse about these little lies, and then they can escalate into huge, life-altering patterns of deceit if left unchecked," said Coleman. "One of the spouses may be very scared of confrontation with the other, so they develop a habit of covering up any conflict issues to avoid a fight. This intense fear of conflict may be rooted in past abuse from a previous relationship, or their family of origin."

Getting caught in a lie can motivate one to seek mental health treatment. "Often a spouse discovers paperwork that show that serious debt, or significant money spent at places they've never been to, evidence of gambling, or a significant savings account just in one name," said Martinez. "Also signing paperwork on behalf of their spouse to receive a loan. The list goes on."

"This level of dishonesty is fixable, but it is very difficult work," said therapist Greg Fisher, LCSW. "It is important to combine couples therapy with additional care for the offending partner. This may be addiction work and medication management from a psychiatrist related directly to what the offending partner is struggling with."

An objective third party can be helpful to couples who want to mend a relationship that has experienced a negative impact from deceit.

"Counseling is a great place to address this issue because it can be hard to admit when you've been dishonest. Having a counselor in the room to guide the conversation could make the experience less daunting," said Emily Simonian, a licensed marriage and family counselor with Thriveworks, a Washington-area therapy and psychology center.

"One course of action could be to identify why the dishonest partner engages in the secret behavior. For example, financial infidelity might be caused by addictive behaviors or trouble with impulse control."

Relationships or marriages that have been tainted by dishonesty can be salvageable. "Lies can be forgivable if the partner feels they won't be lied to again," said Martinez. "I've seen it happen many times, but once forgiven, if the partner continues to be lied to for the same or multiple other things, it would not be healthy to continue such a relationship."

"Counseling is a great place to address this issue because it can be hard to admit when you've been dishonest. Having a counselor in the room to guide the conversation could make the experience less daunting."

— Emily Simonian, licensed marriage and family counselor

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

SHEPHERD'S CENTER SEEKS NEW VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church (SCMAFC), an all-volunteer organization, is seeking volunteers to drive seniors to medical and dental

appointments or run errands to grocery stores and pharmacies. In addition to driving volunteers, Shepherd's Center is also seeking volunteers to assist with event planning, recruiting, and marketing (newsletter, website and social media) as well as administrative tasks. To apply for services, you

have to be over 50 years old and live in the McLean, Arlington, or Falls Church area. There are three ways to apply: Online: scmafc.org/contact; email: contact@scmafc.org; or phone: 703-506-2199. Visit scmafc.org or call 703-506-2199.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11

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Food For Neighbors volunteers and school staff enjoyed a beautiful day working together to feed hungry students in six area schools: Irving Middle School, West Springfield High School, Key Middle School, Edison High School, John R. Lewis High School, and Mark Twain Middle School.



Food For Neighbors celebrated Springfield Area volunteers and schools that make a difference in the lives of students every day. Pictured from left to right are: Dr. Aimee Holleb, Principal, Key Middle School; Karen Joseph, Founder, Food For Neighbors; Cynthia Conley, Principal, Irving Middle School; Patrice Butler, Social Worker, Edison High School; David Rolls, Family Liaison, Irving Middle School; Julie Peasley, Springfield Area Volunteer Coordinator, Food For Neighbors; Tahnee Blausler, Springfield Area Driver Coordinator, Food For Neighbors; and Yolanda Girouard, Springfield Area Anniversary Celebration Coordinator, Food For Neighbors.

A Meal for My Brother, Please?

Springfield community responds to prevalent food insecurity.

Springfield, VA. A young middle school student walks into the school food pantry. He's there because he's hungry, and he eagerly accepts all the food the school staff member offers him. Before he leaves, he looks up with his big brown eyes and asks "May I have that for my little brother?" as he points to one of many hearty, microwaveable meals. "He really likes those."

This was one of many conversations that Meg Gollinger, Director of Student Services at Irving Middle School, has with children on a regular basis. She is grateful that, thanks to the services provided by Food For Neighbors, she has the ability to say "yes" every time.

"A lot of people don't realize the need for food in Northern Virginia," said Gollinger, while emphasizing that so many families struggle with meeting basic needs. "Growing kids, especially those in their middle school and high school years, need healthy foods to eat. Beyond school meals, many kids go without. Food For Neighbors has really helped fill a need in my school and many others."

