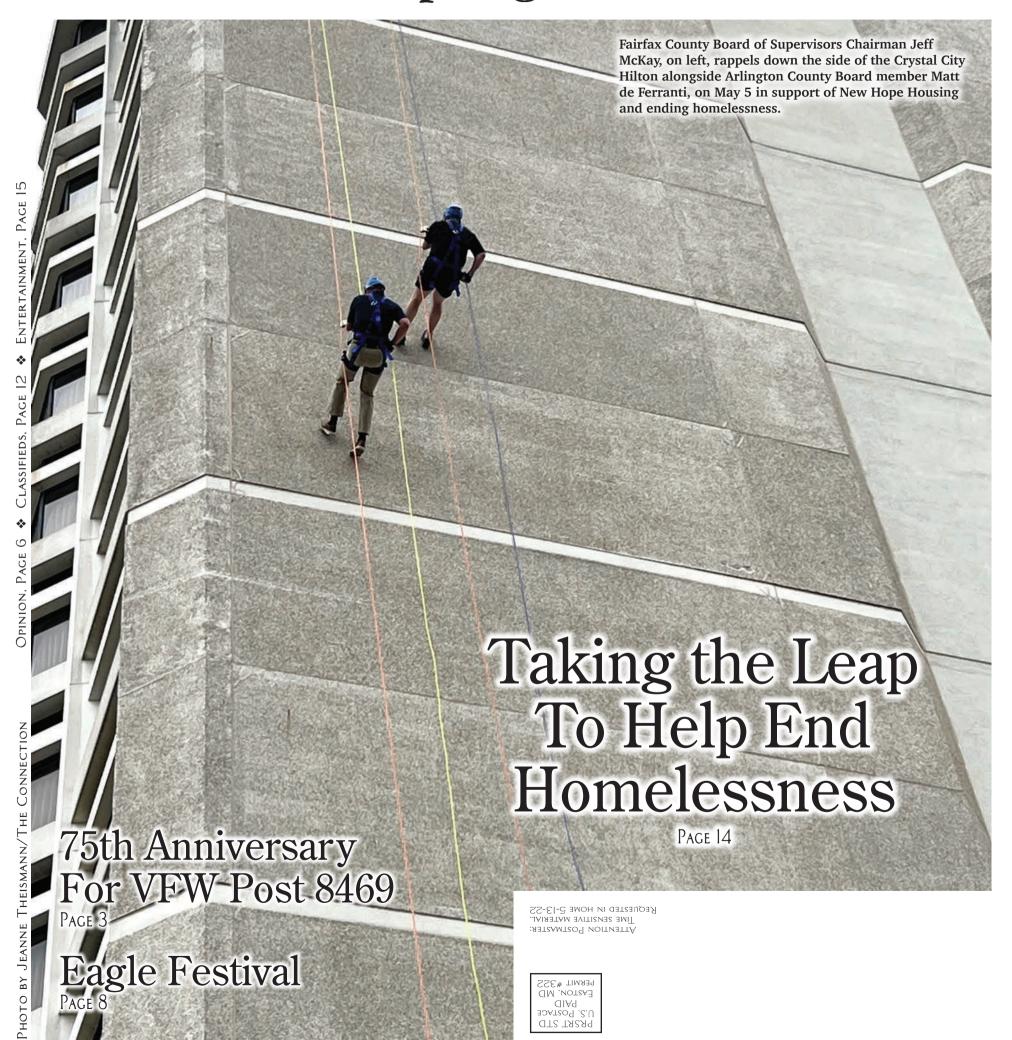
CONTECTION
Burke *Fairfax *Springfield *Fairfax Station





Fatal Motorcycle Accident on I-495

t 4:26 p.m. on May 1, Virginia State Police responded to a single-vehicle crash on westbound I-495 close to a half-mile west of Route 613 (Van Dorn St.).

A 2021 Harley-Davidson FLHX motorcycle was traveling west on I-495 when its tire blew out. This caused the motorcycle to lose

control and eject the rider onto the roadway.

The rider, Rochelle Stevenson Jr., 30, of Durham, N.C., was transported to Inova Fairfax Hospital where on May 5, he succumbed to his injuries. He was wearing a helmet

The crash remains under investigation.

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.

THURSDAY/MAY 12

Virtual Public Information Meeting. 7 p.m.
Route 236 Little River Turnpike Stars
Study. The Virginia Department of
Transportation will hold a virtual public
information meeting on a STARS (Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway
Solutions) study that is assessing potential operational, safety and accessibility improvements for about four miles
of Route 236 (Little River Turnpike)
between 1-495 in Annandale and I-395
in Alexandria. Potential study improvements being assessed include:

Innovative intersection enhancements at Backlick Road

Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon at Minor Lane Raised medians between Markham Street and John Marr Drive

Traffic signal and crosswalks at Green Spring

Road

Improved traffic flow from eastbound Route 236 to I-395

In lieu of an in-person meeting, VDOT invites residents and travelers to learn more, participate in the virtual meeting and give feedback in the following ways through Tuesday, May 31:

Attend the Thursday, May 12 online meeting. Register at virginiadot.org/Route236Stars or to participate without registering in listen-only mode, call 833-548-0276 (use meeting ID number 845-6536-0256 and passcode 438475).

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

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7



Be a part of our:

Wellbeing pages, the first week of every month.

Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus**: **Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

Senior Living, fourth week of every month.

Questions?

E-mail sales@connection newspapers.com or call 703-778-9431



VFW Post 8469 Celebrates 75th Anniversary

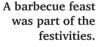
n April 30, VFW Post 8469 celebrated its 75th anniversary since being chartered. The post was chartered on Oct. 11, 1946, in Fairfax City and has been an integral part of the City and Fairfax County ever since. It's most visible marching in the Fairfax City Independence Day Parade and jointly leading the City's Veterans Day and Memorial Day ceremonies with American Legion Post 177.

In addition, the post raises funds for veterans' programs, supports classroom instruction and provides volunteer manpower for community efforts such as packaging food for Afghan refugees. It also supports Scout troops and recognizes excellence in community leaders, including teachers, law-enforcement officers and students. This year, the post will achieve both All-State and All-American status in the VFW for its exceptional performance and active support of veterans and the community.

During its anniversary celebration, VFW Post 8469 was honored by the presentation of a joint resolution from the Virginia House of Delegates and Senate recognizing the Post and its many accomplishments. Presenting it were Del. David Bulova (D-37th), Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34th) and Del. Dan Helmer (D-40th). Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) presented a resolution on behalf of the Springfield District.

There, as well, were Sheriff Stacey Kincaid and her husband, Virginia State Police Capt. Greg Kincaid; VFW Dept. of Virginia Chief of Staff Chris Birch; VFW Dept. of Virginia Inspector Charles Bush; and soldiers and families from the 29th Division of the Virginia National Guard.

