

Swimming Beaches On the Potomac?

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CALENDAR, PAGE 7

PHOTO BY GLENDA BOOTH

Housing Bias Is Alive and Well

PAGE 3

As water quality improves for the Potomac River, more recreational activities could include swimming in some areas.

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NEWS BRIEFS

American Spirituals at McLean Community Center

This event is at the McLean Community Center, Friday, July 29, at 1234 Ingleside Ave, McLean, VA 22101. Calvin Earl, the US Spokesman for the African American Spirituals as a National Treasure, will share stories and songs of how slave ancestors embedded their oral history into spirituals for safekeeping. Discover their secret coding hidden within songs to help runaway slaves find safe routes on the Underground Railroad and explore how these humble songs were transformed into freedom songs during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Cosponsored by The Alden. Friday, July 29, 2022, 7pm - 8:30pm. McLean Community Center/The Alden. Registration required. <https://librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/8949990>

Man Arrested in Widespread Theft from Churches

A 61-year-old man has been arrested for stealing from churches throughout the region. On June 28, Fairfax County police officers responded to the Saint Mary's of Sorrows Catholic Church in Fairfax for a man who stole a purse from a car in the parking

lot. The man used stolen credit cards from the purse at several stores nearby. On July 4, the same suspect returned to the church and stole from two donation boxes. At least one stolen check was cashed from the donation box.

Detectives reviewed surveillance footage and distributed flyers of the suspect throughout the region to other law enforcement agencies. Detectives from Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) identified the suspect as a Maryland resident. MCPD was investigating Phelan for similar crimes.

At 10:50 p.m. on July 14, officers responded to the 5700 block of Columbia Pike for an unresponsive man in a white truck. Officers found the suspect in the same vehicle used during the larcenies. Officers determined the truck was stolen from Montgomery County. The suspect was treated by medics then taken into custody. He was charged with unauthorized use of a vehicle and possession of burglarious tools. Four days later, detectives obtained and served warrants for three counts of credit card fraud, three counts of identity theft, theft of a credit card and petit larceny. He was held without bond.

Detectives view him as a suspect in several other larcenies at churches and businesses throughout Fairfax County. Detectives continue to review surveillance footage and anticipate additional charges are forthcoming.

Detectives believe there may be additional victims. Anyone with information about this is asked to call detectives at 703-277-2361. Tips can also be submitted anonymously

through Crime Solvers by phone – 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477).

9-8-8 and Emergency Services

A new 9-8-8 crisis and support hotline is now active across the United States, including in Fairfax County.

In 2020, Congress designated a new 9-8-8 dialing code to operate through the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network, which comprises over 200 locally operated and funded crisis lines across the country.

PRS, Inc. operates the local network in our area.

Dialing either 9-8-8 or the existing National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number, 1-800-273-TALK (8255), will connect the caller to behavioral health care and support 24 hours a day. Virginia continues to invest in building capacity to enhance community-based crisis services. Further updates will be provided in the upcoming months.

In addition, county services include emergency services (open 24/7) at the Sharon Bulova Center for Community Health, operated by the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. You may access emergency services by calling 703-573-5679 or going to 8221 Willow Oaks Corporate Drive in Fairfax.

Before coming to the Sharon Bulova Center for Community Health, please call ahead to emergency services to see if you can be seen via telehealth services – phone or video.

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.

WEDNESDAY/JULY 27

McLean Community Center 50th Anniversary Planning Committee Meeting. 5:30 p.m. Plans are underway for the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the McLean Community Center in 2025. If you are interested in serving on the planning committee, contact Holly Novak at Holly.Novak@fairfax-county.gov.

NOW OPENED

Tyson's Pop-Up Biergarten. At 7581 Colshire Dr, McLean. This new Biergarten, located in the heart of Tysons, features four shipping containers converted into four unique restaurants under three massive tents. The concepts include Tyson's Biergarten, Waffles and Tacos, RollBär, and Salamati. Each restaurant will catapult you to a different corner of the world through the mouthwatering flavors of their dishes and drink selections.

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NEWS



Supervisor Walter L. Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill) presents the Joint Board Matter he and Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D-Franconia) brought forward.



Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D-Franconia)



Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay (D- At-large)



Bryan J. Hill, Fairfax County Executive

SCREENSHOT PHOTOS

Can't Get a Foot in the Door

Housing discrimination found in Fairfax County.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Recently released findings by the Equal Rights Center, contracted by Fairfax County, observed discernable differences between housing providers' treatment of White and Black testers in eight of 25 rental tests. The Equal Rights Center observed discernable differences between housing providers' treatment of White and Black testers in eight of 15 Mortgage Lending tests. And ERC observed discernable differences between real estate agents' treatment of White and Black testers in six of 14 sales tests.

The testing showed housing providers were more likely to give white testers more detailed information, respond more frequently to their messages, and offer more favorable terms than their matched-pair counterparts, said Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill) on June 7, at a regular meeting of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

Testers reported certain housing providers lacked the training to provide the same level of treatment to deaf individuals as they do to hearing individuals.