This weekend and evening food gap was the grassroots impetus behind Food For Neighbors, founded to address food insecurity experienced by secondary school students, for whom few to no supplemental food programs existed. Food For Neighbors mobilizes communities to provide food support so that students have a reliable, nutritious food source in addition to their school meals. The organization partners with the schools, where school staff identify students

in need and provide them with direct food and grocery gift card support. The rapport built through this food connection also enables staff to identify other needs students may have.

"We could not do this without our school partners," shared Karen Joseph, Founder and Executive Director of Food For Neighbors. "Schools truly are in the best position to identify and address teen food insecurity. This is why we're making a point of celebrating schools and their volunteers and surrounding communities for the difference they've been making in the lives of students."

During the Food For Neighbors April 30th Red Bag food collection and sorting event, Joseph visited Irving Middle School, which, under the management of Gollinger, has been serving as the food collection site not only for Irving but also for West Springfield High School, John R. Lewis High School, Key Middle School, Edison High School, and Mark Twain Middle School. There, Joseph lauded Gollinger and her volunteer team including Volunteer Coordinator Julie Peasley, Event Coordinator Kristin O'Connor, Driver Coordinator and Red Bag Drop-off Supervisor Tahnee

Hunger Is Closer Than You Think

www.FoodForNeighbors.org
Blausler, and Anniversary Celebration Coordinator Yolanda Girouard. Joseph then highlighted the many Springfield area schools and staff that have been making a difference through the program, which reached the Springfield area in January 2018.

Among these are Norma Cruz and Alena Carroll, John R. Lewis High School family liaisons who raised their hands immediately when their school was looking for new staff to coordinate with Food For Neighbors. Passionate about the program, they wanted to make sure it continued when the former liaison changed schools. They have seen Food For Neighbors make a direct, positive impact on students facing a variety of struggles, from the homeless or unaccompanied minor to the student influenced by poor peer examples to the child of a single parent who lost her well-paying job during the pandemic. Cruz and Carroll also recruited Gonzalo Tomas Ovalle, the school's On-Time Graduation Coordinator, to help pick up large quantities of food from Irving Middle School and to deliver food weekly to families experiencing dire circumstances.

Carroll explained, "Food For Neighbors has been a blessing for our students and families, as the supplemental food gives them a nutritional boost. It has also been a stepping stone to building rapport with our families, which helps us better assist them. We're very thankful, and the families are thankful. They don't have to worry about their children having food so they can focus at school."

In all, Joseph recognized six schools, each with its own Food For Neighbors story, as well as the school staff that are key to the program's success.

Irving Middle School
Cynthia Conley, Principal
Meg Gollinger,
Director of Student Services

Traci Jamison, Social Worker
David Rolls, Family Liaison

West Springfield High School
Michael Mukai, Principal
Anne Marie Colligan, Social Worker
Rebecca Cousins, Teacher
Key Middle School
Dr. Aimee Holleb, Principal
Monique Borthayre-Dignan,
Family Liaison

John R. Lewis High School
Alfonso Smith, Principal
Alena Carroll, Family Liaison
Norma Cruz, Family Liaison
Gonzalo Tomas Ovalle,
On-Time Graduation Coordinator
Mark Twain Middle School
Charles Miller, Principal
Steve Fitzgerald,
Director of Student Services

Edison High School
Pamela Brumfield, Principal
Patrice Butler, Social Worker

While the brief recognition ceremony ensued, vehicle after vehicle loaded with Red Bag food and toiletry donations continued to arrive. This wasn't surprising given the steadfast support that the Springfield community has given to Food For Neighbors.

"As soon as we sent out information to the Springfield area, we received an immediate response," shared Gollinger. "I credit



Cynthia Conley (center), Principal of Irving Middle School, made the call that brought Food For Neighbors services to her school in January 2018. With the help of Meg Gollinger (not pictured), her Director of Student Services, as well as amazing community support, Irving now serves as the food hub for six area schools. Also pictured are Karen Joseph (left), Founder of Food For Neighbors, and David Rolls (right), Family Liaison for Irving.

Springfield Community Responds to Prevalent Food Insecurity

FROM PAGE 10

the wonderful Springfield community members. Their support of this program has been amazing. Any time we ask for something, they go above and beyond.”

This generosity of spirit allowed Gollinger to offer support to surrounding schools, growing the program from one to six schools in the immediate area. As a result, the Springfield area now has 393 households donating food, 76 drivers collecting it, and 294 volunteers sorting it. To date, it has collected over 72,000 pounds of food for area students.

