

# CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Oak Hill Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW

Roan Polakoff of Fairfax tries his hand at calligraphy during the Fox Mill ES Japanese Children's Day Matsuri held on May 13 at Rachel Carson Middle School.

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



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MAY 18-24, 2022

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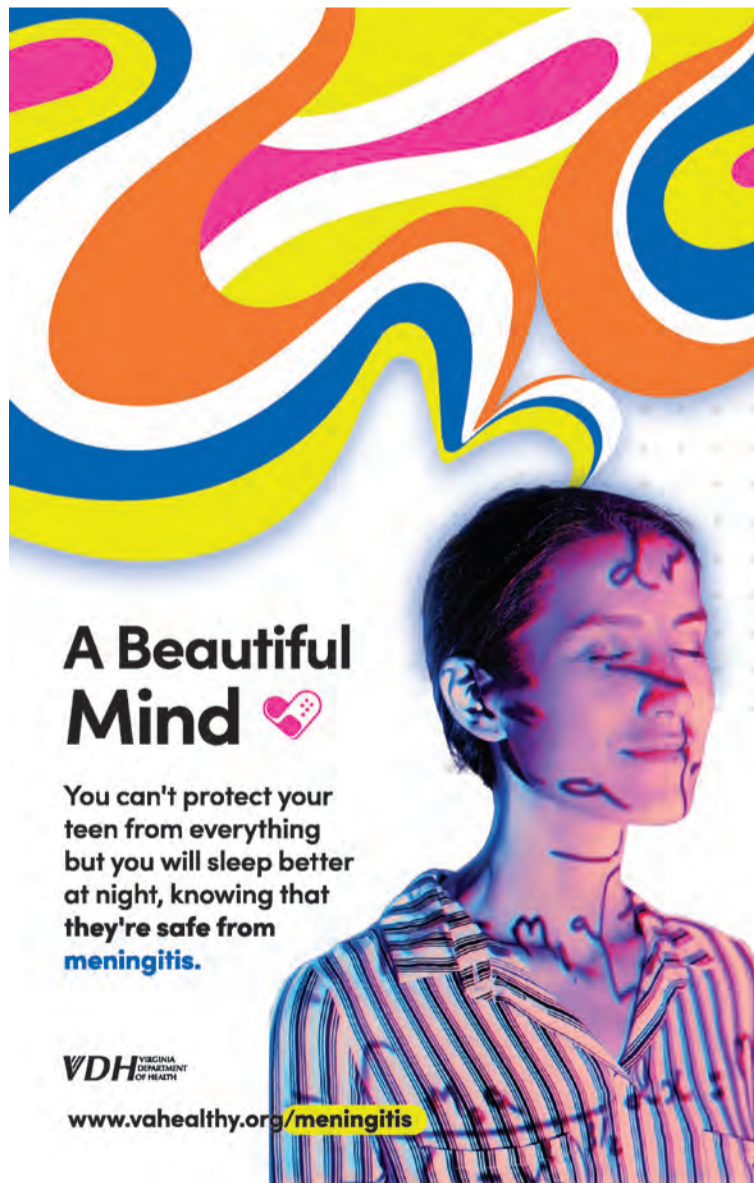
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## NEWS



Artist's rendition of the Gallery Park townhouses.



Artist's rendition of the townhomes from the back.

# 154 Townhouses Proposed

**New townhomes would be across from Westfield High.**

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

If all goes as planned, K. Hovnanian Homes will be constructing a brand-new townhouse community across the street from Westfield High in Chantilly. First, though, it needs to go through Fairfax County's approval process.

Toward that end, its representative, attorney Ken Wire, came to a recent meeting of the Sully District Council (SDC)/West Fairfax County Citizens Assn. (WFCCA) Joint Land-Use Committee, for the second time, to present further details about the project.

What's proposed are 154 townhouses, including 16 affordable dwelling units (ADUs). They'd be stacked, two-over-two structures with brick-masonry façades. The location is 11.3 acres at the northwest corner of Stonecroft Boulevard and Northridge Drive. It's also in Land Unit J – not far from Dulles International Airport.

The new neighborhood would be called Gallery Park, and it would feature an open-space network throughout the community. Wire said the proposal includes keeping and adding to the trees already there. And the site's open space would be available for use by the people who work in the nearby Westfields Corporate Center.

"Access would be off Northridge and Stonecroft," said Wire. "There'd be no access from Old Lee Road." In addition, Northridge would be repaved and brought up to VDOT standards.

Wire also noted that the buildings would be 57 feet high and would have a total of 363 parking spaces, including visitor spaces. Each lot would be 24 feet wide, and every unit would have its own, one-car garage, plus an outside driveway space, for a total of two parking spaces per unit. Some units will have rear balconies and upper-level terraces.

Currently on that property are three office buildings. And in order for homes to be built there, the site needs to be rezoned



A site plan of the proposed Gallery Park in Chantilly.

**"We hope to have models available by Fall 2023."**

— Ken Wire for K. Hovnanian Homes

from I-4 industrial to residential. Existing power lines bisect the property, so the architect turned the homes perpendicular to avoid them.

"There's 40 percent open space," said Wire. "And when you add the area under the power lines, it's just over 50 percent."

"I personally wouldn't want to live in a community like this," said SDC's Lewis Grimm. "But I imagine that many people would."