For more information about the post, go to www.vfw8469.com.





From left, Pat Herrity presents the Springfield District's resolution to VFW Post 8469 Commander Mac McCarl.





From left, Chap Petersen, Mac McCarl, Dan Helmer and David Bulova with the resolutions from the Virginia General Assembly.



Enjoying the celebration are (from left) Greg and Stacey Kincaid, Pat Herrity, Mac McCarl, and David and Gretchen Bulova.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MAC McCarl



Stacey and Greg Kincaid (at right) enjoy dessert with other attendees.



VFW Post 8469 celebrated its 75th anniversary on April 30.

'Look at the World through a Different Lens'

Artful Living event benefits families in need.

By Bonnie Hobbs The Connection

n evening filled with original artwork, live music, gourmet food and socializing is in store for attendees of Artful Living. A fundraiser for Fairfax-based Britepaths – which helps local families in need – it's set for Thursday, May 19, from 7-10 p.m., at the Country Club of Fairfax, 5110 Ox Road in Fairfax.

The juried art show will feature 54 works by 38 local artists. Works on display will include oil, acrylic and watercolor paintings; photography; mixed media; sculpture and textiles. They'll be judged before the event by area residents Lynne Garvey-Hodge, Daniel Johnson and Jessie Whitten, who also served as judges in previous years. Artists include GMU student



"Everything is Connected," by Fairfax's Camille Kouyoumdjian, is in Artful Living.

Nadya Steare, a recipient of the 2020 Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Fellowship; Fairfax's Camille Kouyoumdjian, who's most inspired by "the symbiosis of human cultures and the natural environments that nurture them;" Jennifer M. Allevato, whose art and design work

have been shown and sold in the U.S. and abroad; and Maria Francisca Roura, a street photographer and portraitist who moved to the U.S. from Chile.

Ribbons and cash prizes will be awarded for Best of Show and Best of Medium. In addition, through-



"Circle Dance," a collage by GMU student Nadya Steare, may be purchased at Artful Living.

out the event, guests may vote for the work they believe deserves the "People's Choice Award," and the winning artist will receive a ribbon. The art is also available for purchase; each artist sets the price and splits the sale proceeds 50/50 with Britepaths. The theme of both the event and art show is "Connected," and it's especially meaningful to Britepaths' Executive Director Lisa Whetzel. "It feels very special to be able to gather at Artful Living this

SEE ARTFUL LIVING, PAGE 10

Fairfax City Adopts FY 23 Budget

Real-estate tax rate reduced 6.5 cents; average tax on Fairfax City home will increase \$127.

By Bonnie Hobbs The Connection

airfax City's newly adopted FY 23 budget fulfills City Council's goals and directives. But more important for the residents, it reduces their real-estate tax rate by 6-1/2 cents.

When City Manager Rob Stalzer unveiled his proposed budget in February, he initially recommended trimming that tax rate from its current \$1.075 per \$100 assessed valuation to \$1.035. But the figure adopted last Tuesday, May 3, reduced it even further to \$1.01.

Because of the 8.75-percent rise in assessed values in calendar year 2022, the average residential tax bill will increase 2.2 percent. That means the owner of an average Fairfax City home valued at \$588,964 will pay \$127 more in real-estate taxes – less the \$274 it would have cost had the tax rate remained at \$1.035.

"The [real-estate] tax rate strikes the right balance between the quality of life our citizens expect and the [rising property assessments]," said Councilmember Joe Harmon.

Stalzer explained that the reduction was made possible due to "an

estimated \$500,000 surplus" the City will receive because of Fairfax County's recently updated FY22 school-tuition cost estimate.

In addition, the average, annual, commercial real-estate tax bill will decrease by 4.2 percent. The personal-property tax rate remains at \$4.13 per \$100 assessed valuation. However, the personal-property tax rate on vehicles was lowered from 100 percent of fair-market value to 86 percent. (The tax rate for machinery and tools will remain at 100 percent).

The overall FY 23 budget contains \$193,908,167 for all funds and \$162,157,744 for the General Fund. "[These] expenditures continue the significant progress made over the past several years," said Chief Financial Officer David Hodgkins. "The adopted budget contains the necessary personnel, operating and capital resources to support economic recovery and grow the City's commercial base in an impactful and sustainable way."

The General Fund spending plan also provides the financial investment required to support the City's FY23-27 CIP of \$11 million, which was adopted last week, as well. It includes 116 projects and is fully funded at \$80,409,389 for FY 23.

The FY23-27 CIP total amount is \$309.1 million, and its projects address many of the City's current and future needs.

The FY 23 General Fund budget is \$7.2 million higher than it was in FY 22 – an increase of 4.6 percent. The total FY 23 budget of nearly \$194 million for all City funds – General, Wastewater, Stormwater Utility, Transit, Old Town Service District, Cable, Transportation Tax, Capital and American Rescue Plan Act Funds — reflects a 5.3-percent increase over the FY 22 amount.

It reestablishes the Old Town Service District tax rate at 4 cents per \$100 of assessed value (a 4-cent increase from the previous \$0.00 rate). And it raises the City's required 12 percent undesignated fund balance to 15 percent, further bolstering Fairfax's AAA bond rating.

But the City's enterprise utility funds for wastewater and stormwater will operate without General Fund dollars, while remaining financially sustainable.

The new budget fully funds the City School Board's \$53,480,000 FY 23 contract with FCPS. And it includes a 3.5-percent merit increase and a 2.6-percent market-rate adjustment to City em-

ployee pay scales. The goal is to ensure greater parity within the Northern Virginia region and aid the City's recruitment and retention efforts. It also provides for the transition of public-safety compensation plans from pay ranges to a step system, effective Oct. 1.

The budget funds a net increase of 9.75 full-time equivalent positions to address the growing needs and support initiatives in the departments of Economic Development, Human Services, Fire Code Administration, Fleet Maintenance, Information Technology, Finance, Public Works, Wastewater and Stormwater Utility.

During discussions last week, prior to adoption of the budget, it was obvious that not everyone was on board with it. "These are decisions none of us take lightly," said Councilmember Tom Ross. "I'm concerned about reducing the tax rate. I understand our revenues have increased and tax assessments have to.

So this is an opportunity to [use the increased income] to invest in the community. I hope we don't have to increase the [real-estate] tax rate next year."

Councilmember Sang Yi, however, believed the real-estate tax

rate should have been reduced further. "I just felt like we could do a little bit better, considering the increased property assessments," he said.

"And with inflation, the cost of gas and food have gone up 8-10 percent – and not everyone gets a COLA [cost-of-living adjustment in their pay]," he continued. "That's why I can't support the \$1.01, but I appreciate all the hard work that [City] staff and my colleagues have put into this budget."

