Asian Festival On Main

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The Choy Wun Lion Dance Troupe thrills the crowd at Fairfax City’s 2nd annual Asian Festival on Main, Sunday, May 15.
NEW 2022 TOYOTA COROLLA LE SDN
LEASES STARTING FROM...
$199
Model #1922, MSRP $21,475. Lease offer for qualified lessees. Based on 36 months. 10,000 miles/yr & $2,299 due at signing. Security deposit waived. Plus tax, tags, freight and $599 processing fee. Factory programs subject to change.

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NEW 2022 TOYOTA CAMRY LE SDN
LEASES STARTING FROM...
$279
Model #1922, MSRP $25,675. Lease offer for qualified lessees. Based on 36 months. 10,000 miles/yr & $2,299 due at signing. Security deposit waived. Plus tax, tags, freight and $599 processing fee. Factory programs subject to change.

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LEASES STARTING FROM...
$309
Model #1927, MSRP $38,725. Lease offer for qualified lessees. Based on 36 months. 10,000 miles/yr & $3,999 due at signing. Security deposit waived. Plus tax, tags, freight and $599 processing fee. Factory programs subject to change.

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MAINTAIN PEACE OF MIND BY EXTENDING YOUR TOYOTACARE COMPLIMENTARY MAINTENANCE PLAN TO 4 YEARS/45,000 MILES!
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Fairfax County Officials Announce New Tourism Brand for South County

Connect, reconnect to the treasures.

Mercia Hobson
The Connection

The Gazette press time occurred as the announcement was underway. Look for more next week.

At a media briefing held Wednesday, May 17, against the backdrop of George Washington’s Mount Vernon, local leaders, and elected officials announced a new brand, unveiled its logo, and a visitors saving pass to cross-pollinate and drive tourism to the southeastern portion of Fairfax County.

The new brand, “Potomac Banks: Explore Fairfax South,” creates synergy between the historical, recreational, cultural, and ecological venues in the region.

Doug Bradburn is President and CEO of George Washington’s Mount Vernon. Bradburn said that the new brand would make people more aware of the different ways to have fun and learn in South County. The South County Tourism Task Force conducted a multi-year evaluation organized by Supervisor Dan Stork in partnership with Visit Fairfax and other tourism sites and attractions.

“Tourism is one of the top drivers of Fairfax South’s economy, which is a major contributor to Fairfax County’s overall tourism impact of more than $3 billion (2019), so the development of an exclusive brand was a natural next step,” said Barry Biggar of Visit Fairfax.

The southeastern area of Fairfax County is a destination for visitors to the region and locals alike. It provides many opportunities that tell the history and culture of America through museums, natural resources, and other attractions. George Mason’s Gunston Hall, the National Museum of the U.S. Army, the Workhouse Arts Center, and Mason Neck State Park are just a few of the many things to do near Mount Vernon.

According to the chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, Jeffrey C. McKay (D), the branding was important not only to tourism but to people who live in Fairfax County to “thread these sites together in a compact way for people to understand.”

Potomac Banks is the first joint destination-focused tourism brand in the county. Stock (D-Mount Vernon) welcomed all to come and explore South County. “Meet your history. Meet your community. Make a difference,” he said.

Visit Fairfax is the official tourism organization for Fairfax County, Virginia. It is charged with destination marketing and tourism promotion and is directed by many of the county’s top tourism and hospitality leaders. www.FXVA.com

The new logo for the brand, Potomac Banks: Explore Fairfax South.
Driver Charged with DUI in Single-Vehicle Fatal Crash In Franconia

By Mike Salmon
The Connection

A 20-year-old woman has died from injuries sustained in a crash that occurred just before 12:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 12, the Fairfax County Police said.

Officers were called to the area of Manchester Boulevard and Beulah Street for a single-vehicle crash. Sara Flores, 20, of Lorton, was the driver of a 2005 Toyota Solara and was traveling east on Manchester Boulevard near Silver Lakes Boulevard. The Toyota left the roadway and struck a telephone pole before coming to a stop. The front passenger, Danight Girmay, 20, of Lorton, was pronounced dead at the scene. Flores and the two rear male passengers were taken to the hospital with injuries later considered not to be life threatening.

