

Silver Line Passengers In Sight?

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Should You Prepare for an Active Shooter?

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Vienna's Pets Will Do Us Good

PAGE 9

Vienna Mayor Linda Colbert
and her cat Ginny will launch
Vienna's Pet of the Week.

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Coming Up: Northern Virginia Senior Olympics

You don't have to be a runner, high jumper, swimmer or tennis player to participate in the Northern Virginia Senior Olympics. NVSO chairman Herb Levitan of Arlington, says, "Many events such as scrabble, Mexican Train dominoes, Sudoku, cornhole toss, Wii bowling and Mah Jongg are just a few of the indoor events being offered in the 2022 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics." New this year is weight lifting. Com-

petition is open to both men and women in five year age groups and will include three lifts, dead, press and back squat.

2022 marks NVSO's 40th Anniversary. It will be held Sept. 10-24 at 25 venues throughout Northern Virginia. Opening day ceremonies will take place at the Thomas Jefferson Community Center in Arlington. All

events are open to the public. Adults 50+ years of age living

in a sponsoring jurisdiction will compete in 78 individual events most in five or 10 year age groups. NVSO is sponsored by the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Fauquier and Prince William.

NVSO events include track and field, swimming, diving, cycling, tennis, table tennis, miniature golf, ten pin bowling, eight and nine ball pool, pickleball, handball, rac-

quetball, badminton, bocce and more. Registration is online only at www.nvso.us beginning Friday, July 6 and closes Wednesday, Aug. 31. Registration fee is \$20 which covers multiple events. For more information, email, nvso1982@gmail.com.

NVSO is also supported by Gold Patrons who contribute \$1000 each which enables NVSO to purchase and replace equipment and services, promote participation and provide awards of recognition.

100% of money donated is used for NVSO activities. It is a non-profit 501-C-3 organization.

Gold Patrons are Hunters Woods at Trails Edge, Chesterbrook Residences, Advanced Hearing Services, Greenspring Retirement Community, Westminster at Lake Ridge, Goodwin Living, Facial Plastic Surgery Center, The Jefferson, Ashleigh at Lansdowne, Heatherwood Retirement Community, Paul Spring Retirement Community and Wellington at Lake Manassas.



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Arlington Doctor Supplied Oxycodone Ring

A Front Royal woman pleaded guilty today to being the ringleader of a decade-long oxycodone distribution network, sourcing high-dosage oxycodone pills from a doctor in Arlington.

According to court documents, Candie Marie Calix, 40, nominally worked as an office manager for a physician in Arlington, referred to in court records as Doctor-1. Between 2012 and 2022, Doctor-1 prescribed Calix nearly 40,000 oxycodone 30-mg pills and more than 9,000 oxycodone 15-mg pills. Doctor-1 also prescribed similar quantities of oxycodone 30-mg and 15-mg pills to Calix's relatives, including her mother, grandparents, great-grandmother, brother, and husband. These quantities were far in excess of therapeutic doses, and Calix personally distributed or directed others to distribute most of the pills that Doctor-1 prescribed to Calix and her family members.

Calix functioned as the gatekeeper to Doctor-1; she recruited individuals she knew from around Front Royal to be "patients" of Doctor-1 and obtain large quantities of oxycodone. These "patients," in turn, typically kicked back the oxycodone 30-mg pills they were prescribed to Calix to redistribute, and kept the oxycodone 15-mg pills for their own use. Calix recruited at least 12 individuals to be "patients" of Doctor-1.

Calix and her co-conspirators used coded language to refer to the pills they distributed, for example, referring to oxycodone 30-mg pills as "tickets," "blueberries," or "muffins." The co-conspirators typically sold oxycodone 30-mg pills at a cost of \$25 per pill, and over the course of the conspiracy, generated at least \$5,000 per month in profits.

Two of Calix's co-conspirators, Kendall Sovereign, 56, and Jessica Talbott, 35, both of Front Royal, also pleaded guilty to their involvement in the conspiracy.

SEE ARLINGTON, PAGE 7

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NEWS



Innovation Center Station

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS



Metro marker to Reston Town Center Station.

PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Silver Line Transferred to Metro's Control

Passenger service date to be determined by Metro's Board of Directors.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

After years of delays, at 6 a.m. on June 23, Metro formally took over control of the Phase 2 Dulles Extension project of the Silver Line from the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority. In a news release, Metro Board Chairman Paul C. Smedberg said, "We are one step closer to extending our service offerings to customers that have long-awaited access to Metro."

The conditional milestone is known as the Operational Readiness Date. While there is still more work to do, achieving this milestone towards opening the Silver Line Extension will create jobs, improve economic vitality, and increase ridership for the region. We appreciate the support and understanding of our jurisdictional partners and customers as we work towards project completion," Smedberg said.

When Phase 2 opens to ridership, on a date still to be determined, the extension will provide a direct transit connection to Washington Dulles International Airport and points in Loudoun County with the terminus at Ashburn.

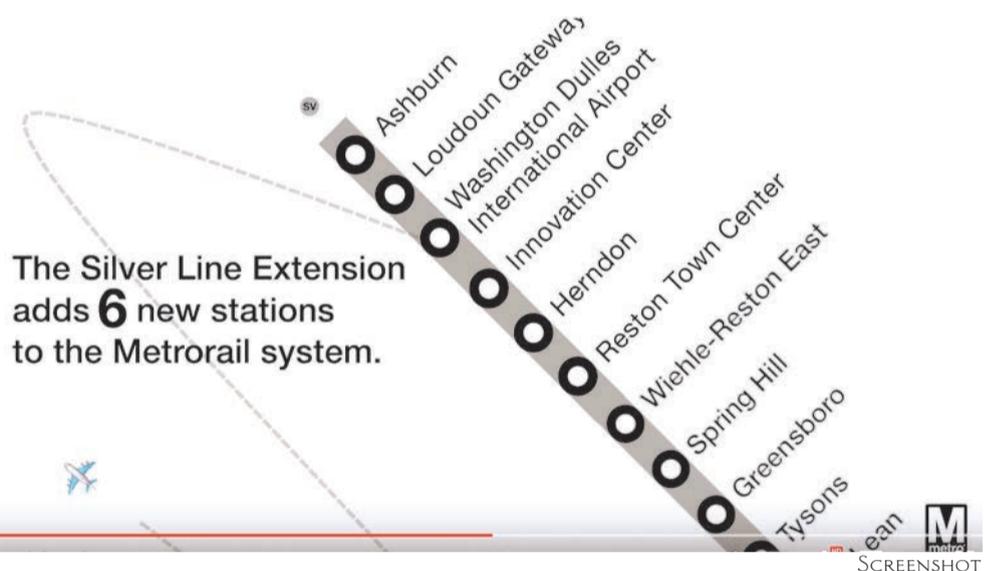
The six new rail stations are Reston Town Center, Herndon, Innovation Center, Washington Dulles International Airport, Loudoun Gateway, and Ashburn. The Extension also includes a new, 90-acre rail

yard with a storage capacity for 168 railcars and new maintenance facilities to service, inspect, and clean the trains, according to Metro.