Meanwhile, Councilwoman Janice Miller – who made the motions to approve both the budget and the real-estate tax rate - explained why she did so. "This budget fully funds the City services and provides an increase in compensation for our dedicated and hardworking staff, and it funds the CIP," she said. "By lowering the tax rate, we [still] funded the stormwater utility. And this budget is fair, reflects our values and preserves our funding plan for FY 23. I'm happy and proud to support the changes we made tonight, and I believe there's enough flexibility in the budget to provide for the coming year."

Ultimately, the budget passed with a vote of 4-2, with just Ross and Yi voting no.

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

4 & Burke / Fairfax / Fairfax Station/Clifton/Lorton / Springfield & May 12-18, 2022

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



Asian Festival on Main Is May 15

he 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, family-friendly event will take place in the City's historic Old Town area, on Main Street between University Drive and Old Lee Highway/East Street.

The fun includes a wide variety of Asian food from more than 30 vendors, including Japanese waffles, Thai rice dishes, Himalayan dumplings, Taiwanese filled and steamed bao buns, Asian desserts and bubble tea. There'll also be a beer garden, art, crafts, children's games and live entertainment.

Performances include the Chinese Lion Dance, K-Pop and hip-hop singers, Hawaiian and Bollywood dancing, a Filipino hip-hop show, yo-yo and dog tricks, a marshal arts demonstration, Muay Thai boxing and a costume contest with people dressed as characters from popular movies, books, TV shows and video games.







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OPINION

Justin Constantine: Local Kid, American Hero

Dear Friends, Virginians, Citizens of Fairfax:

This is a melancholy newsletter, based upon news this week of the passing of Lt. Col. Justin Constantine of prostate cancer. A decorated veteran of the Iraq War, Justin was 51 when he died on Wednesday [May 4]. He was a friend and an inspiration to many of us.

REMEMBRANCE

Like Justin grew up on the mean streets of Fair-

fax City. He attended J.C. Wood Elementary and Fairfax High School in 1980's. (I played soccer with his older brother at FHS). He graduated a couple years after me and we ran in the same circles. It was that kind of small town.

Years later, I was back in northern Virginia as a young lawyer. Justin had just graduated from JMU and, like me, played for NOVA Rugby. He was a happy-go-lucky young man and strong as an ox. When he ran the ball, he knocked over tacklers like bowling pins. We immediately reconnected and became friends.

In 1997, Justin was attending law school out West but home during the summer. After work, we played "sevens rugby" at a local school. Justin told us he was joining the Marines and becoming a JAG officer. After law school, he served a five-year tour with the USMC, then took a reserve billet. During the Iraq War, he volunteered for deployment as a civil affairs officer, bringing stability to Iraqi communities torn apart by war.

In 2006, we heard the shocking news that Justin had been shot in the back of the head by a hostile sniper in Anbar province. The bullet exited his mouth and effectively destroyed his face. A Navy corpsman saved his life by performing an impromptu tracheotomy. He was rushed to a field hospital and eventually to an Army hospital in Germany where 20 operations were performed to put his face back together. He told us how the hospital staff in Germany put towels over the mirror so he could not see his own face.

In October 2006, after Justin returned stateside, I stopped by his parents' house in Fairfax City to see him. Somehow, he was still upbeat, despite the horrific injuries, and talking about plans to resume work. Months later, I joined a caravan from Fairfax City to attend Justin's Purple



Justin Constantine

Heart ceremony at the Marine Corps Museum in Quantico. The Fairfax Rebels were in the house that day, representing one of our own.

Over the years, I would see Justin and his wife Dahlia (their courtship is another inspiring story), socially or in the community. In 2010, a group of ruggers hosted a happy hour for him before his marriage to Dahlia. After years of rehab, he worked for a few years at DOJ, then decided to make his career as a motivational speaker.

He became the national face of the Wounded Warrior community and was recognized by Senator Scott Surovell, his JMU classmate, in an emotional presentation to the House of Delegates in 2012. Everything in his life seemed like it was on track. Every time I saw him, he told me he was lifting weights and could still kick my butt on the rugby pitch.

I heard a couple months ago that Justin had cancer and it was not good. (You learn to dread "GoFundMe" pages). I didn't have a chance to speak with him again and I have no idea if the cancer was related to his battlefield injury. Regard-

less, his service as a Marine, his advocacy for veterans, and his upbeat nature -- still doing daily PT to his final days -- marked him as a man who lived a full life.

We live in a world where courage and optimism are in short supply. Justin Constantine had every reason to be depressed or bitter. He was neither. He was an American hero and a Fairfax City kid (and true rugger) all the way.

We need more people like him in America today.

-Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34th

ONNECTION

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Lamb Center and Wesley Housing Partner for Supportive Housing

uesday, May 10, Fairfax nonprofit homeless services provider The Lamb Center and nonprofit affordable housing developer Wesley Hous-

ing announced a strategic partnership to create much-needed supportive housing in the City of Fairfax.

In the immediate term, the partners are applying for a Special Use Permit application with Fairfax City officials for the redevelopment of the Hy Way Motel site (9640 Fairfax Blvd, Fairfax, into a five-story residential/ mixed-use com-

and office space on the ground floor of the building.

The property will house residents with very low incomes, at or below 30% of the Area Median Income (\$29,910 for a single person,

Fairfax County Point-in-Time "Supportive Survey released this week afhousing profirms the urgent need for supvides stability portive housing. The survey that decreases shows there were 1,191 peothe recurrence ple experiencing homelessness in of homelessness Fairfax County on the night of and reduces the the 2022 Pointin-Time Count. draw on public This is a slight decrease of 3 resources." percent people) — Lamb Center Executive

Fairfax County munity with 54-studio apartments Five-Year Consolidated Plan include developing a minimum of 10,000 new affordable housing

2021. The hous-

ing goals of the

units over the next 15 years.

"It's good to see homelessness in the county trending down, but the long-term solution is supportive housing," said Lamb Center Executive Director Tara Ruszkowski. "Our project in Fairfax City will provide critical supportive services centered in human dignity. Supportive housing provides stability that decreases the recurrence

of homelessness and reduces the draw on public resources," Ruszkowski said.

Residents at the new Fairfax development will receive on-site case management and other wraparound support. Case managers will help each tenant formulate and achieve individual goals such as securing income or work,

SEE LAMB CENTER, PAGE 7

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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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Director Tara Ruszkowski

OPINION

Lamb Center and Wesley Housing Partner For Supportive Housing

From Page 6

improving physical and mental health conditions, and maintaining housing. Case managers will also provide skills training to improve individuals' ability to budget, manage medication, maintain employment, and develop positive social supports.