SDC's Jay Johnston asked what the market-rate homes would sell for, and Wire said the prices would be in the \$600,000s and \$700,000s. "The ADUs will all be for-sale units and will be \$230,000," he added. "And they will look the same as all the other homes."

If the county Board of Supervisors green-lights this project, said Wire, "We hope to have models available by fall 2023, and people settling in, in late spring 2024."

Since the new homes will be so close to the airport, Virginia Run resident Jim Hart asked, "Is there any noise-mitigation planned for the rooftop terraces?" But Wire said it's only planned for the interiors of the homes.

Hart then said, "It's a terrible site, but I like the architecture." And SDC President Jeff Parnes said the joint land-use committee had no objections to the proposal, pending approval from county staff.

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# NEWS

## No Motion on Comstock's Downtown Redevelopment Parcel

2016 Comstock presents Herndon RFP; six years later, excavation & build schedule again being "negotiated."

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Part of an ongoing series

At the Tuesday, May 10, 2022, Herndon Town Council Meeting, 17:05 minute mark, Vice Mayor Cesar del Aguila said he had a question for Town Manager William (Bill) Ashton. "To the extent you can, there are a lot of rumor mill and conspiracies out there ... A quick update on the Downtown development Project?"

Aguila's request is nearly two years to the date, May 1, 2020, when Comstock Herndon Venture, LC erected, on its then-new construction fence at the corner of Elden and Center streets, an 8-foot-tall, 43-foot-long, full-color graphic banner promoting its Historic Herndon District. The banner featured a graphic pair of faux "tower viewers," binoculars mounted on stalks like those at scenic overpasses.

Individuals presumably would be looking through the cutouts in the banner lined up with pre-cut holes in the fence "to take a look," as the banner announced. They would watch Comstock construct the 4.7-acre parcel into the centerpiece of Herndon's revitalization plan for its historic downtown.

Fast forward from 2020, through the two COVID-19 years, to 2022. Comstock has no upwards growth at the parcel except for grass and weeds. Just as the Silver Line Phase Two was set to open in May 2022, it again has no new proposed opening date. Covid, construction costs, labor shortages, and WMATA's pulling over half its trains result in delays affecting residents and commercial businesses.

Likewise, in many aspects, the Comstock project in Herndon has no scheduled date.

May of 2022, the Comstock banner in Herndon is faded and dirty two years after being installed. The company did, though, demolish the historic "Subaru" building, and other non-contributing structures on the site deemed not viable for adaptive reuse. In January 2022, a sanitary sewer main extension and lateral installation, required as part of the development and fund-



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

The graphic banner erected in 2020 to promote Comstock Herndon LC's Historic Herndon District at the intersection of Elden and Center streets in the Town of Herndon fades, and tall grass grows in front of it.



SCREENSHOT

Comstock Herndon Venture LC. demolished some of the structures on the redevelopment parcel; their footings can be seen in the tall grass.

ed by Comstock, were completed, according to Ashton. Ashton added, "Construction on the rest of the development project is expected to begin this spring."

While the details in the initial renderings and description of the development in Comstock's 2016 documents submitted as a Request for Proposal have been downsized slightly over the years, the project remains impressive. As of May 2022, the project includes the 273 residential apartments and 17,300 square feet of boutique commercial, restaurant, and café space; the shell of a 16,265-square-foot arts center; three public plazas with outdoor seating; and a 726-space shared parking garage. There are no affordable housing units, though.

In Ashton's 48-second statement, answering the vice mayor's inquiry at the May 10 Town Council meeting about the redevelopment project by Comstock, Ashton said the town attorney spoke with Comstock's attorney earlier that morning (May 10) about their "financing package" and getting it ready. They just "need to iron some things out."

"They are on the cusp of going into lending," Ashton said. He noted they were working on some of those matters Tuesday. Ashton said that the town building permit was ready for Comstock. But Comstock required a modification to the permit based on site plan revisions, and they will be submitting those. Ashton said that modifications to a permit gen-



MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Comstock Herndon Venture LC. is to develop this 4.7-acre tract, which is now overrun with thick grass and weeds and strewn with debris visible to people traveling on Elden Street since the wood construction fence was removed. Comstock has presented the Town Manager a new schedule, which he is negotiating with them.

erally are not a long-lead matter.

Ashton said that Comstock had submitted a "new schedule" to him. "We are negotiating with them. ... That's about where we stand right now as of 3:35 this afternoon (Tuesday, May 10)."

On Sunday, May 15, in an interview, Mayor Olem said, "As the town manager said, the council was updated on Comstock recently. In my recent conversation with Christopher Clemente, CEO of Comstock, he told me they are fully committed to the downtown redevelopment project."

According to Olem, multiple unforeseen events for the project have slowed progress toward the build start line. First, there was the appeal by three citizens, then the COVID-19 pandemic and rapid changes in the lending finance business. Comstock has one last step.

"I fully support moving ahead," said Olem. "Temporary parking has been negotiated, and our town residences and businesses are ready to get this done."

In a separate interview on May 15, Vice Mayor del Aguila questioned what the remedy would be if Comstock didn't make the start date for deliverables. "There's too much up in the air and too much on the developer's side. We don't have any leverage. To the extent we can, given the constraints of the contract signed, I want to put the town in a better position. But starting sooner rather than later is my goal and that of everyone else to whom I've spoken."