"[The] announcement brings the National Capital Region a big step closer to new rail service which will connect existing Metro stations with Dulles Airport and Loudoun County," said U.S. Representatives Don Beyer (D-8th District), Gerry Connolly (D-11th District), and Jennifer Wexton (D-10th District), who represent Northern Virginia in the U.S. House in a joint release. "We are encouraged by this news, and will continue to seek safe, reliable Metro service that benefits as many of our constituents as possible."

After the most recently announced Silver Line Phase 2 delay on March 29, 2022, Wexton, Beyer, and Connolly wrote a letter to John Potter, president and chief executive officer of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, and William Sudow, chairperson, Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority. In the letter, they expressed concern about the additional delay as revenue service was planned to start before June 30, 2022.

The Members of Congress wrote, "During recent testimony before the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, Mr. Wiedefeld stated that his goal was to begin revenue



Metro's diagram shows the six stations yet to open for passenger service, (from top) Ashburn to Reston Town Center.

service on Phase 2 before the end of Metro's fiscal year and Mr. Wiedefeld's retirement on June 30, 2022, but, with this update, that goal is unfortunately no longer attainable."

There is still important work to do before the Silver Line Extension (Phase 2) can be opened for passenger service, including readiness testing and workforce training.

Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill) said that Phase 2 of the Silver Line "should be open and running in 2-3 months." There are no guarantees, however. The opening date for Phase 2 of the Silver Line passenger service will follow action by Metro's Board of Directors on the final acceptance of the

line by MWAA.

Phase 1 of the new Silver Line opened for revenue service over eight years ago, on August 26, 2014, after a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Local, county, and state elected officials and dignitaries boarded a train that departed the Wiehle-Reston East Metro station, the present western terminus of the line.

"This is a major milestone having the Metro transferred and testing now beginning," said Sheila Olem, mayor of the Town of Herndon. "I look forward to the opportunity to ride the train as I did in Phase 1, this time when the Silver Line Extension opens."

Police Advise: Avoid, Deny, Defend in Active Attacks

Would you know how to respond in critical minutes?

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Recent news reports of active shooting events in distant locations, like Uvalde Texas and Buffalo New York, and in our own backyard, at Tysons Corner Center, have some wondering when it will stop.

Calling to mind the tragic deaths in earlier Virginia incidents at VA Tech, Virginia Beach municipal building, and at various locations around the beltway by two snipers, you also might well ask, "What should I do to survive in an active shooter situation?"

Fairfax County police have advice and training for the public to help people prepare, as best one can, for a traumatic active attacker event. Training provided on June 25th, at West Springfield District Government Building, by MPO Anthony Capizzi, from the police department's crime prevention unit, taught attendees how to respond to an active situation, learning from tragedies that happened before.

While almost all past mass killing incidents involve guns, use of knives and cars in such attacks have led law enforcement to use the term "active attacker" instead of "active shooter." The FBI and DHS still refer to "active shooters."

Most attackers, 95 percent, are male of any age, set on avenging a perceived wrong done to them in a location they have some connection with; many broadcast their plans in advance on social media or by other means. The majority of incidents occur at commercial establishments, about 50 percent; about 25 percent at schools, and 15 percent outdoors, according to police.

Regardless of the method or location, police urge people who find themselves in such situations to "avoid, deny, and defend," previously called "run, hide, fight," as the FBI still refers to the strategy.

❖ AVOID means run away from the area if you can to avoid the killer. This might include using an exit other than the one you used to enter an area.

❖ DENY means precluding the killer the

HOW TO RESPOND

WHEN AN ACTIVE SHOOTER IS IN YOUR VICINITY

QUICKLY DETERMINE THE MOST REASONABLE WAY TO PROTECT YOUR OWN LIFE. CUSTOMERS AND CLIENTS ARE LIKELY TO FOLLOW THE LEAD OF EMPLOYEES AND MANAGERS DURING AN ACTIVE SHOOTER SITUATION.

<p>1. EVACUATE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an escape route and plan in mind • Leave your belongings behind • Keep your hands visible 	<p>2. HIDE OUT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hide in an area out of the active shooter's view. • Block entry to your hiding place and lock the doors 	<p>3. TAKE ACTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a last resort and only when your life is in imminent danger. • Attempt to incapacitate the active shooter • Act with physical aggression and throw items at the active shooter
--	--	--

CALL 911 WHEN IT IS SAFE TO DO SO

FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE

Police advise citizens on how to respond to active attacker situations.



Matthew Mallory, Lorton, practices packing a gunshot wound on a "leg" during training



Joan Cephas, Lorton, applies pressure to stop the bleeding on a simulated wound

ability to see or get to you. It may be possible to hide and be undetectable, or to block access to your location by locking or tying doors, creating barriers or changing your position to remain unseen.

❖ DEFEND is the action you might need to take if "avoid" or "deny" are not possible. It means to take aggressive action to defend yourself using whatever materials may be at hand, grabbing the gun, or fighting the attacker. Police advise that you do not attempt to "play dead" as this is not likely to be convincing and is more likely to make you an easy target.

While police cannot prepare you for every situation possible, they say using the "Avoid/Deny/Defend" strategy provides your best chance of survival until they arrive on the

scene. Police response time, at a national average of three minutes from a 911 call, while short, means you may need to rely on your own preparation and deliberations for critical moments. Training yourself to make note of possible exits when you enter any area, giving prior consideration to defense, and keeping "avoid/deny/defend" strategy training in mind, could help save your life.

Capizzi also says it's important to come to your action decision quickly, to fight the denial phase; if you hear gunshots — react — don't wait to convince yourself gun fire is happening.