"Amid a housing crisis, we have to get creative when it comes to boosting permanent supportive housing options for vulnerable community members," said Wesley Housing President/CEO Shelley Murphy. "Pairing Wesley Housing's development experience with The Lamb Center's expertise in serving the homeless population will ensure a high-quality property that meets the needs of very low-income members of the community and supports Fairfax County's overall housing goals."

Wesley Housing is a leading nonprofit developer in Northern Virginia, has been working to provide affordable rental housing for individuals and families for nearly 50 years. For more information, please visit www.wesleyhousing. org and follow @WesleyHousing on social media.

The Lamb Center is a daytime drop-in center for homeless individuals in the central Fairfax area. Since opening its doors in 1992, thousands of guests have been welcomed and served. The Lamb Center provides a variety of services without cost to its guests, including breakfast, lunch, showers, laundry service, case management, Bible studies, housing and job counseling, AA meetings, a nurse practitioner clinic, a dental clinic, and much more. The Lamb Center partners with both Fairfax City and Fairfax County to provide approximately 20 guests each week with paid jobs maintaining city parks and public spaces. For more information, visit www.thelambcenter.



Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
NORTON	22454	58	EBL/ROUTE 58A	BEAR CREEK	4/28/2022
NORTON	22455	58	WBL/ROUTE 0058	BEAR CREEK	4/28/2022
ALLEGHANY	1199	710	STONEWALL LANE	DUNLAP CREEK	4/27/2022
BUCHANAN	4003	1020	GREAT OAKS RD	LEVISA FORK	4/26/2022
SCOTT	16808	670	HALES SPRING RD	VALLEY CREEK	4/26/2022
SCOTT	16698	623	SPEERS VALLEY RD	N FORK CLINCH RIVER	4/20/2022
HALIFAX	9317	716	DRYBURG RD	DIFFICULT CREEK	4/16/2022
SMYTH	17552	633	BEAVER CREEK RD	BEAVER CREEK	4/12/2022
BLAND	3045	602	SPUR BRANCH RD	SPUR BRANCH #1	4/8/2022
FRANKLIN	7951	739	GAP GATE RD/ROUTE739	GREEN CREEK	4/7/2022
BLAND	3111	625	CERES SCHOOL RD	N FORK HOLSTON RIVER #1	4/5/2022
RICHMOND	21310	7542	GROVE AVE	ROUTE 195 & CSX RR	4/1/2022

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth, but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit https://www.virginiadot.org and navigate to Info Center/Trucking Resources. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities 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 VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730.

Bulletin Board

From Page 2

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:

❖ May 19 – "Whale Watching in Baja" – Paul Wormeli

May 26 – "Vienna African American Trailblazers and Liberty Amendments – Gloria Runyon/ Sylvia/DeeDee

Students may attend one or all of the all spring classes for a \$55 fee and are encouraged to create their own schedule – attend classes all day or attend only one class. For a complete listing of classes or to register, visit the AIL page on the SCNOVA website at SCNOVA Adventures in Learning Spring 2022 or call the office at 703-281-0538. Visit www.scnova.org or contact the Office at 703-281-0538.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Parent Support Partners, a service of the Healthy Minds Fairfax initiative, are all parents who have received training and are qualified to offer education, support and assistance at no cost to families or caregivers. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax or www.nami-northernvirginia.org/

parent-peer-support.html.
Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke sponsors a monthly meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, noon-1:30 p.m., for caregivers to learn and to share with others experiencing similar challenges. Before attending, contact the facilitator, Eileen Thompson at 703-451-8626 or eileen.thompson1@gmail.com.

Haven of Northern Virginia provides support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. To become a Haven volunteer, please call 703-941-7000 to request an orientation. Volunteers must complete a 30-hour training and commit to one year of service answering Haven phones (2.5 hours weekly). Next training is scheduled for fall 2017.

ONGOING

Assistance League of Northern
Virginia is an all-volunteer
non-profit organization that
feeds, clothes and provides
reading assistance and books to
children in need. Assistance
League's programs touch the
lives of hundreds of children
in Fairfax and Prince William
Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to
helping those in need. To learn
more, email info@alnv.org, or
visit www.alnv.org.

STEM Professionals Needed. Volun-

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15

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Eagle Festival Provides Nature Programs

Rain dampens attendance, not learning.

By Susan Laume THE CONNECTION

ason Neck State Park, and its supporting Friends group, opened the park's gate to a live celebration of their traditional Eagle Festival on May 7th. Unfortunately, after a two year pandemic hiatus from the live event, heavy rains plaguing the east coast over the weekend limited festival activities at the 1,856 acre park which sits on the land neck between Belmont Bay and Gunston Cove (7301 High Point Rd, Lorton). Events were scaled back from this year's larger plans, presenting only shows and exhibits which could be contained within the visitor's center, main tent, and tented exhibitor tables.

A lone owl, Smoke, a Grey Morph



New interpretive ranger, Meg Doppee, Gainesville, documented her fourth day on the job with fellow ranger Parker Fox.

Eastern Screech-owl, became the live stand-in for eagles who are normally a focus of the festival named for them. Rain canceled the guided telescope and binocular viewing of the several eagle pairs resident in the park and the scheduled guided bird walks. An eagle nest camera feed played in the visitor's center as a substitute, with the benefit of



Edita Peterson, Springfield, learns snakes aren't so scary, from Echo Uzzo, of Echos of Nature.

Edita Peterson's mom captures her moment meeting and learning about ferrets.

a close-up focus greater than most binoculars can provide.

Instead of viewing live eagles, seeing a variety of creatures under the shelter of the main tent held all attendees', especially young visitors', rapt attention. Educational programs by Echoes of Nature (www.

echosofnature.org) and Wildlife Center of Virginia (www.wildlifecenter.org) introduced the audience to Black, Hognose, and Corn snakes, an opossum, ferret, box turtle, and a Red-tail Hawk. Visitors had the opportunity to meet those wildlife ambassadors face to face and touch

many of them, for an experience not usually possible with such creatures who inhabit the wild.

For those not quite ready to greet nature in true wild form, costumed characters, Ranger Parker Red Fox, (enacted by Jessica Bowser) and

SEE EAGLE FESTIVAL, PAGE 9

Retiring State Park Manager Honored

Reinhardt Gray lauded by House of Delegates and Citizens Association.

By Susan Laume The Connection

ormer Mason Neck State Park Manager, Reinhardt Gray, who retired in January, was recognized on Saturday for his contributions to the Commonwealth in a Resolution by the Virginia House of Delegates, HR 218. As manager since 2014, Gray is credited as being "instrumental in forming a coalition that became a support structure for sharing resources and ideas, leading to better experiences for the many thousands of people who visited Mason Neck [State Park] each year." His coordination included building a partnership with the active Friends group and local garden clubs to open the Junior Ranger program to children of low-income families often living remote from green space, and broadening the park's signature annual Eagle Festival which focuses on environmental awareness.