"The numbers reported for the lending and sales markets were more troubling," Alcorn said. "They clearly show that historical practices of segregating neighborhoods through steering or offering no or worse loans to Black individuals are still very much an issue today."

At the June 7 meeting, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved the Joint Board Matter, Review of Enforcement Program for Fair Housing, which was proposed by Alcorn and Rodney Lusk (D-Franconia). The vote was unanimous.

"This should not be happening. This is horrible," said Lusk during the discussion at the board meeting. "It's making my stomach

turn to even talk about it."

Lusk said the Board must educate the community, adding he never thought he would be treated differently when going through the housing process. "It is unfortunate this sort of activity is still occurring," he said.

Lusk said they needed to identify what they were doing and how to partner with others. "There might be a role that Fairfax County takes, even separately, to make sure we are protecting our residents," Lusk said.

"The numbers reported for the lending and sales markets were more troubling. They clearly show that historical practices of segregating neighborhoods through steering or offering no or worse loans to Black individuals are still very much an issue today."

— Walter Alcorn, Hunter Mill Supervisor

The board directed the Fairfax Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs to review its enforcement program for fair housing and provide the Board with a plan to enhance its education and training activities that includes an ongoing review of the effectiveness of these activities.

Fairfax County's policy is to provide housing throughout the County without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin; marital or familial status; disability; sexual orientation and gender identity; elderliness; military status; or source of funds, said Alcorn.

In 2019, Fairfax County contracted with the Equal Rights Center (ERC) to provide

email, phone, and in-person testing services in the rental, lending, and sales housing markets.

During the contract term, June 2019 to March 2021, the Equal Rights Center conducted and analyzed 122 tests in the county based on race, national origin, and disability. The Fairfax County Human Rights Commission recently provided a summary of the results of these tests in the Fair Housing Rental, Sales, Lending Testing Report (<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/humanrights/sites/humanrights/files/assets/documents/pdf/fair%20housing%20testing%20report.pdf>).

RENTAL TESTS

Equal Rights Center analyzed 25 rental tests based on race, which compared treatment between a Black tester and a White tester. The ERC observed discernable differences between housing providers' treatment of White and Black testers in eight tests. The Leasing Agent:

- ❖ Quoted the Black tester a higher rent amount than the White tester
- ❖ Told the White tester the apartment they were viewing was available now, but told the Black tester it was not available until later
- ❖ Told the Black tester about more fees

LENDING TESTS

Equal Rights Center analyzed 15 lending tests based on race, which compared treatment between a Black tester and a White tester. The ERC observed discernable differences between housing providers' treatment of White and Black testers in eight tests. The Loan Officer:

- ❖ Only offered the Black tester first-time homebuyer loan products
- ❖ Gave the White tester a loan quote without asking their income
- ❖ Only generated a quote for the White tester

RENTAL TESTS

Equal Rights Center analyzed 13 rentals based on disability, all of which compared treatment between a Deaf tester using either an IP relay service or a video relay service and a hearing tester using a traditional phone service. The ERC observed discernable differences between housing providers' treatment of Deaf and hearing testers in six tests. The Leasing Agent only:

- ❖ Questioned the Deaf tester on how they found out about the complex
- ❖ Asked the hearing tester for their contact information
- ❖ Offered the hearing tester a live tour
- ❖ Told the Deaf tester about more stringent application requirements than the hearing tester

HIGHLIGHTS OF SAMPLE DIFFERENCES

Source: Fair Housing Rental, Sales, Lending Testing Report, Fairfax County Human Rights Commission, Fair Housing Program

The Potomac River Is Healing, but Problems Remain

River groups hope to open beaches for swimming along the Potomac.

By GLENDA C. BOOTH
THE CONNECTION

While the Potomac River is no longer “a national disgrace,” as then-President Lyndon Johnson decreed in 1965, it still faces challenges, two river stewards told a July 20 gathering of 40 at Alexandria’s Athenaeum.

The river’s water quality grade rose from a D in 2010 to a B- in 2020, reported Hedrick Belin, President of the Potomac Conservancy, adding, “There is still work to do.”

Nancy Stoner, President of the Potomac Riverkeeper Network (PRK) credited the 1972 federal Clean Water Act for much of the river’s improving health and commended Alexandria for being on schedule to meet the 2025 deadline for the \$454.4 million River Renew project, an initiative designed to keep 140 million gallons of untreated sewage out of waterways each year.

Challenges Loom

Despite some advances, “There is one glaring red mark,” Belin warned, stream-side trees. “In fact, forested buffers, as we call them, received a flat-out F in our report card,” he cautioned.

Trees, shrubs and other plants near waterways help filter out pollution, stabilize stream banks and keep streams and rivers cool in hot weather. Without riverside vegetation, silt, sediment, trash and other pollutants flow into rivers during rain storms.

“Currently there is a real supply chain issue around having enough trees to plant,” Belin said, offering two solutions. The Conservancy helped persuade the Maryland General Assembly to finance the planting of five million trees over the next 10 years and to require that at least 10 percent or half a million trees be planted in underserved communities.

This fall, the Conservancy will launch “Tomorrow’s Trees,” a program that will organize acorn and other hardwood seed collection that will then go to tree nurseries, providing what Belin called, “much needed stock. Today’s seeds will become tomorrow’s trees.”