Part of the managed portfolio for Comstock Holding Companies, Inc. NASDAQ: CHCI, according

to the Comstock January 2022 Investor Presentation, includes transit-oriented and mixed-use developments, Reston Station, a 5+ million-square-foot, 80-acre development surrounding the terminus station of Phase I of the Silver Line in Reston, and Loudoun Station, a nearly 2.5 million square foot 50-acre development located adjacent to the terminus station of Phase II of the Silver Line in Ashburn, Virginia.

Comstock did not respond to a request for comment by presstime.

### Timeline: Pre-Construction Highlights

Redevelopment of 4.675 acres of town-owned land for a mixed-use project

#### 2016

June 1-Christopher Clemente, Comstock Development Services, LC, submits a proposal after the Town of Herndon issues an RFP to award a comprehensive public-private partnership agreement.

#### 2017

October 24-The Town Council approves a resolution authorizing a proposed Comprehensive Agreement between the Town of Herndon and Comstock Herndon Venture, LC.

November 1-The Comprehensive Agreement by and between the Town of Herndon and Comstock Herndon Venture, LC for the Herndon Downtown Redevelopment Project is signed.

#### 2018

June 18-Herndon Heritage Preservation Review Board awards Comstock three Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) required to move forward with the project.

July-Town receives appeals from three citizens challenging the Herndon Heritage Preservation Review Board's June 18 awards. The COAs

SEE REDEVELOPMENT, PAGE 8

# Fulbright for Valerie Nguyen

Centreville High grad Valerie Nguyen becomes Fulbright scholar.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**W**hen Valerie Tú Uyên Nguyễn graduated May 7 from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, she did more than just receive a diploma. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies and a Bachelor of Science in Biology – becoming the first Vietnamese American to double major in both subjects at the nation’s first public university.

She also minored in Chemistry and graduated as an Honors Laureate from UNC’s Honors College. And she did it all while also studying Medical Anthropology, being a research intern at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Md., and researching pediatric cancer in UNC’s Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center.

But that’s not all. Nguyen, a 2018 Centreville High grad, will be spending the next year in Utrecht, Netherlands, as a Fulbright Scholar. On March 29, she was named the lone, NAF (Netherlands-America Foundation) Pediatric Oncology Fulbright Research Scholar in the U.S.

Saying she was humbled and honored by the scholarship, Nguyen also credited her immigrant parents for helping her reach this point. “It’s so magical to think I’ve been able to experience this life and this major milestone because my parents were brave first,” she said. “They crossed the ocean in hopes of just surviving, and now I’m living their greatest hopes and dreams. I am a proud daughter of Vietnamese boat people and the first, not the last, in my family to graduate college.”

While the Fulbright program offers thousands of grants internationally, Nguyen’s is the only one worldwide earmarked for childhood-cancer research. And it will enable her to continue studying her specialty, Ewing sarcoma, a form of bone cancer.

“Childhood cancer only gets 4 percent of the National Cancer Institute funding, and I work to advocate for it,” she said. “Childhood cancers are very aggressive, and you’ve got to go through more hoops [than with adult cancers] to get clinical trials.”

But for Nguyen, it’s also personal. When she was 16, her younger sister, Cecilia, died of osteosarcoma (bone cancer) at age 13. “I think I had a unique perspective as a sibling,” she said. “And I was always a curious kid and wouldn’t stop asking questions.”

“I remember first stepping into a laboratory at age 15, hungry to ‘do’ something, as a sibling of a childhood-cancer patient. This led me to ‘get my hands dirty’ at an early age, starting at the NIH [National Institutes of Health] in high school and into the Davis lab at UNC, my first year.”

Along the way, Nguyen came to believe “There are lots of things the pediatric oncology field is missing. Many Ph.D.s and professionals forget the human element and their



Valerie Tú Uyên Nguyễn celebrating with her mom, Evelyn Phan, and a photo of her sister.



UNC grad Valerie Nguyen of Centreville.

bedside manner because they’re mainly involved with the data and their lab mates.”

She worked in the Lineberger lab, studying Ewing sarcoma, since she was a freshman, but experienced the human aspect of medicine via the program, Carolina Pediatric Attention, Love & Support (CPALS). Nguyen was involved in it all four years of college, and even became its president.

“We create one-to-one matches between any college student [on campus] and pediatric oncology patients, mainly at UNC Chapel Hill,” she explained. “The students visit them and become like part of their family – especially when their family is far away.”

Nguyen said the students support these young patients during their whole hospital stay and beyond. They can provide relief for parents needing to take a break, while they



Valerie Nguyen’s mom, Evelyn Phan, adjusts her cap.

play games and do crafts and puzzles with their hospitalized children. And they watch proudly while a patient who’s completed treatment rings a bell in celebration.

“Visiting patients gave me a break, too, from the lab,” said Nguyen. “It also kept me motivated and gave the patients hope. Two Ewing patients even congratulated me on getting the Fulbright. They said my senior honors thesis [in Biology] made them feel like all they’d gone through wasn’t in vain, because I used patient-derived cells as part of my research into the paper.”

Her thesis was the culmination of all her undergrad work at UNC and was about a small molecule her lab discovered. “It’s potentially able to find the foundational mechanisms of Ewing sarcoma,” said Nguyen. “I chose to investigate it because UNC is known for its epigenetics program, which is the study of how you can change DNA without altering its sequence. And I knew I’d be mentored well there and could learn from the best in the field.”

She also led the Order of the Golden Fleece – UNC’s oldest and highest honor so-



College graduate Valerie Nguyen with mom, Evelyn Phan (holding a photo of daughter Cecilia).