A Go Fund Me page for Danight Girmay had raised more than $11,000 and was not accepting more donations as of May 18. "If you knew Danight, you'd know she was a jokester you knew Danight, you'd know she was a student at Virginia Tech.

and loved to share laughs. She would always wear a smile on her face and somehow be able to make you smile, even if you didn’t want to. Lastly, she was so passionate and devoted to everything she participated in whether it was for her education, sports, or the Hayfield community," the Go Fund Me page said.

According to a LinkedIn listing, Danight was a student at Virginia Tech. A warrant for Flores was issued for driving under the influence and will be served upon her release from the hospital, FCPD said. Detectives from the Crash Reconstruction Unit determined speed was also a factor in the crash. Additional charges are pending. Details of the investigation will be presented to the Office of the Commonwealth’s Attorney for review.

 Victim advocates from the Major Crimes Bureau’s Victim Services Division have been assigned to this case to ensure the victim’s family is receiving appropriate resources and assistance. This is the third non-pedestrian related fatality in the County in 2022. In 2021 there was one non-pedestrian related fatality.

Anyone with information about this crash is asked to contact the FCPD Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone -1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477).

Officials Examine Southern Beltway Section for Express Lanes

Plan calls for express lanes to cross Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

By Mike Salmon
The Connection

With an EZ-Pass, drivers can bypass traffic on express lanes in certain sections of the beltway. I-66 and I-95 and now officials are looking at one final stretch of interstate I-495 from Springfield across the Woodrow Wilson Bridge into Maryland.

This new idea planners have named “I-495 Southside Express Lanes,” is an 11 mile stretch from the Springfield interchange in Fairfax County, across the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge, to the MD 210 interchange in Prince George’s County, Maryland. As with the other express lanes locations, the trip is toll-free to vehicles with three or more passengers, but an EZ-Pass Flex is needed to get the toll-free option with a switch on it. A regular EZ-Pass will work but it will charge a toll no matter how many passengers are in the vehicle. Motorcycle in the vehicle. Motorcycle in the vehicle. Motorcycle in the vehicle.

When the rebuilt Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge opened to traffic in May 2008 it included additional space for future transportation needs which included transit across the bridge. This study is being coordinated with surrounding stakeholders including localities and the Maryland Department of Transportation’s State Highway Administration. The study also will be informed by a Transit and Transportation Demand Management Study to be initiated by the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation and coordinated with the Maryland Transit Administration.

VDOT says the goals and objectives of the study are to evaluate transportation improvements that extend and provide continuity of the Express Lanes system on I-95/I-495 (Capital Beltway), provide additional travel choices, reduce congestion, improve travel reliability, improve safety, and provide consistency with local and regional plans.

But without three people in the car, the tolls can get very expensive, as many in this area have seen from the express lanes on I-495. In the morning, when traffic is heavy; the cost for riding in the express lanes from a point just south of Braddock Road past the Dulles Toll Road can run $25 or more. The toll lane operators are using a congestion management system to keep the traffic flowing, so the higher tolls are meant to discourage some drivers at that time, and this keeps the traffic on the toll lanes moving. Nevertheless, it can be a costly alternative for someone in a hurry.

The first express lanes were built on I-495 and this was a big project because many of the bridges across I-495 had to be rebuilt, and that included a bike lane bridge north of I-66 as well. The I-95 Express Lanes came next, and these were partially built on a portion of High Occupancy Lanes that had been paid for with tax payers money, and now the tolls are going to a private operator. At the same time, these lanes were extended down to Garrisonville, and are now being extended to Fredericksburg. Next on the list were the I-66 Express Lanes, and these are still under construction out to Haymarket.

To weigh in on these plans:
Express Lanes Plan To Cross Woodrow Wilson Bridge

Meeting Details:

Virtual Meeting
WEDNESDAY, MAY 18, 2022
6:30 - 8:30 p.m. (presentation at 7 p.m.)
Visit www.virginiadot.org/495southside or call 703-691-6715 for details on how to join the meeting.