Should the worst happen and you or someone around you is wounded, the Fairfax County Police training includes instruction on how to stop bleeding, which saves lives. The instruction includes applying pressure to and packing wounds, and pos-

Resources of Interest

❖ Department of Homeland Security Active Shooter Booklet
https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active_shooter_booklet.pdf

❖ FBI Active Shooter Resources
<https://www.fbi.gov/about/partnerships/office-of-partner-engagement/active-shooter-resources>

❖ FBI Analysis of Active Shooter Incidents in 2021
<https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/active-shooter-incidents-in-the-us-2021-052422.pdf/view>

❖ Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines developed at UVA
<https://education.virginia.edu/faculty-research/centers-labs-projects/research-labs/youth-violence-project/comprehensive-school>

sible use of a tourniquet until professional emergency medical help arrives. You could need to assist the wounded even as police arrive since their first priority would be to stop the killing. Only after eliminating the continued threat will police then assist with treatment of the wounded, and evacuation of the injured.

Statistically, public active shooter events are very unusual according to FBI documents, referring to them as "low probability, high impact events." For example in 2006, the average school in the U.S. could expect to see a current or former student involved in a homicide on its grounds every 13,000 years.

The next training for citizen response to active attackers at West Springfield District Station will be July 16, 9 a.m. until noon. Contact MPO Capizzi at anthony.capizzi@fairfaxcounty.gov to register for a limited number of seats.

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NOVA Parks Seeks Input into 5 Year Strategic Plan

Park users invited to comment before July 8.

By SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

With 34 parks and 12,335 acres spread over six jurisdictions in Alexandria, Arlington, Falls Church, Fairfax, and Loudoun cities and counties, NOVA Parks serves many northern Virginia people with a variety of park amenities. Whether you look for ornamental gardens, historical sites, golf, waterparks, biking, kayaking, cabins in the woods, holiday light shows, or simply the pleasure of enjoying time in nature along its many hiking trails, you can find a special place in the NOVA Parks system. Founded as a conservation organization over sixty years ago in 1959, the organization has acquired and now boasts ownership of “more parkland adjacent to the rivers of the region than any other public lands organization.” It generates 88% of its operating revenues from park programs and events.

Touching the lives of Northern Virginia’s 2.5 million people is a challenge and a responsibility, and NOVA Parks continues to reassess their approaches and look at “conserving natural and historic resources, making parks more central to the community’s life, and funding all of these vital community needs.”

As part of that on-going reassessment, NOVA Parks is asking the public’s help to provide feedback on their draft 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. The plan addresses five “pil-



Paul Gilbert, Executive Director, NOVA Parks, “We want our parks to be open and welcoming to everyone.”

lars” of objectives: “environment, belonging, our team, building the future, and revenue and efficiency ... to help guide improvements, operations, conservation, and services in NOVA Parks over the next five years.”

Executive Director Paul Gilbert says, “A strategic plan sets the course for any organization. I am very excited about what our new strategic direction will mean for Northern Virginia. NOVA Parks can be a leader in a number of important areas. We can address the causes of climate change by focusing on how to make our lands absorb more carbon and how to reduce our carbon footprint. We live in a very diverse region, and we want our parks to be open and welcoming to ev-



NOVA Parks, a large holder of waterfront parks, looks to establish a five year strategic plan

eryone. We have a whole section of the plan called ‘Belonging.’ We can become even more welcoming by being thoughtful about creating community partnerships and developing programs and facilities that are culturally relevant to different groups. This is a plan that will make our region better and, in the process, make our world a little better.”

The online survey asks only a few minutes of your time to give input, by answering two questions related to each of the five pillars, and a couple overall questions, ranking objectives within each area. Visit <https://www.novaparks.com/StrategicPlan> to review the plan and provide feedback by July 8.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



The Regional Park System is a favorite of citizen scientists, like Jim Waggener, who monitor seasonal birds, blooms, and insects in the area of Occoquan Bay

STRATEGIC PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

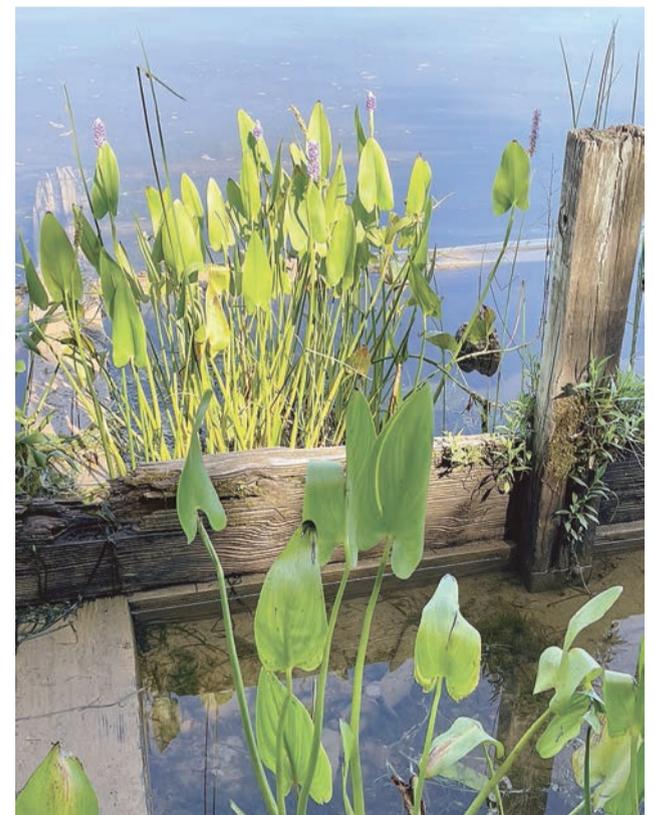
- Plant over 50,000 trees creating new areas of forest
- Create or improve trails with a focus on sustainability and an investment of over \$6 million
- Create a W&OD Visitor Center
- Create a new wetland park for environmental education and sustainability
- Invest in electric vehicles and mowers, and take other steps to lower carbon footprint
- Add five new parkland properties, and manage existing parkland to better sequester carbon
- Expand cultural events and festivals
- Lead effort to commemorate the Declaration of Independence with interpretive efforts focused on liberty, justice, and freedom
- Expand partnerships with community groups
- Grow entrepreneurial revenues to support park improvements
- Create a team and programs that are reflective of our changing and diverse community



The five year plan could include a new wetland park for environmental education



Parks in the regional system provide recreation and viewing an abundance of wildlife within their areas of conservation



Pickerelweed, a native aquatic plant blooms within the wetlands of Accotink Bay in the park

OPINION

U.S. Supreme Court Threatens Women's Fundamental Rights

BY SEN. SCOTT SUROVELL



Last week the U.S. Supreme Court issued three very important decisions: Carson v. Maiklin, New York Rifle & Pistol Assn v. Bruen and Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Org. (Dobbs). The Carson case relates to taxpayer funding of religious schools. NY Rifle affects firearm violence prevention.