Irving Middle School Principal Cynthia Conley, who learned about the Food For Neighbors program and brought it to her school, agrees. “... thanks to our partnership with Food For Neighbors and our amazing West Springfield community, we have been able to do more for kids and families than we could have ever imagined. ... Knowing we can do so much for so many is such a highlight of the program.”

Conley emphasized the resilience of the community at the beginning of the pandemic, which was a time

when nearby Westfield Baptist Church also offered tremendous support. Conley also noted how much she loves that Food For Neighbors encourages all to become involved. At her school, students of all abilities may pack the food for distribution, and the big Red Bag food collection and sorting events present easy opportunities for entire families to serve.

“My favorite part of Food for Neighbors is seeing families volunteering together on collection day,” said Conley. “We have had young children, to include my own daughter, ... help on collection day. Showing kids at a young age the importance of helping others is immeasurable.”

Food For Neighbors now has over 1,700 households donating food and over 1,200 volunteers offering to collect, sort, and deliver it to 29 schools in Fairfax County and Loudoun County. As of the April 30th event, the nonprofit has provided over 330,000 pounds of food for students, and it continues to expand to address the need. To learn how you can serve others through Food For Neighbors, visit <https://www.foodforneighbors.org/>.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 9

PUBLIC INVITED TO REVIEW FLOOD MAPS

FEMA is proposing updates to the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) for Fairfax County. Community partners are invited to participate in a 90-day appeal and comment period. The updated maps were produced in coordination with local, state

and FEMA officials. Significant community review of the maps has already taken place, but before the maps become final, community partners can identify any corrections or questions about the information provided and submit appeals or comments. The 90-day appeal period will begin on or around April 22, 2022. Residents, business owners and other community partners are

encouraged to review the updated maps to learn about local flood risks and potential future flood insurance requirements. They may submit an appeal if they perceive that modeling or data used to create the map is technically or scientifically incorrect. An appeal must include technical information, such as hydraulic
SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 14



As usual every year at this time, The Connection calls for submissions to our Mother's Day photo gallery.

Mother's Day is Sunday, May 8.

This year we will continue to publish submissions through the May 18 edition. Photo submissions are due by Monday, May 16.

#Send photos of mothers, grandmothers, great-grandmothers, with children or without children in the photos. Please name everyone in the photo, the approximate date, describe what is happening in the photo and include your name, address, email address and phone number. We will not print your full address or contact information.

You can upload photos and information directly to www.connectionnewspapers.com/mothersday/ or email to editors@connectionnewspapers.com.

This is a fine time for submissions for our annual Father's Day galleries. Online at www.connectionnewspapers.com/fathersday/



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Early morning quiet as sunrise fills the newly installed playground orb at Laurel Hill Park before visitors arrive to enjoy the new playground



Two year old Grant, of Alexandria, tries out the climbing nets of the Crab Trap

Fun and Learning Combine at Laurel Hill Park

FROM PAGE 3

multiple routes for climbing from the interior to the top of the net structures,” according to Landscape Structures, the equipment designer and manufacturer. The Minnesota company, founded in 1971, has supplied about 75,000 playgrounds world-wide. Experts in play, the company reminds us that play is more than just having fun. “When children climb, they engage and exercise large arm, leg and back muscles that build upper-body, lower-body, and core strength. Climbing can also increase heart rate and improve cardiovascular health, agility, balance and hand-eye coordination. As children work to figure out how to physically navigate a piece of equipment, especially one that is new to them, they also develop their problem-solving skills.”

The Park Authority’s project manager, Kelly Price, says several contractors worked to bring the playground to completion. Sparks at Play created the design layout, Hunt Valley Contractors installed the equipment, and Southern Asphalt laid the new sidewalk and ADA parking space.

The Central Green playground is the latest installment in a \$240,000 project approved by the Fairfax County Park Authority in January 2019 for Laurel Hill Park. Other project additions include a paved loop trail, four sheltered picnic pavilions available for full day rental, and a coming restroom facility. The area abuts the Giles Run Disc Golf course where the local club makes practice discs available.

For many the Park’s greatest draw still is the natural environment and many walking/biking trails. The paved loop circles a meadow conservation area and in the parking



Although designed for children ages 2-12, some of the young at heart may not resist a spin or a climb, like Amber Mapes, of Alexandria, who made a new young friend at the park

area opposite the playground, volunteers have installed a pollinators’ garden filled with native plants to attract birds, butter-

flies, bees, and other pollinators.