In-person Meetings
6:30 – 8:30 p.m. (presentation at 7 p.m.)
THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2022
Oxon Hill High School
6701 Leyte Drive
Oxon Hill, MD 20745
MONDAY, MAY 23, 2022
John R. Lewis High School 6540 Franzonita Road Springfield, VA 22150
WEDNESDAY, MAY 25, 2022
Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center
1108 Jefferson Street Alexandria, VA 22314

All four meetings will provide the same study information, and will include a formal presentation, question and answer session, and opportunities to provide input and comments on the study. The in-person meetings will also include an open house period allowing attendees the chance to view exhibit boards and interact with staff individually to learn about the study.

Study information is available at www.virginiadot.org/495southside. Meeting materials including a public opinion survey/comment form, informational boards and brochure will also be available at this study website. This information can also be reviewed at VDOT’s Northern Virginia District Office (4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030), or obtained by calling 703-691-6715 for assistance.

How to Provide Input:

Input on the 495 Southside Study can be provided to VDOT in the following ways:

- Completing a public opinion survey/comment form at www.virginiadot.org/495southside or at the in-person public information meetings
- Providing comments orally or in writing at the virtual or in-person public information meetings
- Submitting comments by email to 495southside-expresslanes@vdot.virginia.gov
- Submitting comments by mail to Nick Nies, AICP, VDOT 495 Southside Express Lanes Study Project Manager, 9030 Stony Point Parkway, Suite 220, Richmond, VA 23235
- Calling VDOT at 703-691-6715

All comments must be received by June 6, 2022, to be included in this public involvement process.
Middle School Library Will be Renamed

Katherine Johnson Middle School’s library will soon be renamed in honor of Fairfax City Schools Superintendent Phyllis Pajardo. The City School Board made the unanimous decision at its May 2 meeting.

The new name will be the Dr. Phyllis C. Pajardo Library, and the official renaming ceremony will happen sometime in June, prior to Pajardo’s retirement on June 30. During Pajardo’s tenure, she oversaw the school’s name change from Lanier Middle to Katherine Johnson Middle.

She also spearheaded the expansion of the advanced academic programs at Fairfax City’s two elementary schools and middle school, plus the opening of partnerships with the four City schools and George Mason University. And she oversaw the establishment of the Superintendent Advisory Team and assisted with hiring of four principals.

Pajardo was named Educator of the Year by Leadership Fairfax in 2017, and she’s the author of “The Principal Influence: A Framework for Developing Leadership Capacity in Principals.”

“Dr. Pajardo has changed the face of City of Fairfax schools,” said School Board Chair Carolyn Pitches. “She was instrumental in guiding us through the Katherine Johnson Middle School name change, and through this [library] naming, we would like to recognize her work.”

After School Board member Toby Sorenson read the resolution about the renaming, Pajardo expressed her appreciation. “I would like to offer a heartfelt thank you to each of you for this honor,” she said. “Katherine Johnson is a woman who I have admired for many years. She was an active member of my sorority, and I am so honored by this. I was an active reader as a student, and this means so much to me.”

— Bonnie Hobbs

Phyllis Pajardo

Fairfax, Woodson High Score Cappies Nominations

Continuing the tradition of outstanding, local, high-school theater, Fairfax and Woodson last week received a total of 10 Cappies nominations. Under Director Chris Whitney, Fairfax High’s six nods were for its play, “Puffs.” And under Director Chris Rushing, Woodson High’s four nods were for “The SpongeBob Musical.”

The Cappies Gala will be held at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., on Monday, June 6, at which time the winners will be revealed. Chantilly and Westfield students are competing for these awards against students from many other schools in the National Capital Area.

**FAIRFAX’S NOMINATIONS:**

- Best Play – Puffs;
- Comic Actor in a Female Role in a Play – Isabella Jackson;
- Comic Actor in a Male Role in a Play – Logan Baker;
- Supporting Actor in a Male Role in a Play – Daniel Todd;
- Ensemble in a Play – Puffs Ensemble;
- Returning Critic – Isabella Jackson.

**WOODSON’S NOMINATIONS:**

- Lead Actor in a Male Role in a Musical – Noah Tajudeen;
- Supporting Actor in a Male Role in a Musical – George Sullivan;
- Female Dancer – Hannah Fidler;
- Returning Critic – Charley Braceiland.

— Bonnie Hobbs
Felon in Possession of Firearm

A Fairfax County man pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm.