Dobbs eviscerates a woman's right to make her own healthcare decisions. This column addresses the Dobbs decision. I will discuss NY Rifle next week, Carson and the Governor's budget amendments in future columns.

The Dobbs case overruled the landmark Roe v. Wade decision which has been the law of the land since Jan. 22, 1973. That decision held that the right to privacy, embodied in various amendments in the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights, gave women a constitutional right to make their own healthcare decisions. Justice Samuel Alito wrote that the Roe case was wrongly decided and should no longer stand.

The Dobbs decision does not change Virginia law -- yet. In Virginia, abortion is legal and in 2020 we even repealed a series of restrictions on a woman's right to make this decision, limits put in place between 2010 and 2019, including requiring an external ultrasound and a picture of the ultrasound's results given to the woman, requiring a 24-hour wait after obtaining the ultrasound, the provision of medically inaccurate information, and revoking a mandate to

the Board of Health to unnecessarily regulate abortion clinics like hospitals.

Today, a Virginia woman may obtain an abortion in the state without restriction during her pregnancy's first two trimesters or during the third trimester if three medical doctors certify that the pregnancy will lead to the woman's death or "substantially and irremediably impair the mental or physical health of the woman."

After the Supreme Court's decision, Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin announced that he will propose legislation to ban all abortions after the fifteenth week of pregnancy. Another Senator has announced that he will introduce legislation to state that life begins at conception. These bills will not pass the current Senate Education and Health Committee, but after the 2023 elections, if the membership and control of the State Senate changes, Virginia's laws could be significantly modified or repealed.

I support a woman's right to make her own healthcare decisions. In 2020, I even introduced legislation to codify Roe v. Wade, to put that policy into Virginia's laws. Senator Dick Saslaw introduced legislation to start the process of placing Roe in the Constitution of Virginia. We withdrew our own bills at the request of several abortion rights organizations who did not want the legislation to be presented for various reasons. The current composition of the General Assembly along with Governor Youngkin's views make it impossible to pass these

bills today, but that could change after 2023 or 2025 when we could try again.

I cannot convey how disturbed I am by the Supreme Court's decisions. While past precedents have fallen before, the Court has never taken away a constitutional right. Americans rely on the Court to follow our Constitution and the law through reliance upon precedent and incremental change. Last week, the Court inappropriately behaved like a legislature.

Five of the six justices who signed on to Dobbs and the other two opinions were nominated by presidents who did not win the American popular vote. All six told Congress that Roe was settled precedent in their confirmation hearings. One was confirmed after the U. S. Senate refused to hold confirmation hearings six months before an election. Three were confirmed after the Republican majority changed internal rules and exempted Supreme Court nominations from the filibuster. All were confirmed by U. S. Senators representing a minority of America's population.

The Court's legitimacy derives from the public's trust, that the public believes that the court bases its opinions on the law and not on a judge's personal opinions or religious beliefs. This week's decisions have eviscerated public confidence and will further inflame the divisions that have plagued our country for the last five years.

I will do everything I can to protect the ability of Virginia's women to have access to contraception and make healthcare decisions without government interference.

All Aboard!

DELEGATE KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM



The latest word is that the second phase of the Metrorail Silver Line from the Wiehle-Reston East Station to the Route 606 Station in Loudoun County will

open this fall. It was originally slated to open in 2018, but a number of hiccups related to construction delayed the project. Many of us will breathe a deep sigh of relief for the completion of a project that has taken decades of our effort. The work will have been worth it. As the Washington Post editorialized in 2005, the Silver Line will "stitch together an incongruent edge city whose future is integral to the region's."

My direct involvement with the project that for some periods of time became an almost full-time job began in 1989 when the Trans-

portation Committee of the Reston Association asked me to meet with them to advise them of my thoughts on how the long-term challenges of getting in and out of Reston might be solved. I was a long-term believer that mass transit had to

be part of the answer with my belief that an extension of Metrorail was the best solution for Reston and for Dulles Airport. I knew that the Committee chaired by urban planner and transportation expert Patty Nicoson and membership including transportation planning expert Joe Stowers would not be satisfied with a too-generalized and simplistic answer. I advised them that I was going to establish an organization made up of community and business leaders with whom I would work to advocate for an extension of Metrorail in the Dulles Corridor. The organization

became the Dulles Corridor Rail Association (DCRA)—I chaired its Board and Patty Nicoson became Executive Director for nearly two decades until the project was approved and underway.

I anticipate that the ride on the Silver Line will be a smooth one ex-

tending from Ashburn in Loudoun County past Dulles Airport, Reston and Tysons Corner into the District of Columbia and Maryland with no need to get out of your seat. The years getting official approv-

SEE PLUM, PAGE 11

Let Us Know Your View

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

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Merrifield Center Renamed Sharon Bulova Center for Community Health

Last month, the Board of Supervisors, elected officials and others gathered to rename Merrifield Center. The new, more descriptive name, Sharon Bulova Center for Community Health, honors Sharon Bulova, former chairman and long-time member of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.



Sharon Bulova Center for Community Health, honors Sharon Bulova, former chairman and long-time member of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

The building continues to provide great benefit far beyond its doors at 8221 Willow Oaks Corporate Drive, Fairfax. Free parking is available in the garage behind the building as well as bus connections for Fairfax Connector bus routes 401 and 402 and Metrobus routes 1a and 1c.

The new name is expected to better reflect the many public services offered inside. The Sharon Bulova Center, for short, is the main entry point for residents seeking services for mental health, substance use disorders and developmental disabilities.

Programs and services delivered at the Sharon Bulova Center are provided by the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) and include:

- ❖ Screening and assessment services available Monday through

Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., at 703-383-8500, TTY 711. Staff can take calls in English and Spanish and can access interpreters for other languages when needed.