Before coming to Mason Neck to assume the role of park manager, Gray had worked in the state park system since 2011; serving as a park ranger at Leesylvania and Belle Isle State Parks, and was later elevated to park manager at High Bridge Trail State Park.

During these tenures he worked with surrounding communities and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Washington to facilitate under-served children's participation in the Great American Campout Program. The program teaches skills related to camping basics; featuring fire starting, campfire cooking, gear suggestions, and generating the camaraderie of an outdoor overnight ex-

Gray began his working career in law enforcement with, the Virginia State Police, as a trooper, with the Bureau of Criminal Investigations, and later with the Postal Inspection Service, and the Federal Air Marshal Service. In retirement from the park service, Gray plans to to return to law enforcement, working part-time with the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services on its accreditation program.

In accepting the House Resolution and community recognition, Gray reminded the audience that it's never the individual, it's the team, including the Mason Neck Park staff, Virginia Dept. of Wildlife Resources, Dept. of Conservation & Recreation, and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, with representatives pictured: (L to R) Taylor Willis, Alex Qualls, Lance Elzie, Parker Fox, Eric Percival, Katiana Quarles, Jamie Leeuwrik, James Watling, Ryan Baxter.



Marvin Miller presents the Mason Neck Citizen's Association 2022 community service award to Reinhardt Gray.





Delegate Kathy K.L. Tran (D-42), with her daughter, present retiring park manager Reinhardt Gray with the Virginia House of Delegates Resolution recognizing his contributions to the Commonwealth.

8 & Burke / Fairfax / Fairfax Station/Clifton/Lorton / Springfield & May 12-18, 2022

Project Launched to Address Overflow at Lake Accotink

After rainy days, hikers face a watery crossing when walking around the lake.

> BY MIKE SALMON THE GAZETTE

or residents of Springfield, the 3.5 mile walk around Lake Accotink is a great workout and good for a breath of fresh air but after any kind of rainfall, the hikers better bring their boots. Down below the lake's dam, water flowing into the creek overflows the drain flooding the path so the Fairfax County Park Authority is addressing it with the Lake Accotink Dam Stream Crossing Project.

The project involves creating approximately 300 feet of asphalt trail improvements and 325 feet on an elevated concrete pedestrian crossing over the dam outfall in Lake Accotink Park, FCPA said.

For Marcella Hernandez, it's a needed improvement. She's had to turn around a few times when she wasn't in the mood to cross it and get her shoes soaked.

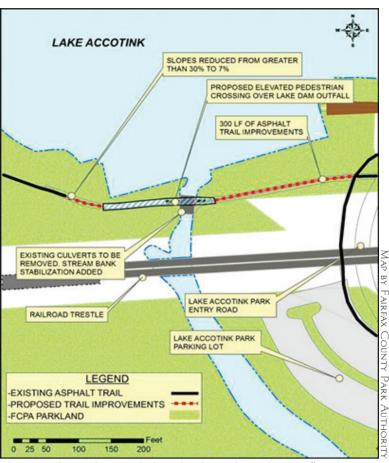
"I've seen that for many years, it's needed," she said of the project. "I've come around on the trail some days and had to go back," she said.

Nick Huynh walked it a few times too. "I had to figure out how to cross, it was scary," he said.

At the flooding point below the dam, there is an overflow channel to address the excess water flowing into Accotink Creek and it has a grate over it so in normal conditions, there is no problem. Erosion has taken place though, and the path has a few channels cut right around the grate where the FCPA project will take place.

According to FCPA, this spot floods suddenly and frequently, often stranding trail users and tempting them to wade through swiftly running water. Excessive damage due to major storm events has required a total reconstruction of the trail twice in the last five years. This project will resolve these issues, enhancing safety and accessibility for park users, the FCPA said.

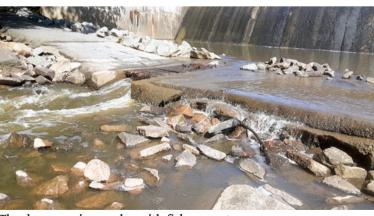
This water hazard was brought to their attention through complaints from the public when it is uncrossable, usually every heavy www.ConnectionNewspapers.com



The map shows the area below the dam where the overflow impacts hikers.



Even a long-jumper would have a problem here.



The dam area is popular with fisherman too.

rain, and this also makes it difficult for the workers to reach that side of the lake when the path is uncrossable. After a heavy rain, wood debris blocks the path resulting in increased the workload of both site staff and Mobile Crew, who had to remove said debris every storm.

Project completion is anticipated in early 2023. Residents should expect occasional construction traffic entering and exiting the Accotink Park Road entrance. Portions of the surrounding Lake Accotink Trail will be closed, and signs posted during construction.

Eagle Festival Provides Nature Programs

From Page 8 Barred Owl, (enacted by Brenda Frank), provided a more cuddly alternative. In true fox form, Parker stimulated wily fox dances complete with tail shaking, paw to hand high-fives, lots of photo ops, and, though perhaps not so foxy, plenty of hugs with the younger set. Barred Owl, a speaking character, made sure that observers became familiar with her habits and preferences; as when discussing the food choices of a puppet animal during the show, saying "I'd rather have mice.'

Hand puppet show participants hatched a tadpole and counted the legs of a spider, among other learning elements under the guidance of puppeteer Caroline Seitz of Kids Nature Shows (www.KidsNature-Shows.com). Liz Dennison, president of Secret Garden Birds and Bees, a non-profit group of volunteers (www.Secretgardenbirdsandbees.com) presented a program on pollinators. The Secret Garden group has made frequent popular presentations at Mason Neck at past events showing beautiful birds of prey rehabilitated at their center, promoting education about birds of prey, as well as bees and beekeeping. Caution over



Smoke, a Grey Morph Eastern Screech-Owl, was bird of the prey stand-in for eagles, accompanied by handler, NOVA Parks roving naturalist Matt Felperin, at Mason Neck State Park's Eagle Festival.

the current avian flu outbreak kept their birds at home for this

Also braving the chilly temperature and drizzle were table exhibits for NOVA Parks and golf course, and Gunston Hall History Museum.

State Delegate Kathy K. L. Tran, a friend of the park which falls within her district, presented a Resolution from the Virginia House commending retiring park manager Reinhardt Gray for his service.



Ava proves she is a Beagle, not a Foxhound, in her curious encounter with Ranger Parker Fox, while visiting from Baltimore with her family Alex and Riley Oldershaw.