The county’s park authority invites families to take advantage of the developmental



Although the park uses fascinating new equipment, the iconic slide still holds plenty of appeal

benefits of the playground in building sensory, motor, cognitive, and social/emotional skills. No need to tell the kids about those benefits though — they can just come for all the fun.

CALENDAR

NOW THRU MAY 8

"True West." At Old Town Hall, Fairfax. True West, a dark comedy and character study, gives the audience a peek inside the lives of two estranged brothers as their worlds turn upside down. Performances will be held on April 29 at 7:30 p.m., April 30 at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m., May 1 at 2 p.m., May 5 and 6 at 7:30 p.m., May 7 at 2 p.m. and 10 p.m. and May 8 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$20 for students online and available here: <https://fairfaxcitytheatre.ticketleap.com/true-west/>.

NOW THRU MAY 30

Hope for the Warriors Fitness Challenge. Participants can now register for the Hope For The Warriors Memorial Day 30x30 Virtual Fitness Challenge. Kicking off May 1 and running through May 30, individuals can participate in the free virtual fitness challenge from anywhere in the world. The challenge is designed to get people moving by incorporating any type of physical activity for a minimum of 30 minutes for 30 days. Any activity counts — walking, running, hiking, swimming, lifting, etc. The goal for this challenge is to support individuals reaching their fitness goals while honoring and remembering fallen service members. Visit hopeforthewarriors.org.

MAY 4-7

Mason Film Festival. 4-10 p.m. at Johnson Center Cinema at GMU, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. The Mason Film Festival is an annual film festival at George Mason University representing the diverse work of Film and Video Studies students, including that of beginning video students, intermediate directing students, and graduating seniors. Visit: <https://film.gmu.edu/mason-film-festival-graduates>

THURSDAY/MAY 5

LESSON ZERO. 5-8 p.m. at 8430 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. The Austin Grill presents the music of Oasis recording artist LESSON ZERO, Thursday, May 5 for Cinco De Mayo from 5 to 8 p.m. at 8430 Old Keene Mill Rd., Springfield. For additional information see: www.youtube.com/lessonzero and www.reverbnation.com/lessonzero

MAY 5, 19

Burke Toastmasters. 7:30-9 p.m. At Burke Oaks Community Center, 5708 Leather Drive, Burke. Burke Toastmasters allows you to practice your speaking in a friendly, diverse environment. They welcome guests. First and third Thursdays. Come check us out. www.BurkeToastmasters.org

MAY 6-8

Sesame Street Live! Let's Party! At EagleBank Arena, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Times: Friday, May 6 - 6 p.m.; Saturday, May 7 - 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.; and Sunday, May 8 - 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Tickets can be purchased online at SesameStreetLive.com or in-person at the venue box office.

MAY 6-7

Spring: Dance Innovations. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. Mason choreographers present a showcase of new dances performed by the Mason Dance Company. Cost is

\$15 General Public, \$10 students, staff and seniors, \$7 groups of 10 or more Center for the Arts, Harris Theatre. Learn More: <https://cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/spring-dance-innovations/>

FRIDAY/MAY 6

"Boy Detective Fails." Friday 8 p.m.; Saturday 2 and 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax. The Boy Detective Fails, based on Joe Meno's novel, tells the story of Billy Argo, "boy detective." In a world akin to Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys, young Billy becomes famous for solving mysteries, until he faces a mystery he can't comprehend — the shocking death of his young sister, Caroline. Learn More: <https://cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/a-concert-presentation-of-39-the-boy-detective-fails-39/>

SATURDAY/MAY 7

"The Voice" Runner-up Addison Agen. 8 p.m. at The Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. Addison Agen is an Indie-Folk singer-songwriter best known as NBC's "The Voice." Based out of Fort Wayne, Indiana, the 21-year-old's raw and heart-wrenching voice welcomes listeners of all kinds to be grateful and self-reflective.

SATURDAY/MAY 7

Eagle Festival. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Mason Neck State Park, 7301 High Point Road, Lorton. Free. Live animal shows, children's activities, live music, food trucks, pony rides, hay rides, environmental exhibits and activities, kayak and canoe try-outs, costumed characters. Visit the website: <https://friendsofmason-neckstateparkinc.wildapricot.org/>

MAY 7-8

LEGO(R) Model Trains. At Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area LEGO(R) Train Club (WamalTC) will be running LEGO(R) model trains at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum for a special Mother's Day weekend show. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$3; ages 13 and older, \$5 (\$6 for special events); seniors and military, active and retired, \$4. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, 703-425-9225.