- ❖ 24/7 Emergency Services and Merrifield Crisis Response Center.

See also: what happens when you come to CSB emergency services.

- ❖ Medication-assisted substance use disorder treatment.

- ❖ Psychiatric services and medication management.

- ❖ Community-based supports for individuals with developmental disability.

The center also has a Peer Resource Center, a pharmacy, Neighborhood Health primary care and other services to promote and sus-

tain recovery, including outpatient services and supports.

If you or someone you care about needs non-emergency mental health or substance use disorder services, please call the CSB Entry & Referral Services at 703-383-8500 or come directly to the Sharon Bulova Center for Community Health.

SHARON BULOVA CENTER
for Community Health
8221 Willow Oaks Corporate Drive
Fairfax, VA 22031
703-559-3000 - Main
703-573-5679 - Emergency Services
703-207-7700 - Medication Clinic
703-852-0041 - Genoa Healthcare Pharmacy
Free parking in the garage behind the building
MetroBus (Routes 1A and 1C), and Connector bus (Routes 401 and 402)

SoberRide for July 4

A local nonprofit organization will offer free safe rides to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area during next week's Independence Day holiday.

The nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) will offer the 2022 Independence Day SoberRide program beginning at 4 p.m. on Monday, July 4 (Independence Day) and operate until 4 a.m. on Tuesday, July 5 as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk holiday.

During this twelve-hour period, area residents age 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones, then enter the SoberRide code in the app's "Payment" tab (under the "Add Lyft Pass" option) to receive their

no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's 2022 Independence Day SoberRide® promo code will be posted at 3 p.m. on Monday, July 4 on www.SoberRide.com

During the 2019 Independence Day period (COVID-19 prevented the last two year's full offerings), 817 people in the Washington-metropolitan area used WRAP's SoberRide® program rather than possibly driving home impaired. The charity also offers its SoberRide® program on St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Halloween and the winter holidays.

SoberRide® is offered throughout Lyft's Washington D.C. coverage area which includes all or parts of: the District of Columbia; the Maryland counties of Montgomery and Prince George's; and the Northern Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William and towns therein plus the cities of Alexandria, Fair-

fax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park.

Sponsors of WRAP's 2022 Independence Day SoberRide® campaign include the 395 Express Lanes, Amazon, Anheuser-Busch, Beer Institute, Brown-Forman, Constellation Brands, District of Columbia Association of Beverage Alcohol Wholesalers, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Foundation of Advancing Alcohol Responsibility, Giant Food, Glory Days Grill, Kendall-Jackson, Lyft, Molson Coors Beverage Company, New Belgium Brewing, Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington, and the Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association.

Since 1991, WRAP's SoberRide® program has provided 82,300 free safe rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area. www.SoberRide.com

Arlington Doctor Supplied Oxycodone Ring

FROM PAGE 2

Sovereign and Talbott are both scheduled to be sentenced on Sept. 21.

Calix is scheduled to be sentenced on Sept. 28. She faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison.

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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.

Planning for a BRIGHT Future!

PUBLIC HEARING ON MCLEAN COMMUNITY CENTER'S DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

WEDNESDAY, JULY 6, 6:30 P.M.

The McLean Community Center (MCC) is seeking public input as it finalizes its strategic plan based on public feedback gathered from district residents over the last several months. MCC has hired AMS Planning & Research to help craft the plan and invites residents of Dranesville Small District 1A to express their ideas about the future programming and strategic priorities of the center at this public hearing.

Your opinion is important!

mcleancenter.org



McLean Community Center
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CALENDAR

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

SATURDAYS UNTIL DECEMBER

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

MCLEAN FARMERS MARKET

The McLean Farmers Market opened for the 2022 season on 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. For more information, see: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/>

HERNDON FARMERS MARKET

Thursdays through Nov. 3, 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 765 Lynn St., Herndon, VA, 20170 <https://www.fairfax-county.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/herndon>

GREAT FALLS FARMERS MARKET

The Great Falls Farmers Market Outdoor Market is open every Saturday, Spring and Summer, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m., 778 Walker Road, Great Falls. For vendors and weekly highlights see <https://www.greatfallsfarmersmarket.org/>

JUNE 24-AUG. 26 (FRIDAYS)

Storytime for Little Historians. 11 a.m. The second annual Storytime for Little Historians program returns this summer. Reston Museum invites our youngest visitors to the Reston Museum every Friday at 11 a.m. to listen to a story about Reston or one of Reston's founding principles. Books for the program come from the Reston Museum and Reston's Used Book Shop. Program is offered free of charge and each child will receive a goodie bag. Program is recommended for children under 7. Visit www.restonmuseum.org.

JUNE 28-JULY 24

"Memory and Illusion" Art Exhibit. 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. At Jo Ann Rose Gallery, Reston Community Center - Lake Anne, 1609-A Washington Plaza, Reston. Experience a retrospective show of more than 50 original paintings in a variety of mediums, representational to abstract, dramatic to whimsical, by Reston-based painter Sandra C. Dovberg. Website: sandracdovbergart.com

FRIDAY/JULY 1

Town of Vienna Independence Day Celebration. At Yeonas Park, Vienna. The U.S. Navy Concert Band will perform at 8 p.m., and a 20-minute fireworks display will begin at 9:30 p.m. Visit www.vienna.gov/fireworks.



"Newsies" will be featured July 8-17, 2022 at Capital One Hall in Tysons Corner.

vienna.gov/fireworks.

SATURDAY/JULY 2

MCC Independence Day Celebration. 6:30-10:30 p.m. At Langley High School Sports Stadium. MCC has rescheduled its Independence Day Celebration to Saturday, July 2. Come and enjoy music, food and fireworks with your family. Free shuttles will be available at the following locations: Beginning at 6:30 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean Churchill Elementary School, 7100 Churchill Rd., McLean Beginning at 7 p.m. St. Luke Church and School, 7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean

Lake Fairfax Park fireworks display. Ticketed entry begins at 10 a.m. The fireworks are expected to start shortly after 9 p.m. All visitors are asked to arrive no later than 8 p.m. The Park Foundation stage will kick off at 1 p.m.

Beer garden hosted by Aslin Beer Company. Food trucks will be on site throughout the day. The Water Mine Family Swimmin' Hole Water Park will be open from 11 a.m. until 6 p.m. However, come early as the facility reaches capacity quickly. Visit the Water Mine website for more information.

Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$15 at the gate. Bikes and pedestrians are free. The Fairfax County Park Foundation is a sponsor of the fireworks.

Register for Lake Fairfax Fireworks https://fairfax.usedirect.com/FairfaxFCPAWeb/ACTIVITIES/Details.aspx?session_id=362185&back_url=fi9BQ1RJVKIUSUVTLLN-IYX.JjaC5hc3B4

Lake Fairfax Park is located at 1400 Lake Fairfax Drive in Reston, Virginia. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/lake-fairfax> or call 703-471-5415.

SATURDAY/JULY 2

Jam on July 2. 7-11 p.m. At Jammin' Java, Vienna. Featuring an all-star lineup of some of the best mid-Atlantic regional bar band players from Danger Bird, Better Off



The Town of Vienna will hold its Independence Day Celebration on Friday, July 1 in Vienna.

Dead, Montgomery Warlocks, and The Crimestoppers; The Grateful Allman Band Experience celebrates the music of the Grateful Dead, Allman Brothers, and The Band. Relive the music from the venerated Watkins Glen Summer Jam Music Festival. Visit the website: <https://www.jamminjava.com/contact/>

SUMMER SUNDAY CONCERTS

The Alden at the McLean Community Center is bringing great music to the great outdoors with its Summer Sunday Concerts in the Park series. The concerts are for all ages and include a wide range of music genres, from South Asian, to indie rock, to hip-hop, to Southwest Native American jazz fusion. The free concerts are being held at 3 p.m. on Sundays through July 31. The park is located at 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd.

Sunday, July 3, 3 p.m. Cinema Hearts. An ex-pageant queen makes power

pop; Cinema Hearts is the indie rock musical project of Washington, D.C. singer-songwriter Caroline Weinroth. Cinema Hearts has played concert halls and rock clubs, including the Kennedy Center, AMP by Strathmore, Smithsonian museums, Black Cat and Fort Reno.

CLIFTON FOURTH OF JULY

Timeline of Events: 3:45 - Parade Line-Up at Dell/Kincheloe in the Town of Clifton. The Class of 2022 Seniors are invited to lead the parade this year. 4:00 - Parade Start; 4:30 - Ayre Square flag raising; 5:00 - CBA Potluck and Celebration Sign up on the link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0b4fafa-92ca57-4thofjuly> Questions? Sam Kinzer sskinzer@gmail.com

MONDAY/JULY 4

Fourth of July 5K Fun Run. 8 a.m.

Join Great Falls TrailBlazers for the annual Fourth of July 5K Fun Run. They will meet at the parking lot behind Great Falls Library. This pet-friendly event is open to all ages. The trail makes a loop and goes through the woods so if you want to bring a stroller it is probably best if it has large wheels like a jogging stroller. Free T-shirts given to the first 200 finishers. This year's T-shirt art was done by Begonia Morton. This year's sponsors are TD Bank, Remax Agility, and The Old Brogue. Contact the race director at GreatFallsTrailBlazers@gmail.com. Register at <https://runsignup.com/Race/VA/GreatFalls/July4th5KFunRun> or GreatFallsTrailBlazers.org.

Great Falls Hometown Celebration & Fireworks

Join us as we celebrate the 4th of July throughout the day!

Morning festivities kick off with the Little Patriots Parade, followed by the Main Parade around the Village Centre. After the parade, head to the Village Green with your kids for food and fun.

In the evening, we will see you at Turner Farm for the main event. Gates open at 6pm for live music, games and food trucks. The fireworks start once it's dark - about 9pm.

<https://www.celebrategreatfalls.org/4th-of-july>

JULY 7-AUG. 18 (THURSDAYS)

Farmers' Market Fun Days. At Town Green, 730 Elden Street, Herndon. Enjoy free kid-friendly entertainment on Thursdays running July 7-August 18 from 10:30-11:15 a.m. on the Town Green, 730 Elden Street. Before or after the performance, people are welcome to shop the locally grown and homemade goodies at the Farmers' Market from 8 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., on Lynn Street in historic downtown Herndon. If inclement weather occurs, call the Inclement Weather line at 703-435-6866 for the status of the performance.

Entertainment Schedule: July 7: Rocknoceros - pop-style music with an all-age appeal July 14: Drew Blue Shoes - interactive magical miracles July 21: Marsha and the Positrons - songs about science and how the world works

July 28: Mr. Jon and Friends - Parents Choice Award winning music for kids

August 4: Milkshake - music for little dudes

August 11: Groovy Nate - fun and educational shows using exotic musical instruments

August 18: Rainbow Rock - plays original children's music for the tot rock set

To learn more about the Town of Herndon Parks and Recreation Department, visit herndon-va.gov/recreation, or call 703-787-7300.

THURSDAY/JULY 7

Nottoway Nights. 7:30-8:30 p.m. at Nottoway Park, 9537 Courthouse Road, Vienna. Joe Coleman, Joe Blunt and Theo Peoples of Voices of Classic Soul have been around the world and back again several times, each as the lead singers of four legendary vocal groups: the Temptations, Platters, Four Tops and Drifters. Call 703-324-SHOW (7469) for inclement weather updates.

Celebrating Vienna's Pets

From poodles to parakeets, Vienna's loyal companions provide unconditional love in both good times and bad. That's why starting the week of July 4, Mayor Linda Colbert will recognize a Vienna pet of the week via the Town's social media channels.

"Studies show that pets can help decrease stress in their human companions, improve heart health and even help children with their emotional and social skills," Colbert said. "Whether you own a pet or not, these stories will surely make your day."

Submitting your pet for consideration as the Mayor's Pet of the Week is easy! Just email Mayor Colbert: Mayor@vienna.gov with the following:

- ❖ Your pet's name
- ❖ Type of pet (please be specific)
- ❖ Three reasons why your animal should be the Mayor's Pet of the Week - A photo of your pet either alone or pictured with you or your family.

Each Monday at noon beginning July 4, the Mayor's Pet of the Week will be posted on the Town's Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter pages (@TownofViennaVA). Then, beginning in August, Mayor Colbert will select one of the weekly winners for recognition as the Mayor's Pet of the Month in the Vienna Voice newsletter.



Celebrating Vienna's Pets

Exceptional Design Awards

Fairfax County is now accepting submissions for the James M. Scott Exceptional Design Awards.