**“I’m a proud daughter of Vietnamese boat people.”**

— Valerie Tú Uyên Nguyen

ciety. It’s part of the North Carolina Fellows [leadership-development] program, and students must be nominated to get into it.

As for the Fulbright, Nguyen competed against other undergrads, post-doctorate students, medical professionals, etc. So, she said, “I thought, ‘I’ll just do my best and see what happens.’ Long term, I want to apply to M.D. Ph.D. programs which would pay for med school. So I’d planned to take some time off this summer, and study for the MCAT [Medical College Admission Test] when I wasn’t running 100 mph.”

When she found out she’d won the Fulbright, Nguyen said she was “in shock. I was one foot in and one foot out of different job applications and had a lot of things up in the air. I like to have things [nailed down], so it was nerve-wracking for me. But I was really excited, I’m glad I got my number-one choice and get to continue doing the work I’d been doing for over five years.”

She’ll begin her year in the Netherlands in August and will receive a living stipend, plus a salary for her work. Nguyen will be researching at the Princess Máxima Cancer Center – which, she said, is “the only cancer center for the entire country. They mostly speak English, but I’m learning Dutch, in the meantime. I think it’s cool because I’m building on what I already know, so I’ll be able to make more progress – I’ll just be learning new skills.”

Her UNC graduation day was the day before Mother’s Day, and Nguyen said, “None of this would’ve been possible without my mom, who’s been my greatest cheerleader, shoulder to cry on and listening ear. Every one of my successes is because of her.”

She also thanked her university for a “formidable experience,” which challenged her and allowed her to grow. And she advises upcoming, high-school grads to “Take college and your own learning seriously. Education is found in both your classes and community. So get deeply involved in your classes, but also be fully present, every day, in the world around you.”

## OPINION

# One Plus One May Not Equal Two

DELEGATE KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM

One plus one equaling two is about as basic as one can get in understanding arithmetic. In the current day, parental-rights, children-protectors, textbook-reviewers are challenging many basic concepts that we thought we understood about mathematics and other subjects in the kindergarten to twelfth-grade school curriculum as expressed in the textbooks that are used in the classroom.

If  $1+1=2$  is expressed as a word problem in a textbook, the book may be thrown out for the implications it might suggest. For example, if the problem is expressed as one man or one woman plus one man or one woman equals two men or two women, it may suggest in the minds of some of the reviewers that there is a same sex suggestion inherent within the problem that would be inappropriate for young children to know or to learn about. If the word problem is one man plus one woman equals a couple, there should be an explanation that couples are married so as to not promote promiscuity. If a textbook writer posed that one black person plus one white person equals two friends the question could be viewed as a divisive problem that is getting too close to being an introduction to Critical Race Theory!

These examples are extreme ones that I have created to make the point that in states like Virginia and Florida the extremists are attempting to dictate school curriculum and materials to meet stan-

dards that most educated people will find unbelievable. In Virginia, Governor Glenn Youngkin issued an Executive Order "on Day One to end the use of inherently divisive concepts, including Critical Race Theory." In Florida, state education officials announced last month that 54 of the 132 math textbooks on its adoption list—most of them elementary level—did not make the cut. Some of the books did not align with state content standards, called the Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking—or BEST—or they included "prohibited topics" and "unsolicited strategies," such as Critical Race Theory (CRT), officials said. Since they provided few specific examples, I imagined the examples I gave above. After all, who gets to decide what are "divisive concepts"?

In Virginia where Governor Youngkin seems to be trying to edge out Florida's Governor Ron DeSantis as ultra-conservative governor of the year, the Governor has included the new mathematics curriculum adopted by the Board of Education as being unacceptable for it violates his promise to take divisive materials from the curriculum and certainly Critical Race Theory. Since the Governor has not been able to offer any specific examples of his concerns, it is left to me and others to speculate what he has in mind other than to build on discontent by a small number of parents and to score political points.

I hope that others will come to the rescue of these two governors and show us how their political rhetoric will be carried out in practice and that my wild examples are not part of what they have in mind.

# We Are Better United To Do More

BY ROSIE ALLEN-HERRING  
PRESIDENT AND CEO OF UNITED WAY, NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA

During the last two years, we have seen small businesses, families, and loved ones devastated by this pandemic. We have united with our neighbors in organizing around social justice and racial equity. We have seen unprecedented levels of hunger, unemployment, and deficits in education. We have also demonstrated that we are better united in

uplifting our neighbors during any type of hardship.

Over the last 10 years, your United Way of the National Capital Area has witnessed how we are Better United during our Do More 24 day of giving. Since 2013, Do More 24 – a social movement that brings together charities, private companies, and donors who are committed to making a difference in the community – has supported more than 1,200 nonprofit organi-

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## CONNECTION

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# Westfields Sprint Triathlon Draws Hundreds

PHOTOS BY TOM MANNING/THE CONNECTION

## Splash & Dash for kids.

The eighth annual Westfields Triathlon took place on April 24 at the Cub Run RECenter in Chantilly. The event was hosted by the Westfields Business Owners Association and put on by Revolution3 Triathlon. The sprint distances included a 250-yard pool swim, a 12-mile bike ride, and a 3.1-mile run. Todd Burns, 42 from Arlington, placed first overall with a time of 54:47.81.

New for this year was a sprint distance duathlon option with a 1 mile run. There were also two shorter Splash & Dash swimming and running distances for the kids. The Westfields Triathlon kicked off the triathlon season in the DC Metro area.