According to court documents, throughout 2020, Babak Safavi, 59, used false names and the internet to acquire and assemble an armory of assault weapons, including at least one with no serial number, while being a convicted felon. Safavi acquired firearms, ammunition, silencers that could be affixed to firearms, suppressor tubes and adapters to manufacture his own ammunition; silencers; and other firearm components.

On March 15, during a court-authorized search at Safavi’s residence, law enforcement recovered an AM-15 rifle; an AR style rifle with no serial number; a Stag Arms Stag 15 rifle; a Smith and Wesson M&P 9 Pro; over 2000 rounds of ammunition; 3 silencers; and other firearm components. All four firearms had threaded barrels, meaning they were able to receive a silencer, and the handgun had an illegal silencer attached. The magazines for the weapons were loaded.

Safavi is scheduled to be sentenced on September 1. He faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. Actual sentences for federal crimes are typically less than the maximum penalties. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after taking into account the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors. Assistant U.S. Attorney Ron Walutes is prosecuting the case.

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

The Caregivers’ Support Group, started in 2002, is for caregivers of adult family members. Most of the care receivers have dementia, but that condition is not a requirement. Some are cared for at home, some in local assisted living facilities, and some are out of state. Meetings are gently facilitated and encourage sharing of feelings, problems, helpful information, and bright spots. These sessions are held the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month from 10:00-11:30 a.m. via Zoom. For more information, contact Jack Tarr, 703-821-6838, jtar5@verizon.net; or Lynn Rafferty, 703-508-1365, radmom8992@gmail.com.

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Asian Festival

Celebrating Cultural Diversity via Food and Fun

Fairfax City’s 2nd annual Asian Festival on Main was Sunday, May 15.

More than 18,000 people filled Fairfax’s Main Street during the Asian Festival.

From left, Kevin Jung and Kevin Tsai, of Rice Culture, prepare fish-shaped Japanese waffles to fill with red bean, ube and matcha custard.

Audrey Liu, 8, of the Fairfax Chinese Dance Troupe, performs a Goldfish Dance. (The fans represent the fins).

Performers with the Fairfax Chinese Dance Troupe do the ribbon dance.

Serving up bubble drinks are (from left) Roger Arangorin, Ivan Urcia and Maurice Mendoza of District Boba.

Audrey Liu, 8, of the Fairfax Chinese Dance Troupe, performs a Goldfish Dance. (The fans represent the fins).

Colorful, orange lanterns adorn the main-stage and beer-garden area.

From left, Molly Liss, Emmie Vannaseng and Shurou Pu, of Toimoi Bakery, selling pastries with Asian-inspired fillings.

Selling festival T-shirts, stickers and beer glasses are (from left) Georgina Chigaru and her mom, Cherryl.

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Serving up bubble drinks are (from left) Roger Arangorin, Ivan Urcia and Maurice Mendoza of District Boba.

Sidney High sophomore Katie West eats a strawberry-banana-Nutella crepe from Kindi Thai Crepe.

Jeff Domigpe of Tres M Cuisine prepares to serve a Philippine-inspired, marinated chicken skewer.

Frederick Corder serving up a Filipino treat of deep-fried watermelon with vanilla icing.

Giving a thumbs up from his modern-Vietnamese food truck is Tuan Vo of PhoWheels.

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Virginia Legislators Join In Call for Research Dog Adoptions

By Susan Laume
The Connection

Several Virginia legislators this week signed their names to an appeal to save 80 beagles used in toxicity tests by two out-of-state pharmaceutical companies. The dogs were slated for euthanasia at Inotiv’s Mount Vernon, Indiana laboratory after tests commissioned by Crine- tics Pharmaceuticals of San Diego California. In their letter of appeal to the top executives of the companies, Virginia legislators were among 160 legislators from 32 states requesting the dogs be given an opportunity for adoption.

Such adoption is already a matter of law in Virginia. In 2021, Virginia Code (§3.2-6593.1) was amended to add a requirement that any animal testing facility that no longer has a need for a dog or cat in its possession shall offer the release of the animal for adoption. In this year’s General Assembly session, the section was amended by Senate Bill 90, sponsored by Senator Bill Stanley (R-20th), to make breeders of research dogs and cats subject to the same requirement as testing facilities. The bill was one of five bills known collectively as “the Beagle bills” which sought better protections for “companion” animals bred for or used in research.