Established in 1984, the awards program aims to celebrate and raise awareness of outstanding planning and design projects among design professionals and the general public.

Any project completed in Fairfax County since January 1, 2017 is eligible for a nomination. Submissions must be sent by email or mail by 5 p.m. on Friday, July 29, 2022. Details about submission categories, requirements and the entry form can be found on the awards webpage.

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/exceptional-design-awards/requirements-and-entry-form>

All award entries should meet some or all of the following criteria:

- ❖ Exemplifies a superior work of architecture.
- ❖ Incorporates outstanding site design and landscaping.
- ❖ Takes into account the context of the project design in relationship to its surroundings.
- ❖ Applies energy and water conservation, and other green building practices.

Awards are granted in three categories: honor, merit and honorable mention. A jury of design professionals, including architects, select the winners who are announced in mid-October.

The James M. Scott Exceptional Design Awards program is sponsored by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and administered by the Fairfax County Department of Planning and Development, in cooperation with the county's Architectural Review Board and the Northern Virginia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

NOVA Parks Is Seeking Input by July 8

NOVA Parks is seeking community input on its Draft 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. The parks agency is asking Northern Virginia residents, businesses, visitors and community organizations to review the draft plan and provide feedback online by 5 p.m. on Friday, July 8. Input will help inform NOVA Parks' priorities through 2027. <https://www.novaparks.com/StrategicPlan>

By 2027, NOVA Parks aims to increase parkland; enhance park amenities; offer new services; serve more community members; create a sense of belonging; offset carbon; conserve energy; become a national brand; attract and retain top-quality employees; and further develop the systems to support and grow this dynamic agency. The 5-year strategic plan provides specific goals and objectives to achieve this vision. Highlights of the plan include:

- ❖ Plant over 50,000 trees creating new areas of forest
- ❖ Create or improve trails with a focus on sustainability and an investment of over \$6 million
- ❖ Create a W&OD Visitor Center
- ❖ Create a new wetland park for environmental education

tion and sustainability

- ❖ Invest in electric vehicles and mowers, and take other steps to lower carbon footprint
- ❖ Add five new parkland properties, and manage existing parkland to better sequester carbon
- ❖ Expand cultural events and festivals
- ❖ Lead effort to commemorate the Declaration of Independence with interpretive efforts focused on liberty, justice, and freedom
- ❖ Expand partnerships with community groups
- ❖ Grow entrepreneurial revenues to support park improvements
- ❖ Create a team and programs that are reflective of our changing and diverse community

The draft plan is organized into 5 pillars — Environment, Belonging, Our Team, Building the Future, and Revenue and Efficiency — with two short questions per section and two overall questions. Responses will take only a few minutes and will help inform NOVA Parks' upcoming priorities.

Visit [novaparks.com/StrategicPlan](https://www.novaparks.com/StrategicPlan) to review the Draft 2023-2027 Strategic Plan and provide feedback by July 8.

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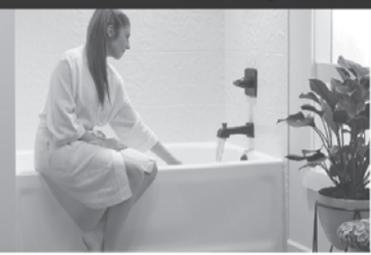


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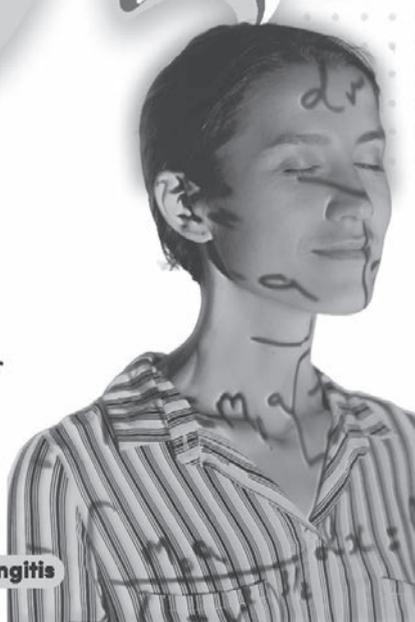
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back to 2008 are available at
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Collect for Kids
School supply and backpack collection efforts are underway for students in FCPS.

Educate Fairfax works alongside many local non-profits, businesses and faith-based organizations to provide school supplies and backpacks to students in need in FCPS. These supplies prepare them to start school in the fall with a smile.

Educate Fairfax purchases school supply kits to be delivered to schools. Your \$10 donation will provide a kit with 10 items in it for a student in need.

Collect for Kids is a county-wide coordinated effort related to the collection and distribution of school supplies and backpacks in Fairfax County.

Educate Fairfax raises funds for the purchase of preassembled school supply kits for our students in need. Monetary donations can be made at the Collect for Kids donation page. <https://educatefairfax.app.neoncrm.com/np/clients/educatefairfax/donation.jsp>

FCPS does not accept physical donations of backpacks or school supplies, but will share best practices on collection efforts for interested groups. These groups may be connected directly to one of the many local organizations that work with the Collect for Kids effort.

Email Kathy Ryan kryan@fcps.edu for more information.

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.

SATURDAY/JULY 2
MCC Independence Day Celebration. 6:30-10:30 p.m. At Langley High School Sports Stadium. Come and enjoy music, food and fireworks with your family. Free shuttles will be available at the following locations:
Beginning at 6:30 p.m.
McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean, Va. 22101;
Churchill Elementary School, 7100 Churchill Rd., McLean, Va. 22101
Beginning at 7 p.m.
St. Luke Church and School, 7001 Georgetown Pike, McLean, Va. 22101

FREE INDEPENDENCE DAY LYFT RIDES
Preparing to combat that time of year when, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, over 40-percent (41%) of U.S. traffic deaths involve drunk drivers,* a local nonprofit organization announced that free safe rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area during the Independence Day holiday. Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the 2022 Independence Day SoberRide program will be in operation beginning at 4 p.m. on Monday, July 4th (Independence Day) and operate until 4 a.m. on Tuesday, July 5th as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk holiday. During this 12-hour period, area residents age 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones, then enter the SoberRide

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 11
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Colloquium Celebrating African American Foodways

Social Practice Resident at the Kennedy Center, Nolan Williams Jr. will present a colloquium celebrating African American foodways with celebrity chef Carla Hall and friends on Saturday, July 9 from 12 pm to 4 pm at the Kennedy Center REACH, Skylight Pavilion.