Melissa Mattes, 57 from Centreville, is enjoying her ride.



Michaela Witzczak, 37 of Centreville, during the 12 mile bike ride.



Rudra Dave, a sophomore at Chantilly High School, displays his finisher medal.



Susan Pan, 53 from Great Falls, finishes the Westfields Triathlon.



Adre Phillips, 44 from Fairfax, is focused during his bike ride.



The Westfields Triathlon begins a little after 7 a.m. with the elite competitors.



Cassie Casino, 46 from Herndon, rings the PR bell.



Elizabeth Wheeler, 30 from Arlington, makes her way to the finish line.



Florendo Astropabio, 44 from Herndon, is thumbs up at the finish.



Don Hodgen, 72 from Arlington, gives a thumbs up. He has been racing for 37 years and has competed in over 130 triathlons and two full Ironman races.



Maureen Shea, 42 from Herndon, is steps from the finish line.



Brian Wie, 41 from Fairfax, cycles his way uphill.



Jessica Dawley, 43 from Centreville, smiles as she crosses the finish line in 1:35:35.



Karl Majer, 48 from Reston, finishes in 1:18:53.



Kasey Klopfenstein, 28 from Vienna, during the 3.1 mile run.



Elizabeth Danberg, 46 from Chantilly, leaves the bike staging area to begin her ride.



Jonathan Besko, 39 from Vienna, as he crosses the finish line.



Marissa Gonzalez, 25 from Chantilly rounds a corner during the 3.1 mile run.



George Bochenek, 36 from Vienna, sprints to the finish with a time of 1:33:16.



Tim Libeau, 44 from Springfield, sprints to the triathlon finish.



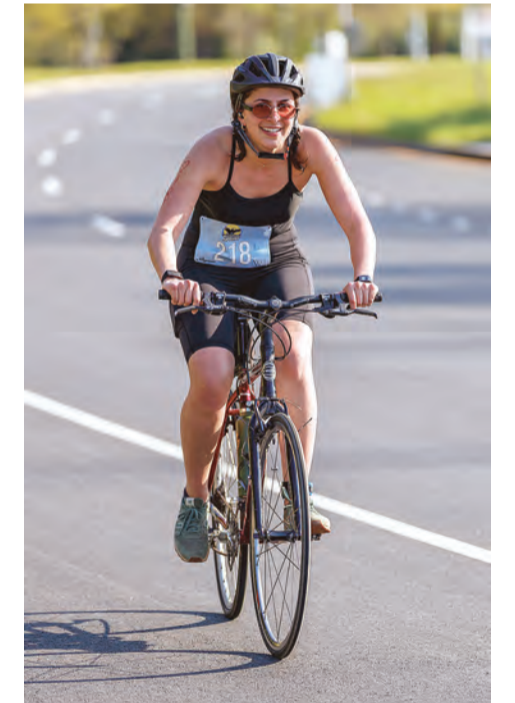
Todd Burns, 42 from Arlington, placed first overall with a time of 54:47.81.



Ed Warren, 34 from Springfield, as he crosses the finish line in 1:24:37.



Julie Upham, 43 from Alexandria, is happy to cross the finish line in 1:35:35.



Setareh Motamedi, 26 from Alexandria, during the bike leg.



Rose Andriatsitabason, 54 from Alexandria, competed in her first Westfield Triathlon and third sprint triathlon overall.

## CAPPIES

# Chantilly, Westfield High Score Cappies Nominations

Continuing the tradition of outstanding local, high-school theater, Chantilly and Westfield last week received a total of 10 Cappies nominations. Under Director Andy Shaw, Chantilly High's four nods were for its musical, "Into the Woods." And under Director Enza Giannone-Hosig, Westfield High's

six nods were for its musical, "9 to 5."

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.

## Chantilly's nominations:

Nitish Kommoju - Comic Actor in a Male Role in a Musical;  
Alyssa Dausch - Supporting Actress in a Female Role in a Musical;  
Abby Lombard and Smriti Balasubramanian - Hair and Makeup Design;  
Grace Drost - Andy Mays Rising Critic.

## Westfield's nominations:

Elias Collier - Comic Actor in a Male Role in a Musical;  
Isabel Nemati - Comic Actor in a Female Role in a Musical;  
Kayla Gadley, Justin Pokrant, Elli Vlattas - Marketing and Publicity;  
Critic Team - Westfield High critics;  
Justin Neil - Andy Mays Rising Critic;  
Justin Pokrant - Andy Mays Rising Critic.

— BONNIE HOBBS



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

From left are Tyler Hicks (Rapunzel's prince) and Nitish Kommoju (Cinderella's prince) in Chantilly's musical, "Into the Woods."



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

The main characters in Westfield's "9 to 5" included (from left) Julia Manser, Elli Vlattas, Elias Collier and Isabel Nemati.

## Redevelopment

FROM PAGE 3

were subsequently void by the Zoning Administrator, and the applicant withdrew the cases.

### 2019

March 2-Site plan is approved for Herndon Downtown Center.

May 15-Heritage Preservation Review Board approves applications for new COAs, including demolition at 750 Center Street of a non-contributing structure and site features and 770 Elden Street, the former Subaru building and site's features, and the construction of new structures and plazas in connection with the planned redevelopment in Downtown Herndon.

### 2020 COVID-19 PANDEMIC BEGINS

May 1- Comstock installs a promotion banner on the fence at Elden and Center streets.