The “Beagle bills” engendered a rare show of bipartisanship in the often divided General Assembly. In a statement at a signing ceremony for the bills on April 4, Gov. Glenn Youngkin said, “Today, I’ll sign five bills, and those five pieces of legislation, on all of them, every single voting member of the General Assembly voted for them. Today’s remarkable achievement brought every single Republican and Democrat together to protect our four-legged constituents. This historic package of bills I signed today clarifies that dogs and cats bred and sold for experimental purposes are protected by Virginia’s Cruelty-to-animals law, will help ensure welfare standards and save lives, and will give Virginia the authority to take action when welfare violations occur.” (See “Governor Signs Bills to Protect Research Dogs & Cats,” Connection, Springfield, May 7-13, pg. 5, 15)

The five beagle bills were inspired by the repeated animal welfare violations uncovered at the Envigo beagle breeding facility in Cumberland, Virginia. The poor conditions were discovered in an undercover operation by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and later confirmed by inspectors from U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) which formally cited the company. Envigo was cited for multiple critical violations in multiple inspections.

Similarly, treatment of beagles at Inotiv, Envigo’s sister company in Indiana, was revealed in April, after a seven-month long undercover operation by the Human Society of the United States (HSUS). Their undercover operation discovered potential violations of the Animal Welfare Act, including failure to provide adequate veterinary care, failure to minimize animal pain and distress, and failure to ensure proper staffing. In one example of many cited by HSUS, one beagle was used to test a substance so toxic that it brought him near death after only two days of dosing. Although in obvious pain and unable to stand, he was left to suffer overnight because the veterinarian was unavailable on a weekend evening; the beagle was euthanized the following day.

While acknowledging pharmaceutical companies and the Food and Drug Administration have a responsibility to ensure drugs are safe for humans, animal welfare groups, and increasingly legislatures, are calling for changes to animal testing for more humane treatment of all animals. HSUS notes “nearly 90% of drugs tested in animals ultimately fail in human trials, and a large proportion of these failures is attributable to unexpected toxicity in humans… even after animal tests.” Groups point to alternatives to animal testing, including in vitro tests using cell lines, tissue samples, alternative organisms such as bacteria, three-dimensional modeling and bioprinting, in silicon tests, computer modeling and in-human microdosing trials.

While the discussion of animal welfare in laboratory testing will no doubt continue, Virginia legislators, Delegates Irene Shin (D-86), Kathy Tran (D-42), Rob Bell (R-58), Kaye Kory (D-38), Patrick Hope (D-47), Shelly Simonds (D-94), and Senators Jennifer Boyasko (D-33) and William Stanley, Jr (R-20), with their signature say, for now, the 80 test beagles at Inotiv “should be given an opportunity to live in loving homes.”

Beagles released from Envigo research breeding facility on their way to adoptions in March this year in accordance with Virginia’s revised law.

Senators Boysko and Stanley who sponsored the VA bill to give research dogs an opportunity for adoption before euthanasia celebrate with rescued beagle.
BOOKS TO CHILDREN IN NEED

Enjoyed reading assistance and providing resources to children in our community. Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides 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.

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/healthy-mindsfairfax or www.healthy-mindsfairfax.org. To learn more, email info@alnv.org or join the Healthy Minds Fairfax Facebook page.

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.

Volunteers needed at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Museum offers a variety of existing volunteer opportunities in Museum events, programs and administration. Contact volunteers@fairfaxstation.org or 703-945-7483 to learn more about more. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP visit www.wvovpva.org.

Shepherd’s Center of Fairfax-Burke serves those 50 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP visit www.wvovpva.org.

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George Mason Brings Bee Studies to Laurel Hill Park

Honey Bees - the newest forensic tool, helping to find the missing?

By Susan Laume
Connection Newspapers

Tocked into a less visited spot in the park, George Mason University’s Honey Bee Initiative’s latest collaboration with Fairfax County Park Authority, is off the ground ... and flying. The new site in Lorton park is one of five now maintained by the University. The dozen new hives there make a total of approximately 80 hives now in the program managed by George Mason’s professional beekeeper Andrew Garavito.