Artful Living Event Benefits Families in Need

FROM PAGE 4

year, after more than two years apart," she said. "But being at this event has always felt special to me because you can really feel the energy of our community's commitment to helping its neighbors."

Providing the music will be local, Latin-jazz band Batida Diferente. Its name means "a different beat," and this group fuses Brazilian and American influences into a unique blend of jazz and pop.

The Country Club is preparing a special menu of appetizers, beer and wines. The appetizers will include top sirloin and dinner rolls, fig and caramelized-onion tarts, beef empanadas, vegetable spring rolls, coconut shrimp, spinach-and-artichoke dip, artisan cheeses and an assortment of Mediterranean grilled vegetables. For dessert, there'll be cakes by Nothing Bundt Cakes and chocolates by Cameron's Coffee & Chocolates.

Among the items up for bid during the live auction are:

- ❖ A private, wine tasting for six guests in the historic, Watergate complex in Washington, D.C.;
- ❖ A beer tasting for eight guests in downtown Washington,
- ❖ A Carolina Beach vacation-house rental accommodating
- An Ocean City condo rental for six guests;
- ❖ A private and secluded, vacation rental home that accommodates six guests in Fauquier County and is close to hiking, wineries and restaurants in Delaplane.



This photograph, called "The Moment of Connection," by Maria Francisca Roura, is in the show.



Also on display will be "Still Life with Tulips" by Jennifer Allevato.

During the evening, attendees will also be able to bid via a silent auction for an assortment of special packages of goods and services offered by local businesses, including Alya Salon & Spa, Merrifield Garden Center, Twins ACE Hardware and

The Wine Reserve at Waterford. Live-auction items are available for preview on the event-registration page. Silent- auction items may be previewed a few days before the event. To see them, go to https://britepaths.org/event/artful-living and click on "Register."

Looking forward to Artful Living, Whetzel said the art show, plus the opportunity to mingle with some of the artists, also make the evening special. "Art has the

ability to transform, which we feel speaks to our mission to empower those among us who've been struggling but working so hard to improve their lives and thrive in our expensive area," she said. "They've faced even more setbacks during the pandemic, and we've been heartened by the outpouring of support Britepaths has received these past two years – but there's still so much more to do."

In 2021, Britepaths served 8,573 Northern Virginia households, impacting the lives of 12,722 people. So event proceeds will benefit Britepaths' programs to provide financial education, coaching and mentoring, job-readiness supports and training, emergency food, financial aid and seasonal assis-

tance to working families struggling to make ends meet. And attendees will also hear stories of resiliency from clients working toward financial self-sufficiency with the help of Britepaths' staff and volunteers.

Admission to Artful Living is \$100. Tickets may be purchased at https://britepaths.org/event/artful-living/ or at the event. Call 703-273-8829 or email events@ britepaths.org for more information.

"The funds we raise that evening will enable us to provide more food and financial assistance at a time when the need is so critical," said Whetzel.

"They'll also help us broaden our reach with our Financial Empowerment and Workforce Development programs that offer vital tools for people to improve their financial futures. We hope everyone will join us for this unique event that offers us an opportunity to lift up our neighbors and look at the world around us through a different lens."

Artful Living is made possible by sponsorships from: Human Touch LLC; Anthem HealthKeepers Plus; MBH Settlement Group; MainStreet Bank; Ken and Linda Kozloff; Apple Federal Credit Union; Printing Ideas; Nothing Bundt Cakes, Fair Lakes and Vienna; Christine Hissong, Positive Pathways to Resolution & Success; and Miller Consulting Group.

Language Skills Valuable for Two Franconia Police Officers

Quick thinking earned them title as "Officers of the Month" for April.

By Mike Salmon The Connection

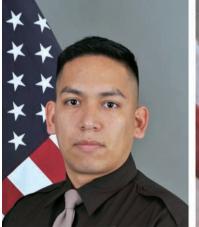
wo police officers from the Franconia district station used their multi-language skills to solve a robbery case and make arrests, earning them the title of "officers of the month," for April.

According to police: Shortly after noon on April 9th, officers from the Franconia Station responded to a call about a potential shooting on Skyles Way in Springfield. The caller reported that his wife had been shot. First-responding officers, which included officers Jennifer Umanzor-Amaya and Kevin Garcia Rosa, arrived to find a chaotic scene. A male subject was lying on the grass with what appeared to be a gunshot wound to

his left shin, police said.

The officers rendered aid, while simultaneously securing the scene and making it safe. Units immediately located and identified a female victim who was the target of an armed robbery. The victim is a local jewelry dealer who has done business in the area for many years. While visiting the Skyles Way address to present her jewelry for a potential sale, she was robbed of her purse at gunpoint by two subjects. They also attempted to steal her jewelry bag but were unsuccessful. The victim had a visible laceration to her head that was initially thought to have been a gunshot graze wound.

Officers Umanzor-Amaya and Garcia-Rosa separated individuals at the scene and began to work their way through a series of inter-



Officers Jennifer Umanzor-Amaya and Kevin Garcia Rosa.

views and translations, according to police. Both officers are fluent in Spanish and nearly all involved parties and witnesses were Spanish speaking only. The composure, command presence, and investigative focus of both officers were noted by other officers, supervisors, and responding detectives, the police said. They interviewed several people on the scene and determined that the male subject lying in the grass was one of the robbery culprits. He had not been shot but, in fact, sustained a compound fracture of his shin as he fled from the building after the robbery.

No bullets had been fired at or in the direction of the robbery victim as was initially suspected. Her injuries were a result of being pistol-whipped with a handgun as the suspects attempted to rob her, the FCPD said.

The Major Crimes Bureau detectives who responded to the scene immediately and were able to decipher the crime scene due to the initial work performed by Officers Umanzor-Amaya and Garcia Rosa, police said.

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Residents, Artists Enjoy Outdoor Art Show

Fairfax City's Art Walk on Main, April 30 in Old Town, featured local artists.



Betty Baumgartner has several, brightly colored acrylic paintings on display.



Burley Rudacille uses traditional, Chinese brush painting for his watercolors.

> Pнотоѕ By Bonnie Hobbs



Yelenna Angeles works on her acrylic, still-life painting.



Fritz Treyz standing beside his oil paintings.







Newspapers & Online

Special Connections Calendar 2022

MAY

5/4/2022Wellbeing 5/11/2022HomeLifeStyle
5/11/2022HomeLifeStyle
5/18/2022A+ Camps & Schools
5/25/2022Senior Living

JUNE

6/1/2022	Wellbeing
6/8/2022	Wellbeing HomeLifeStyle
6/15/2022	A+ Camps & Schools
6/22/2022	Senior Living
6/29/2022	Summer Fun

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Services



An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them. -Werner Heisenberg

Announcements

In accordance with New York law, the National Rifle Association of America announces that its Annual Meeting of Members will be held May 28, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. in Houston, Texas in the **General Assembly Theater** at the George R. Brown Convention Center.