MAY 7 TO JUNE 11

"Xanadu." Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sundays at 2 p.m. At The Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. This is a hilarious, roller skating, musical adventure about following your dreams despite the limitations others set for you.. Tickets are \$20-30. Visit <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/xanadu>

SUNDAY/MAY 8

Pianist Maria Yefimova. 7:30 p.m. at The Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. Maria Yefimova, an internationally acclaimed pianist who has performed in Italy, Spain, England, Slovakia, Croatia, Russia, throughout the United States.

SUNDAY/MAY 8

Mason Symphony Orchestra Concert. 7 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, Fairfax.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15

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OPINION

Keeping an Eye on Government

FROM PAGE 6

ing. In another study JLARC will look at the progressivity of Virginia's individual income tax. There is a debate going on in the current conference committee on the budget on taxes and a possible doubling of the standard deduction. Most people acknowledge that the income tax, while structured to be somewhat progressive, in reality is regressive, and current tax proposals may make it even more regressive. The study results, if followed by the General Assembly, could make a significant change in a tax that produces about seventy percent of general fund revenue.

Legalized gambling, referred to as "gaming," generates at least \$8.9 billion in sales and wagering. JLARC staff will take a close look at existing laws to see if they are adequate to protect the public and look at the current regulations to determine their effectiveness. This study comes about just as the state has legalized gambling casinos in several parts of the Commonwealth.

On education issues, the staff will undertake a study this year of higher education financial aid and dual enrollment funding. An equally important and challenging study will be the K-12 Standards of Quality funding formula for public schools. A long-needed study will be undertaken this year to evaluate the Community Services Boards system for community mental health services to determine if it meets the needs of the citizens who have behavioral, developmental, and mental health services needs.

There are other studies that will be undertaken this year along with the oversight responsibilities JLARC is assigned. For more information and to review past study results go to <http://jlarc.virginia.gov>.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 11

or hydrologic data, to support the claim. Appeals cannot be based on the effects of proposed projects or projects started after the study is in progress. If property owners see incorrect information that does not change the flood hazard information—such as a missing or misspelled road name in the Special Flood Hazard Area or an incorrect corporate boundary—they can submit a written comment. The next step in the mapping process is the resolution of all comments and appeals. Once they are resolved, FEMA will notify communities of the effective date of the final maps. Submit appeals and comments by contacting Mr. Dipmani Kumar at Dipmani.Kumar@fairfaxcounty.gov.

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 13

Join the Dewberry School of Music for their spring finale concert featuring the Mason Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Dr. Soo Han and the University choirs under the direction of Dr. Lisa Billingham. Learn More: <https://cfa.calendar.gmu.edu/mason-symphony-orchestra-concerto-and-university-choirs-concert>

SUNDAY/MAY 8

Brass of Peace Concert. 4-5:30 p.m. At St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 6509 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Directed by Sylvia Alimena, Brass of Peace is a brass ensemble of the Washington area's most accomplished high school brass players. Come hear the rising stars of tomorrow. Visit the website: www.standrews.net

FRIDAY/MAY 13

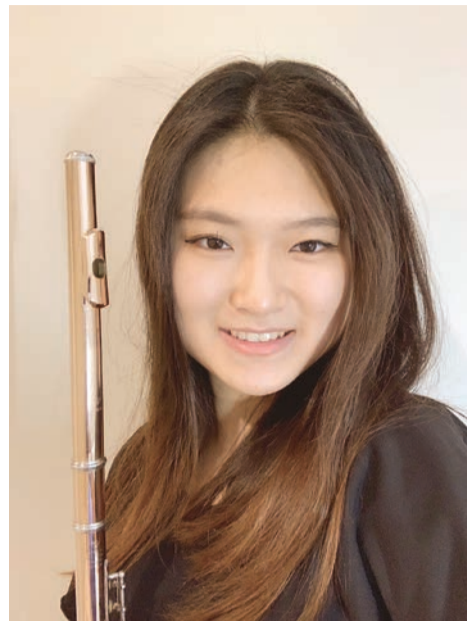
Cocktails by Candlelight. 6-9 p.m. At Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. Sip and savor 18th-century cocktails and experience Gunston Hall by candlelight. Visit the website: <https://www.tix.com/ticket-sales/gunstonhall/5996/event/1255855>