In describing the Honey Bee Initiative, the University says it “works on honey bee sustainability by providing an innovative education, conducting collaborative research, and establishing community partnerships in our local Northern Virginia region. The HBI supports education in beekeeping, research, and science...”

Co-founder of the initiative, and an associate professor in University’s School of Business, Dr. Lisa Gring-Pemble outlined a few of the programs involving honey bees at the university, which now engage the business, science-tech, and forensic campus.

Dr. Lisa Gring-Pemble, “the bulk of these 80 hives are going to be used to try to develop a sustainable beekeeping operation in Northern Virgin...”

A recent grant, from the O’Shaughnessy Hurt Memorial Foundation, which started this Spring, will help expand the number of hives over about three years, so that "we can become a self sustainable operation through the sale of honey and related products, such as cosmetics and the creation of mead."

Gring-Pemble also mentions their College of Science has a 300 seat pollination lab. Every Fall and Spring, it becomes a teaching apiary for those students. The College of Education and Human Development uses the apiary to assist teachers in the area to learn about creating pollinator friendly lessons with which to engage their math and science students.

Another project with the Colleges of Education and Human Development, and of Computing, collaborates with the National Science Foundation Future of Work program in a grant that investigates ways to use the bees to spur people to study science and beekeeping.

Likely the most intriguing Honey Bee Initiative project, and the one slightly off-putting for some, is the use of bees in forensic science crime investigation. Just established in November 2021 and opening for use this Spring, the University’s Forensic Science Research and Training Laboratory of the Sci-Tech Campus will manage a five-acre body farm in a quiet field in Manassas. Only the eighth of its kind in the United States, human bodies will be laid to rest on the open field there, not buried. Monitoring their decomposition will allow development of information to contribute to forensic science. Security measures assure the privacy and environmental integrity of the site.

The honey bees will play a role in a project related to the body farm. Four hives will be moved there to see if the honey produced by bees after feeding on flowers near the bodies can help investigators locate missing persons. Explains Gring-Pemble, “the goal is to see if genetic material from the bodies present in the plants growing there can be traced in the bee colony after the pollen is collected.”

Mary Ellen O’Toole, director of George Mason’s forensic science program notes, “The hope is that bees can help find missing persons; ultimately help spare grieving families long-term uncertainty, while also saving investigators thousands of hours and resources in the search for a missing person. In this case, the bees are our new partners in crime fighting, and that’s amazing science.”

Of course, while the University will use their honey production at other sites to offset program costs, honey from hives used in the forensic study will not have honey...
Helping to Find the Missing Honey Bees

From Page 12

extracted except for testing of the DNA components.

George Mason’s Honey Bee Initiative got its official start in 2013 with just four hives funded from the Patriot Green Fund for sustainability. Beginning in June 2017, Covanta Waste Company hosted a bee sanctuary on the grounds of the Lorton landfill. The five acre site with its flourishing ecosystem of wild flowers and native grasses became a top honey producer after the company created a pollinator friendly habitat designed with plants with root systems above the landfill’s soil cap.

University beekeeper Andrew Gravito hopes the second Lorton site will be equally productive. How was the site chosen? Fairfax County Park Authority provided a list of suggested sites with GPS coordinates which Gravito scouted out to select the best. With the recent decision to consider adding new community garden plots close by next year, will there be an impact to the apiary? Dr. Gring-Pemble sees a mutual benefit for the bees and the gardens. The bees can enjoy a ready source of pollen and the gardeners have close-by bee workers to pollinate their crops. Is the public in danger with having an apiary in the park? Gring-Pemble, who is allergic to bee stings, is comfortable being near the bee colonies, only suiting up in beekeeper gear if she plans to work directly with the hive frames. She explains that honey bees are not very aggressive. Bees on flowers are usually more interested in the food they’re collecting than people around them and are busy bringing pollen back to the hive at the colony site. Unfortunately, bees often ‘take the wrap’ for the stings of their more aggressive wasp and yellow jacket cousins. Bees sting only when they feel threatened. Don’t walk in clover flowers in the garden. Bees sting only when they feel threatened. Don’t walk in clover flowers in the garden. Bees sting only when they feel threatened. Don’t walk in clover flowers in the garden. Bees sting only when they feel threatened. Don’t walk in clover flowers in the garden. Bees sting only when they feel threatened. Don’t walk in clover flowers in the garden. Bees sting only when they feel threatened.