*Includes product and labor; bathtub, shower or walk-in tub and wall surround. This promotion cannot be combined with any other offer. Other restrictions may apply. This offer expires 6/30/2022. Each dealership is independently owned and operated. **Third party financing is available for those customers who qualify. See your dealer for details. @2022 BCI Acrylic Inc.



News

Effective Covid Treatment Available

Source: Fairfax County Health Department

Staying up to date with vaccination, and continuing to practice layered prevention strategies remain critical strategies to stem the spread of COVID-19 illness in our communities. Vaccination not only prevents COVID-19 but also makes illness less severe if you do become infected.

But what if you have chosen not to get vaccinated, or still get sick even after receiving vaccine, and are at increased risk because you are older or have a chronic medical condition? This is where treatment can be important.

If you are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19, effective treatment is now available that can prevent illness from becoming worse leading to hospitalization and death. People who are more likely to get very sick include older adults, people with chronic medical conditions or a weakened immune system, those who are overweight, and women who are pregnant.

Several types of treatment are available, which may be used at different times or in different groups of patients. Talk with your healthcare provider to get more information about the range of options.

An expert panel of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) identified Paxlovid (ritonavir boosted nirmatrelvir) as the preferred therapy with strong evidence supporting its use. In a randomized clinical trial, Paxlovid was 88% effective in preventing hospitalization or death from COVID-19 among high-risk patients. In that trial, there were no deaths among people who received Paxlovid compared with 12 deaths among those who received placebo.

Other Treatment Tips

The Fairfax Health District shares the following information about COVID-19 treatment:

If you test positive and are an older adult or someone who is at increased risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, treatment is available. Contact a healthcare provider after a positive test to determine if you are eligible for treatment, even if you only have mild or moderate symptoms. You can also visit a Test to Treat location and, if eligible, receive a prescription from a provider at that location. https:// aspr.hhs.gov/TestToTreat/Pages/ default.aspx

SEE COVID TREATMENT, PAGE 13 www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

Effective Covid Treatment Available

From Page 12

- Follow CDC guidance on testing for COVID-19 and use the Treatment Locator or call 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489) to find a testing location that can provide treatment if you test positive. https://covid-19-test-to-treatlocator-dhhs.hub.arcgis.com/
- Don't delay: Treatment must be started within the five days of when your symptoms began.
- Staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccination is still the best way to prevent serious outcomes of COVID-19, including severe disease, hospitalization and death.

Medications to treat COVID-19 are free, whether or not you have health insurance. While there is no cost for tablets (such as Paxlovid), there may be a co-pay for infusion or injection of a monoclonal antibody product. For those using the Test to Treat program at a pharmacy clinic, health insurance, including Medicaid, also will pay the cost of the consultation; those who do not have health insurance would be responsible for the consultation

More information on COVID-19 treatments and therapeutics can be found here. https://www.hhs. gov/coronavirus/covid-19-treatments-therapeutics/index.html

Stay Informed About COVID-19

 Call the Health Department Call Centers Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., for questions about COVID-19 (703-267-3511) or vaccines (703-324-7404). You also can email ffxcovid@fairfaxcounty.gov.



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- Install and perform tire maintenance
- Install batteries and check starting / charging systems
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Past issues of back to 2008 are available at http://connectionarchives.com/PDF

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- Bonuses that give you realistic opportunities to significantly increase pay.
- Additional Bonus for ASE Certifications

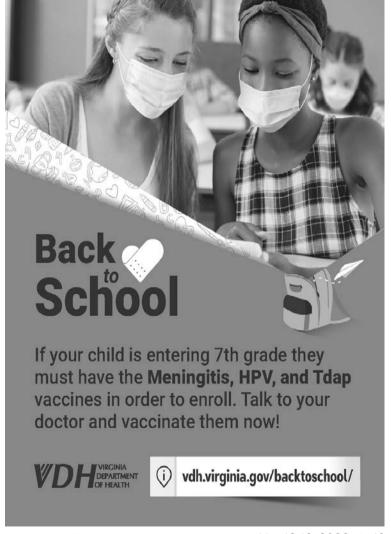
Duties & Responsibilities

- · Diagnose and repair basic automotive including brakes, alignments, suspensions, cooling and electrical
- Continuously learn new technical information and techniques in formal training sessions in order to stay abreast with rapidly changing automotive
- Change engine oil and filter
- Install and perform tire maintenance
- · Install batteries and check starting / charging systems
- · Install headlights and other small bulbs
- Repair flat tires
- · Install wiper blades
- Stock and unload tires
- · Assist fellow technicians/mechanics in performing technical activities.
- · Keep store management aware of mechanical repair problems as they occur.
- · Clean and maintain an organized and neat shop.
- · Adhere to all company policy, procedure, safety and environmental rules.

We are especially interested if the candidate has five (5) years of experience in the automotive service and repair industry but we will consider qualified

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Over the Edge

Rappellers raise funds for New Hope Housing.

By Jeanne Theismann
The Connection

xcitement was mixed with tinges of fear as more than 80 volunteers rappelled down the 14-story Crystal City Hilton as part of the Over the Edge fundraiser for New Hope Housing.

Held May 5 and 6, rappellers included Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay, who descended side by side with Arlington County Board member Matt de Ferranti.

McKay admitted he was hesitant but wanted to draw attention to the homeless situation throughout Northern Virginia.

"I was terrified when we started but as we went down it went a little bit easier," McKay said. "But even as scared as I was at the top of the building, it wasn't as scary as sleeping outside in the freezing cold, dead of winter like too many of our homeless people have to each night. So if I can raise awareness and overcome a fear of my own here today it is worth it. Most importantly I wanted to support New Hope and what they are doing."

New Hope Housing is a nonprofit operating homeless shelters and housing programs across Northern Virginia. The event was an alternative to a traditional gala in the wake of the uncertainties of the pandemic.

"This was a COVID-friendly way to raise funds that are desperately needed to support our mission," said Jan-Michael Sacharko, Director of Development for New Hope Housing. "Because of our partnerships with the Crystal City Hilton, Keller Williams Metro Center, sponsors and volunteers we were able to raise more than \$200,000."

De Ferranti, who has rappelled before, was eager to raise awareness for homelessness.

"The cause is what it's all about," de Ferranti said. "Homelessness is a fixable condition. We can end chronic homelessness, but we need people to believe that we can do it and invest in doing it."