SATURDAY/MAY 14

Young Artist Winner. 7:30-9 p.m. At Johnson Middle School, 3801 Jermantown Road, Fairfax. Flutist Julia Kwon, Independence High, has won this year's City of Fairfax Band Young Artist Competition and is guest soloist performing "Hue Fantasie" by Georges Hue. Tickets: Senior, \$10; Adult, \$15; Students under 25, free. Visit the website: <https://www.fairfaxband.org/>

SATURDAY/MAY 14

Fairfax Symphony Orchestra. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Presents Beethoven's "Ode to Joy." The program includes Leshoff: Symphony No. 4 "Heichalos;" and Beethoven: Symphony No. 9. Visit FairfaxSymphony.org.



Flutist Julia Kwon, the Young Artist Winner, will perform on Saturday, May 14, in Fairfax.

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.

Fairfax City's Annual Asian Festival On Main

FROM PAGE 2

"In Fairfax City, close to 20 percent of the population is Asian, and many Old Town business owners are, as well," he continued. "This festival brings attention to the diversity we have here in Fairfax and celebrates our heritage and culture, while also highlighting Asians' contributions to American society."

The main sponsors are Hollywood Casino at Charles Town Races, Asians at Amazon and Mainstreet Bank. "We're also excited to partner this year with Asian American Youth Leadership Empowerment and Development," said Chan. "It's a nonprofit that supports low-income and underserved Asian American & Pacific Islander youth with educational empowerment, identity development and leadership opportunities through after school, summer, and mentoring programs."



PHOTO COURTESY OF JINSON CHAN

Asian street food offered by Sarin Grill at the first festival.

"By expanding this year's festival, we're providing even more opportunities to highlight Asian businesses and culture," he added. "We appreciate all the hard work of the volunteers and the support of our sponsors that make this event possible. And we want people to bring their families and friends and come celebrate with us."

For more information about sponsoring, volunteering, participating in or attending this event, go to <https://asianfestivalonmain.com>.

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Compartmentalize This



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

With all the physical problems and emotional challenges, a typical cancer patient undergoing treatment experiences, one's attitude is a significant contributor to the eventual outcome. My approach has been to never let the mental anguish and disappointment in my presumptive adjusted life expectancy (I was originally diagnosed as "terminal." Now I'm not really classified since I'm in a rather unique situation. My current diagnosis of papillary thyroid cancer stage IV is not usually a "terminal" condition. However, due to a misdiagnosis, my thyroid cancer has progressed to the point where it's not nearly as "friendly" as it could have been. And by 'friendly,' I mean curable as papillary thyroid cancer is often called "the friendly cancer" due to its positive prognosis. Right now, I would say I'm precarious more than "terminal" though life goes on without too much additional negative effect) overwhelm me. In short, I still believe (certainly hope) I'm in it for the long haul.

And being a cancer patient with or without non-small cell lung cancer stage IV (my original diagnosis) is indeed a long haul. As discussed in a previous column: "The Cancer Effect," there are innumerable and ongoing appointments and conditions making it difficult for one to ignore the very real fact that I have cancer and one that, due to years of mistreatment, the cancer has imbedded itself in my collarbone and as such, turned a curable form of cancer into an incurable one. Moreover, one whose treatment is simple enough (after having a thyroidectomy), one pill a day and no infusions. But a pill whose window of effectiveness ends in Sept. '23, three years after I started the regimen for papillary thyroid cancer (according to current medical data) and for which there's no better available medication waiting in the wings. Granted, medicine isn't arithmetic, and my window may be open longer - or shorter. Nevertheless, if I allow myself to think about it, I don't likely have left nearly as much life as I had long anticipated. But I don't think about it, and that's the point of this column.

Obviously, one can't ignore the fact that he or she has cancer. There are constant reminders; in how you feel, how you think, how you look, how you're reacted to by others and how you integrate all your cancer demons into something like a manageable routine. Somehow, it all must become normal and no big deal, and just another day at that. If you let its abnormality define and/or control your life, then cancer wins and maybe even makes you sicker than your physical condition would otherwise warrant.

Respecting that cancer is in and of itself, bad enough (physically), I'm not going to make it worse mentally by "woeing" is me and therein likely exacerbate my symptoms, further weaken my immune system, and much sooner rather than later, suffer severe consequences as a result.

My enduring philosophy: "I have cancer. So what?!"

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

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