NOW THRU MAY 30
Hope for the Warriors Fitness Challenge. Participants can now register for the Hope For The Warriors Memorial Day Fitness Challenge. Kicking off May 1 and running through May 30, individuals can participate in the free virtual fitness challenge from their own work or home. The challenge is designed to get people moving by incorporating any type of 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 our service members. Visit hopeforwarriors.org.

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: www Friends.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. Check out their website: www.Burke Toastmasters.org

THURSDAY/MAY 19
Fairfax Muster Fife. 7-8:30 p.m. At Veterans Amphitheater, 10455 Stadium Road, Fairfax. Enjoy the Stony Creek Fife and Drum Corps (Connecticut), the Patriots Fife and Drum Corps ( Mason), the Old Guard (US Army), and the 8th Green Machine Regiment Band ( Mason). Visit the website: https://www.fairfaxva.gov/ Home/ Components/Calendar/Event

The Fairfax Muster Fife will take place on Thursday, May 19 in Fairfax.

BULLETIN BOARD

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Annandale. A series of classes and in home consultations taught by PHILLIPS’ cosmeticians. Open to all local families. Call Stacy Stryjewski at 703-658-9054.

To find out about upcoming events and activities, visit www.Fairfaxcounty.gov/ener
gy or call 703-946-6939 for more. A series of classes and in home consultations taught by PHILLIPS’ cosmeticians. Open to all local families. Call Stacy Stryjewski at 703-658-9054.

Civil War Research scholarship to a Virginia. The offerings are free and open to the public, but reservations are required. brtipaths.org/news/

get financially fit new year

Volunteers Needed. PIRS is looking for enthusiastic and caring volunteers to make phone calls to older adults who may be feeling socially isolated. The commitment is one 3-hour shift per week for one year. Interested? Call during regular business hours to set up. Intensive training provided. Learn more and apply: pirsnc.org/caregivertraining

Burke Lake Senior Activity Center seeks members. Interested Older adults are invited to join the Burke Lake Seniors Golf League. Must be 55 and older, enjoy playing golf, meeting new people and having an all-around good time. Reservations tee times on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at the Par 3 Burke Lake Golf Course on Ox Road. Annually dues for the season – April 1 through October 31 – are $20 plus green fees. For more information, call Charlie Ryan 703-690-4227.

The Northern Virginia Long Term Care Ombudsman Program needs volunteers advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Contact Lisa Callahan at 703-324-5863. TTY 711 or email Email Lisa@fairfaxcounty.gov. Also visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ dfs/olderadultservices/long term

Fairfax County needs volunteers to drive older adults to medical appointments or ongoing activities. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ dfs/olderadultservices/longterm

Volunteer Fairfax provides opportunities for individuals, families, youth and corporate groups for service opportunities at a variety of nonprofit agencies. One-time special events or ongoing activities

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Burr / Fairfax / Fairfax Station/Clifton/Lorton / Springfield – May 10-25, 2022 – 13
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.

Announcements

Classified

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National Kids to Parks Day is May 21

Virginia State Parks will feature kid-friendly programming in celebration of National Kids to Parks Day on May 21 to encourage kids to discover science, history, nature and adventure by exploring the outdoors. National Kids to Parks Day is sponsored by National Parks Trust. Make reservations in one of the more than 300 Virginia State Parks of your choice.

For more information about spring registration through March 1, 2022. For more information about spring registration and sites for Girls on the Run see www.gotrnova.org.

SUNDAY/MAY 22
Air Force Singing Sergeants, 4-5:30 p.m. At St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, 6509 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. The Singing Sergeants’ historical and cultural significance and provided entertainment for the nation twice yearly with the Concert Band. You don’t want to miss this exciting performance! Masks are required along with proof of vaccination. Contact Cheryl Ann St. John at 703-772-5050 or visit our website: www.programs.virginia.gov.

Bulleted Board

CALL 703-549-0004 FOR ADVERTISING INFORMATION

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