Added McKay, "It was an amazing experience and an opportunity to bring awareness to the urgent need to support the homeless population of Fairfax County."

Photos by Jeanne Theismann The Connection



The KW Metro Center team poses for a photo at the New Hope Housing welcome reception for the Over the Edge fundraiser May 5 at the Crystal City Hilton.



New Hope Housing Director of Development Jan-Michael Sacharko, at right, poses with volunteers at the May 6 Over the Edge rappelling fundraiser at the Crystal City Hilton.



Lois Cook, vice president and wide receiver for the D.C. Divas, rappels down the Crystal City Hilton May 6 to support New Hope Housing.



Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay, on left, and Arlington County Board member Matt de Ferranti rappel down the side of the Crystal City Hilton May 5 in support of New Hope Housing.

"As scared as I was at the top of the building, it wasn't as scary as sleeping outside in the freezing cold, dead of winter like too many of our homeless people have to each night."

— Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeff McKay



Fairfax County Board of Supervisors chair Jeff McKay waves after descending 160-feet down the side of the Crystal City Hilton May 5 in support of New Hope Housing.

CALENDAR

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.

NOW THRU 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

NOW THRU JUNE 12

Art Blossoms 2022. At Torpedo Factory Artists

@ Mosaic, 2905 District Ave. #105, Fairfax.

A new exhibit at the Torpedo Factory Artists

@ Mosaic gallery in Fairfax offers its own interpretation of the beauty of nature in a show titled Art Blossoms 2022, featuring artists from the highly acclaimed Torpedo Factory Artists' Association. This is the third year hosting a floral inspired show and it's one of the favorites of gallery visitors. This exhibit by Torpedo Factory Artists' Association members includes paintings, fine art photography, sculpture, printmaking, ceramics and exquisite jewelry.

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/gunston-hall/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 Leshnoff: Symphony No. 4 "Heichalos;" and Beethoven: Symphony No. 9. Visit Fairfax-Symphony.org.

SUNDAY/MAY 15

N Gauge Model Trains. 1-4 p.m. At Fairfax Sta-

BULLETIN BOARD

From Page 7

teers are needed to assist K-12 STEM teachers in northern Virginia as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, stemvolunteers. org, during the 2019-20 school year, beginning in September. Please contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488 or donaldrea@aol.com.

Docents Needed. Sundays 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Greet museum visitors and tell them about the exhibits, the museum and its railroad and Civil War history. Ideal for those interested in railroads, the Civil War and Northern Virginia history. Training and orientation provided. Other volunteer opportunities are gardening, publicity and exhibit planning. Call 703-945-7483.

Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed. Help assist

tion Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Northern Virginia NTRAK Club will display and run N Gauge Model Trains at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum. Admission: Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-12, \$3; ages 13 and older, \$5 (\$6 special events); seniors and military, active and retired, \$4. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, www.facebook.com/FFXSRR, 703-425-9225.

SUNDAY/MAY 15

Asian Festival. 12-6 p.m. In The City of Fairfax Historic District, Main Street (Between Chain Bridge Road and University Drive) Fairfax. Old Town Fairfax Business Association partners with local business owners and the City of Fairfax to bring you the 2nd Annual Asian Festival on Main. Enjoy local food trucks, caterers, crafts, and vendors. Experience diverse, flavorful food and drinks for you to enjoy during Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Other than delicious Asian foods, alcoholic beverages are available for 21+ to enjoy all day as well.

MONDAY/MAY 16

Golf Outing Fundraiser. 10:30-6:30 p.m. At International Country Club, 13200 Lee Jackson Memorial Hwy., Fairfax. Tee off with family, friends and community leaders

and help feed your neighbors in need. Learn More: https://foodforothers.org/golf-outing/

MAY 19-22

Annandale Book Sale. 10:30-5:30 p.m. At George Mason Regional Library, 7001 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. A wide selection of high-quality books, CDs, and DVDs in various categories will be available at the 4-day long George

Mason Friends Spring Book Sale. Visit the website: georgemasonfriends.blogspot.com

THURSDAY/MAY 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 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

the Department of Family Services' BeFriendA-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil at Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-4547.

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An Uncomfortable Month



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

In an odd juxtaposition of events/months, I find myself adrift, sort of, with no medical appointments whatsoever on the previous or future horizon; compared to the previous month when I had a medical something-or-other practically every other day. And I can't help fearing that this calm is ahead of some storm. I mean, I have cancer. Shouldn't I be doing something (other than taking my daily thyroid cancer pill), going somewhere, being tested, being scanned, having my blood drawn and/or having a telephone or video appointment with one of my doctors? I'm not exactly unsettled by this lack of activity, but I can't help thinking, to quote Shakespeare: "something is rotten in the state of Denmark."

Not that I have any symptoms that are new or have persisted for three weeks (the advisory timeframe I was given for such cause/concern). But how do I go about my daily business (life) without any substantial cancer-related activity/inquiry, other than my daily lenvima? Cancer is a very serious situation, maybe more serious than a heart attack (as the old expression says), yet here I am unsupervised – sort of, and untethered (to quote one of my late father's Sid Caesar references) as if I don't have a care in the world. Not having any cancer-centric activity or preoccupation; it's almost as if I'm on holiday from my disease, and I'm not expected back for another few weeks. Moreover, given the rarity of this emotional interval I can't help wondering: "What's wrong with this picture?" I have an incurable from of thyroid cancer, shouldn't there be more hands on me?

The juxtaposition is that instead of worrying/planning for all the cancer activity ahead, I'm worrying/not-having-to-plan since I have no cancer activity ahead. Somehow, it feels wrong, or at least something is missing somewhere. I'm used to having lots of cancer stuff on my schedule. That's my normal. It's abnormal – now when I don't have to schedule anything. Not that I'm paranoid (which to quote Major Frank Burns from M*A*S*H: "I wouldn't be if everybody wasn't looking at me"), but this silence is not golden.

I can't imagine any medical professional on my quasi team is assuming anything about my health/status (after all, we know what assuming does). And cancer is hardly best left unattended. As my oncologist said years ago in response to my question about what happens if I stop the medication: "I know what happens. The cancer grows." Is it really the process that I take a pill every morning and then call the doctor in the morning, three months hence? Granted, I have been on this thyroid cancer track going on two years since I was re-diagnosed and I do know the drill, but as I felt in the early days of being a non-small cell lung cancer "diagnossee," am I closer to the beginning or the end?

I don't feel neglected, exactly. I feel like I'm not doing something I – or someone else, should be doing. Cancer is rarely better left to its own devices. My dilemma is, I just don't know if the devices I'm left with and/or which are being left on my behalf, are enough to meet the challenges ahead because cancer never takes any days off, so I shouldn't be taking any days (certainly not months) off either, right?

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



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