November 17-Herndon Town Council unanimously approves a resolution that amends the comprehensive agreement with Comstock to advance the project. The COVID-19 pandemic has played a role in substantial material cost increases and workforce restrictions.

The amended Comprehensive Agreement between the Town of Herndon and Comstock Herndon Venture, LC, effective on December 3, 2020, sets a deadline for Comstock to start construction on the

project on December 31, 2021. Comstock has the option to postpone the Outside Satisfaction Date for up to twenty-four months by giving Herndon written notice before December 31, 2021.

December 15- The town closes on land transfer subject to the public-private partnership with Comstock Herndon Venture LC.

### 2021 COVID -19 PANDEMIC CONTINUES

December 14- The Herndon Town Council unanimously approves a Memorandum of Understanding between the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the Town of Herndon to accept a grant from the Economic Opportunity Reserve (EOR) Fund of \$5 million for capital construction of the Herndon Downtown Redevelopment Project. "I'm looking forward to the redevelopment project." Time kills all things... I don't want there to be any more delays."- Vice Mayor Cesar del Aguila

### 2022 COVID-19 PANDEMIC CONTINUES

March 17-The Connection Newspapers receives a comment from Town Manager Ashton, "Construction on the rest of the development project is expected to begin this spring."

May 10-Town Manager Ashton reports that Comstock submits a new schedule to him.

## For The Community

FROM PAGE 5

zations raising more than \$13.7 million for this region's heroes and the nonprofits that support the community every day.

This year, Do More 24 will be held on Wednesday, May 18. It's a day when members of the community are encouraged to think about what they care most about; learn what others are doing to solve our region's most pressing social problems, like food insecurity, mental health challenges, lost wages, the digital divide, or the emergence out of this current health crisis; and feel like they are Better United to DO MORE for the community.

Hundreds of nonprofits throughout the DMV area will come together for Do More 24, the region's largest online giving day, powered by United Way of the National Capital Area (United Way NCA). Each dollar makes a difference in the nonprofits that directly serve your community.

For example, HART (Homeless Animals Rescue Team), a no-kill animal rescue and support group in Fairfax, has participated in Do More 24 for 10 consecutive years. With the community's help, a great team of passionate volunteers, and supporters, each year, the organization rehomes nearly 1,000 cats and dogs of all ages that were once in dire situations.

While the organization raises funds year-round, they are always excited to participate in United Way of the National Capital Area's Do More 24. The funds raised during the 24-hour day of giving are the lifeblood of helping animals in need, as the organization's most significant need is for its medical fund.

"Many of the animals we rescue are from situations where they were either neglected or abandoned and haven't had the veterinary care they need for vaccines, fleas, neutering to more serious critical surgeries," said Cynthia Voccia, volunteer for HART. "Many other animal rescues can't afford to take in these pets, but we are determined to save as many as possible. Do More 24 puts us right in front of the donors who want to make a difference in a rescue animal's life. The difference in the amount of money that we can raise in this one single day is enormous for us because we don't have the structure to fundraise at that level every day."

In addition to the funds raised, Do More 24 has helped HART attract new supporters, followers, and, just as important, adopters. The overall impact of the community event offers the organization a whole new avenue to connect with people and other organizations that are passionate about helping animals.

We hope to continue to strengthen the financial capacity and community support for all of the participating Do More 24 nonprofit partners. When we join together to break down barriers to create a more equitable society where everyone in our community has fair and equal access to health, education and economic opportunity, we are better united as a community, as a sector and as a region. We invite you to join us during the 24-hour day of giving. To find a nonprofit that is meaningful to you, please visit <https://unitedwaynca.org/what-we-do/our-programs/do-more-24/>.



Soul Mates by Sandra C Dovberg



Swallowtail & Bluebells by Sandra C Dovberg

## Natural Habitats by Sandra C Dovberg

Sandra C Dovberg presents her newest paintings with a primary focus on the beauty of nature in scenes of local flora and fauna in their own environments in the show "Natural Habitats" on display at Reston Art Gallery and Studios (RAGS) from through May 30. The show is open every weekend from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. on Saturdays and 12 noon until 5 p.m. on Sundays.

Dovberg is also an award-winning silversmith and will bring a special display of her fascinating art objects when she is in the gallery on two Saturdays, May 21 and May 28. To view the show on other days, appointments can be requested by emailing sdovberg@gmail.com. Find more details and see the vast variety of the artist's work on her website, sandracdovbergart.com.

Dovberg's next solo show, "Memory and Illusion," will be exhibited in July at the Jo Ann Gallery at Reston Community Center – Lake Anne.

While viewing the "Natural Habitats" show

visitors can also enjoy works displayed by all seven artists of RAGS, as well as the scenery of the lakeside setting. Neighboring the gallery are local restaurants with outdoor seating, and it is just steps away from Lake Anne's Saturday morning Farmers Market.

In addition to featuring Dovberg's show in May, RAGS presents a special exhibit at Reston Community Center – Hunters Woods from through May 31.

Furthering its nurture of art, RAGS offers free, themed Crafts for Kids every Saturday morning at the gallery, April through December, from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m.

Reston Art Gallery and Studios (RAGS) is located on the lakeside of 11400 Washington Plaza West, Reston, VA 20190 by the orange "ART" sign at historic Lake Anne Plaza. For GPS directions and parking, search "Lake Anne Plaza." Follow @RAGSReston on Facebook, @RestonArtGallery on Instagram, and for general information visit RestonArtGallery.com.