The event, GRACE: Beyond the Stage: A Colloquium Celebrating African American Foodways, is free to all. Registration is required.

The day will be a discussion about the

historic role African Americans have played in the development of our nation's culinary industry; meeting pioneering founders of local Black-owned restaurants; hearing great music inspired by Williams's research (including selected songs from the musical GRACE); and tasting mouth-watering African American cuisine.

<https://www.kennedy-center.org/whats-on/explore-by-genre/discussion/2021-2022/grace-beyond-the-stage/>

Plum

FROM PAGE 6

als and agreed-upon details were more like a roller coaster ride, however. DCRA had a professional survey conducted that showed 93 percent support for the project, but the federal administration at the time was backing away from costly mass transit ventures. The late Senator John Warner and then Governor Tim Kaine and Congressman Frank Wolfe provided critical and timely support. DCRA organized dozens of citizens, businesses, and organizations in a "Dulles Rail Now" advocacy effort. There were debates on alignment, over or under in Tysons Corner, financing

alternatives, and other issues. Supervision for building the project was assigned to the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA) as it had experience with large project management with the airport expansions. Metro that operates the entire subway and bus system for the region will operate the extension as an integral part of the system.

With the opening of Phase One of the Silver Line and contracts approved for Phase Two, DCRA recognized that its mission had been accomplished, and it merged with the Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance in 2017. I am relieved that we seem to be past the delays. See you on board Metro in the near future!

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 10

code in the app's "Payment" tab (under the "Add Lyft Pass" option) to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's 2022 Independence Day SoberRide® promo code will be posted at 3 p.m. on Monday, July 4th on www.SoberRide.com.

INPUT NEEDED ON MCC DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

The McLean Community Center is seeking public input as it works to finalize the MCC Draft Strategic Plan. The plan is based on public feedback MCC has gathered from district residents over several months spanning 2021-2022. MCC is located at 1234 Ingleside Ave. MCC has hired consultants AMS Planning & Research to help craft the plan. AMS has extensive nationwide experience in strategic research for community centers and nonprofit organizations that are similar in scope to MCC. The goal is to design an effective strategic plan that will yield significant impact over the next three to five years. The next step is to invite residents of Dranesville Small District 1A, who pay a real estate surcharge to support the center, and other patrons and stakeholders to again express their ideas about the future programming and strategic priorities of the center. An in-person public hearing on the MCC Draft Strategic Plan will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 6, at the center. AMS staff will present the draft plan to attendees and record their responses. The draft plan is posted on the center's website, www.mcleancenter.org, and printed copies are available at the center's welcome desk.

JULY 6-29

Host French Teens. Ten volunteer families are needed to host French students from July 6-29. Enjoy an international experience and help promote international understanding

and worldwide friendships, Call Tiffany 484-347-3459. Visit the website: <https://www.smore.com/n2csd>

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.

The Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia Caregivers' Support Group takes place the first and third Tuesdays of each month, 10-11:30 a.m. via Zoom. This group is for caregivers of family members with dementia. Meetings are gently facilitated. For more information and to get the Zoom link, contact Jack Tarr at jtarr5@verizon.net or 703-821-6838.

Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group. 703-941-7000, www.havenofnova.org or havenofnova@verizon.net.

Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group Meets from 1:30-3 p.m. the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW. 703-532-4892.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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.

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Being Naïve Is Just Plain Stupid



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Even though I was unexpectedly diagnosed at age 54 and a half with stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer, I never felt compelled to look for additional trouble by ever having an age-recommended colonoscopy – until recently, that is. I figured what I didn't know wouldn't hurt me or rather, I had already been hurt enough (my pre-existing cancer diagnosis). As such, I didn't consider that cancer has its own set of rules and presuming otherwise is not a prudent course of action – or in my case, inaction. Incorrectly, I also thought that having one cancer diagnosis would somehow mitigate against having another cancer. I must have thought that there was some logic to the process. I should have known better. Cancer and logic aren't usually a part of the same diagnosis/prognosis.

But I rationalized that since I was regularly being CT-scanned, MRI'd, bone-scanned and P.E.T. scanned, I thought – wrongly, that if there was cancer to be found in my body somewhere, all these scans would find it, even if they weren't exactly looking for it. I mean, who's having more diagnostic scans than a "terminal" cancer patient undergoing active treatment? Given how much diagnostic process I was already enduring, I didn't/never really grasped the importance of doing more. I figured I was already doing more than my share. Not that share has anything to do with fending off cancer. Nevertheless, it made for plausible deniability and so it wasn't until nearly age 67, almost 13 and half years after my initial lung cancer diagnosis in 2009, that I acted my age and not my shoe size. I scheduled the procedure and am relieved to report that all's well that ends well, except that I still have a "terminal" form of papillary thyroid cancer. 'Terminal' in that the medication I'm taking, and which is working to keep me stable, has a limited shelf life: three years, expiring Sept. 2023-ish. So either I'll need new medicine or a stronger shelf.

But I can't worry about any of that. I must live my life like everyday matters and that means getting scanned/examined like my life depends on it because you know what? It just might. And in the process of paying attention/following doctor's orders/age-related protocols, I just might improve my quality of life by lifting that bale and toeing that line because it's probably not going to happen by itself. I'm a humanities person, not a science person and so there are lots of substance that is lost on me. Certainly, I can keep my eye on the ball but it's the ball I'm sort of paying attention to. The problem is? There's a lot more than the ball I need to be paying attention to. Fortunately, delaying this most recent procedure hasn't complicated my life. In a way, it's sort of unencumbered me. I'm less afraid now that the next procedure will result in something bad because I've been through one that wasn't. Not that I was paranoid, but when you've been diagnosed with cancer at a relatively young/unexpected age (54 for me), your entire orientation, how you think and feel, how you prioritize and analyze and theorize changes. On the one hand, you live and learn, on the other you value each day as if it might be your last. And when an oncologist tells you your prognosis is "terminal," as mine told me in late February 2009, you take him at his word, that the next day really could be your last.

But that was a long time ago and somehow, I'm still alive. And though I've been given no assurances of anything living forward, I am grateful for each day and will try to care for myself in a way that doesn't hasten my demise but rather prevents it. And if that means having colonoscopies annually so, be it. It's a small price to pay/minor inconvenience to endure to take advantage of the blessings I've been given.

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