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# CALENDAR

## SATURDAYS UNTIL DECEMBER

The Reston Farmers Market (sponsored by the Fairfax Co. Park Authority) Lake Anne Village 8 a.m.-noon. SNAP beneficiaries receive up to \$20 match <http://restonfarmersmarket.com/>

## NOW THRU MAY 25

Watercolor Exhibition. At Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Celebrating a Lifetime of Art showcases the watercolors of Catharine Noland (1920-2020). A reception will be held Saturday, May 14, from 2-4 p.m. Event start and stop times correspond to normal library hours, which are available at: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/great-falls>

## NOW THRU DEC. 31

Crafts for Kids. 10 a.m. to 12 noon. At Reston Art Gallery and Studios, 11400 Washington Plaza W at Lake Anne, Reston. Free, themed art projects for children (with guardian) are offered at Reston Art Gallery and Studios every Saturday from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. Visit the website: [www.restonartgallery.com](http://www.restonartgallery.com)

## MCLEAN FARMERS MARKET OPENS

The McLean Farmers Market has opened for the 2022 season on Friday, May 6th, at Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. The market will run every Friday from 8 a.m. to noon through November 11. Local farmers and producers will sell fresh produce and fruits; breads and pastries; prepared foods; meats; herbs; flowers, and more. All products are grown or produced by the vendors and come from within 125 miles of Fairfax County. Visit: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/>

## MAY 20-30

The Jurassic Encounter Dinosaur Walk Thru Experience. At Bull Run Events Center, 7700 Bull Run Drive, Centreville. The Jurassic Encounter will transform the events center into a walk-through experience featuring more than 50 static and moving, life-like dinosaurs that both entertain and educate. Also enjoy Digging for Bones, the Dino Village, shopping, food, free photo-ops, games, bouncy house and more. The exhibit will open on Friday, May 20 from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. and all other days from 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Tickets start at \$19.00 per person (anyone two years and older will need a ticket). Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times. There are also special add-on prize packs for the kids to get souvenirs. Parking for the event is free and pets are welcome. Web: <http://feeltheroar.com>

## SATURDAY/MAY 21

Book Signing Event. 2-4 p.m. At Scrawl Books, 11911 Freedom Drive, Reston. Emily Suñez, author and illustrator of The Healing Journal: Guided Prompts & Inspiration for Life with Illness, will be signing copies of her book and chatting with attendees at Scrawl Books. Visit the website: <https://www.scrawlbooks.com/event/author-emily-sunez-presents-healing-journal>

## SATURDAY/MAY 21

McLean Day. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. The free, outdoor festival features a wide variety of rides, games, activities and performances. Patrons can come enjoy the large carnival ride on Friday, May 20, from 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. In addition to the large rides on the parking lot, the Kids' Way area of the park offers smaller, ticketed rides especially for younger children. Also, for the young and young-at-heart are costumed superhero characters who will be available for photos. Other free activities include laser tag, Bubble Ball, two rock-climb-



The McLean Day celebration will take place Saturday, May 21 at Lewinsville Park in McLean.

ing walls, balloon twisters, a magician and a petting zoo. Free performances will be offered throughout the festival on the Community Stage. Young dancers enrolled in MCC's Art in Motion Dance classes will open the show at 11:05 a.m. The McLean Community Players will follow at 1:05 p.m. The Alden's Unruly Theatre Project teen improv group will perform at 1:45 p.m., followed by the McLean High School Chorus at 2:25 p.m. The McLean Citizens Association will present its Teen Character Award at 3 p.m. and G'NASH, a five-member rock band comprised of McLean High School students, will perform at 4 p.m. In addition, a Jugglers' Stage, located close to the children's ride area, offers free performances throughout the event. Visit: [www.mcleancenter.org/special-events](http://www.mcleancenter.org/special-events) or call the Center at 703-790-0123/TTY: 711.

## MAY 21-22

Tephra ICA Festival (formerly Northern Virginia Fine Arts Festival). At Reston Town Square Park, 11900 Market St., Reston. Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art (Tephra ICA) and Reston Community Center (RCC) announce the Trisha Brown Dance Company as the headlining performers at the Tephra ICA Festival. TBDC is a contemporary dance company dedicated to the performance and preservation of the work of Founding Artistic Director and Choreographer, Trisha Brown.

## 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](http://www.gotrnova.org).

## SUNDAY/MAY 22

Concerts on the Green. 6-8 p.m. At the Village Centre Green, Great Falls. Featuring Wes Tucker and the Skilletts. Fine Roots rock with a little old school funk. Hosted by Costa Dentistry. Come relax at the Village Centre Green and enjoy laid-back evenings of good music and good times with your neighbors.

## SATURDAY/MAY 28

"Sixteen Candles" Movie. 7:30 p.m. At The Winery at Bull Run, 15950 Lee Highway, Centreville. Part of '80s movie night. Tickets \$20.

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## A Little Perspective



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Last week's column addressed the issue of uncertainty which, as a long-surviving and still-undergoing-treatment cancer patient, I am very familiar. In fact, 'uncertainty' becomes my daily bread whether I'm hungry or not. I learned early on in my cancer life that there are no guarantees. Instead, there are ups and downs all-around. If life in the cancer lane were an amusement ride, it would be the most feared, gut-wrenching, life-altering roller coaster you ever had the misfortune of experiencing. The significant difference being that roller coasters don't kill you. They scare you certainly, but, when the ride is finished so too is your involvement. Unfortunately, for a cancer patient, the ride is never over.

And it's some ride, too. A ride where your life really is at risk, and one that constantly changes direction and takes you places emotionally and spiritually you likely never imagined. Moreover, nothing really prepares you for the diagnosis and it's only the prognosis that might provide a little relief if you're lucky. Many cancers are survivable now compared to the previous generation. Nevertheless, cancer remains the most feared word in any conversation, especially when it's directed at you by an oncologist with whom an appointment has been set after you have taken multiple diagnostic steps to confirm your diagnosis.

For me, the process took about six weeks from when I first went to an emergency room complaining of migrating pain in my right rib cage area (after it being on the left side a few days earlier) and having difficulty breathing and catching my breath to two sets of chest X-Rays, one CT scan, one PET scan and finally a surgical biopsy. I visited multiple doctors in multiple locations until the diagnosis was confirmed and the initial appointment with an oncologist was arranged.

A week or so prior to meeting the oncologist, my internal medicine doctor had called me at work with the results of the previous week's biopsy. When he asked me if I wanted to meet at his office to discuss the results, I figured the news was bad, but I never imagined how bad it would be: non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV. How bad you ask? "13 month to two years" prognosis, that's how. I was age 54 and half.

Much has changed in the past 13-plus years since that late February 2009 shock. For one thing, and most significantly, my diagnosis. I am now a papillary thyroid cancer patient and have had a thyroidectomy to surgically remove both my thyroid glands. My prognosis however is not exactly "terminal" as it was when I was diagnosed with lung cancer, but it's precarious nonetheless as previous columns have explained (the one medication that's effective has a three-year window: I'm nearing the end of year two) and at present, there's no new options. Still, I can't worry about things for which I have no control (another lesson). As concerns what happens to my life when the 10 mg lenvima is no longer effective? To invoke Scarlett O'Hara at the end of "Gone with the Wind": "I'll worry about that tomorrow."

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

# JAPANESE CHILDREN'S DAY

PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS



Opening the doors for Fox Mill ES's Japanese Children's Day Matsuri 2022 held at Rachel Carson Middle School on Friday, May 13.



Madeline, 9, of Herndon gets a little help from a volunteer as she tries on a kimono.

## Celebrating Fox Mill ES's Children and Japanese Immersion Program

### Japanese Children's Day Returns.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

The Japanese Cultural Committee (JCC) of Fox Mill Elementary School and the Parent Teacher Association hosted a traditional Japanese Children's Day Matsuri on Friday, May 13. The evening event held at Rachel Carson Middle School celebrated student growth, happiness and prosperity. It mirrored many activities associated with the significant holiday for Japanese people that typically occurs in early May.

Parent Lesley Ryan of Herndon helped coordinate the Japanese Children's Day Matsuri. She estimated about 500 people attended the celebration, the most significant number ever. According to Ryan, the organizers did not charge an admittance fee this year.

"We wanted Japanese Children's Day to be a re-establishment of a connection in our community. This was a chance to bring everybody back together, celebrate our community and celebrate our Japanese immersion program," Ryan said. The event did occur during the first two COVID-19 years.

According to Ryan, organizers hoped to replicate a traditional Japanese children's festival by presenting a variety of Japanese games, art, cuisine, and entertainment. The Okinawa Kai Eissa Club, a dance team from Washington, D.C., performed, as did Miyako Taiko, a Japanese drumming group also from D.C.

Fox Mill ES is a public school in Fairfax County that offers a Japanese Immersion Program for students in grades one through six. Enrolled children study mathematics, science, and health in Japanese for approximately half of each day. The other half of the day

is spent learning social studies, language arts, and reading in English. FCPS students are enrolled in the program through a lottery process.

#### VIEWPOINTS

*The Connection asked current and past Fox Mill ES students how they intended to participate in the matsuri and their recollections of being in the Japanese Immersion Program. All students resided in Herndon.*

**Saira Vasudevan, 10** - "I just love this. It is a cool way to show the Japanese culture. This is the first time I helped set up."

**Dana Pehrson, 11** - "I'm wearing a summer kimono, a yukata, (which) people in Japan wear to summer festivals. My mother chose it for me. It used to be my sister's."

**Cleo Ryan, 11** - Recalls her first day of first grade in the Japanese Immersion Program at Fox Mill ES. "I was nervous that everyone else was going to know a bunch of Japanese, and I was not going to know anything. But the teachers were nice. I learned a lot."

**Hoku Isidro, 10** - "The hardest part, at least for me, was writing all the symbols and understanding them in sentences and conversations. There are three different types of Japanese writing, and sometimes it's really hard to copy or even trace to do a good job."

**Aya Ryan, 14, 8th grader** - (Aya has been coming to the matsuri since first grade.) "Volunteering is fun because I get to see how it is set up, and I like the work that is put into this event."



Dylan Laino, 4, observes his brother Owen, 6, attempting to play the Kendama, a classic Japanese hand-eye coordination toy used by young and old.



Students shop at the Japanese Cultural Committee's sales table during the Fox Mill ES Japanese Children's Day Matsuri held on May 13 at Rachel Carson Middle School.



Paper sumo wrestling- After the children colored their sumo wrestlers' cut-outs, they stood them on the box and drummed it rapidly with their hands, making them move. A wrestler wins the bout by forcing their opponent to touch the ground with any body part except their feet.