At 18 sites, Potomac Riverkeeper volunteers monitor turbidity, pH, temperature and E. coli bacteria weekly from May to September by taking samples and analyzing them in their floating lab, the Sea Dog. Among other sites, the group collects samples at Oronoco Bay, Belle Haven Marina, Little Hunting Creek, Pohick Bay and National Harbor. Their online Swim Guide reports results for E. coli bacteria. The July 20, 2022, report found, for example, that the water at the marina “meets water quality standards,” but water quality at Little Hunting Creek, “failed to meet water quality standards.”

Showing a 1918 photo of swimmers on a three-tiered platform in Washington’s Tidal Basin, Stoner said that the network wants to make the river swimmable and to create public swimming beaches. The group’s website says that “the water is sometimes still too polluted for safe recreational use,” but asserts that some areas are “often clean enough to swim at public access points such as the Tidal Basin, Hains Point and Fletcher’s Cove.” They are advocating repeal of the District of Columbia’s swimming ban imposed in 1971.



Hedrick Belin, President of the Potomac Conservancy and Nancy Stoner, President of the Potomac Riverkeeper Network speak at the Athenaeum in Alexandria on July 20.



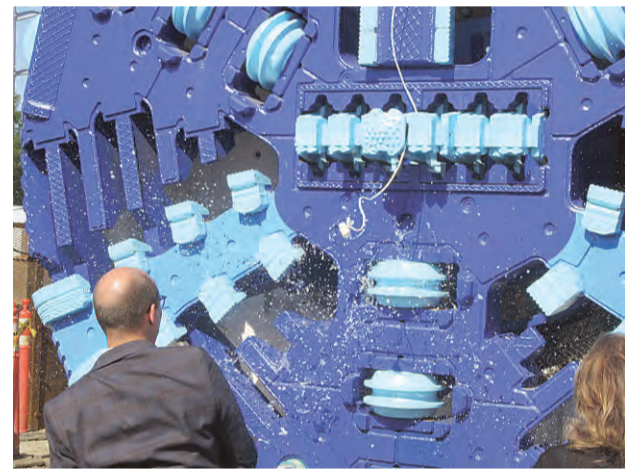
An Alexandria wastewater official explains the River-Renew project to keep untreated sewage out of area waterways.



A forum on the health of the Potomac River at the Athenaeum in Alexandria on July 20.



On July 14, AlexRenew introduced the public to the German-made tunnel boring machine which they named “Hazel.”



On July 14, Alexandria Mayor Justin Wilson christened Hazel by breaking a bottle of treated wastewater on the machine.



Paddlers on the Potomac River



Group paddling at Key Bridge.



Historic photo from the Tidal Basin

Stoner urged cooperation. “We’re proud of what we’ve accomplished and if we continue to work together, we’ll have a cleaner river that everyone can enjoy,” she said.

The event also featured an art show titled “Potomac River Life” with 40 local artists participating and proceeds going to the artists and the Riverkeeper organization. The exhibit catalog is here: <https://www.nvfaa.org/potomac-river-life-catalog>.

She showed a slide identifying six possible sites for swimming beaches in the Washington region. In Virginia, possible sites are Jones Point Park, an area just north of Belle Haven Park and Gravelly Point Park. Site selection criteria include good water quality and publicly-owned lands, Stoner said in a follow-up call. The PRK released a swimmable Potomac report on July 23.

Belin also said that the warming atmosphere is bringing more extreme weather and flooding to the region. More severe storms dump more sediment and pollution into rivers. Droughts are becoming longer. A

water warmer, Stoner said, and warmer waters hold less dissolved oxygen which can harm fish and other aquatic species.

Potential Beach and Potomac Swimming areas in the DC region



Map of potential public beaches

Will We Swim in “Bathwater”?

Both speakers cited a warming planet as a serious threat. Rising temperatures make

Conservancy 2021 report titled “Rising to the Challenge” examines what the warming climate means for the Potomac and the Washington, D.C., area.

The report says, “Washington, D.C., is coming off its hottest decade on record (2011-2019) and temperature rises have been observed in every state within the Potomac River watershed.” The study predicted that by 2080, “the number of days when the heat index tops 95 degrees Fahrenheit in the nation’s capital may double by mid-century and triple by 2080.”

During a July 2019 heat wave, “the Potomac River felt like bath water,” said the report, with a record water temperature of 94

degrees Fahrenheit at Little Falls.

Belin also said that the Potomac “has risen almost a foot in the last century, and it’s expected to rise another three feet by 2080.”

The Conservancy has enlisted the University of Maryland’s Dr. Sacoby Wilson to help address environmental justice concerns, Belin said. Wilson has written that racially-discriminatory housing practices, called “redlining,” have resulted in lower-income communities having fewer ecological amenities like tree canopy and green spaces, and more impervious surfaces which absorb and re-release heat. One study found an eight-degree temperature difference between redlined versus non-redlined areas.

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CALENDAR



The DuPont Brass will perform at McLean Central Park on Sunday, July 31, 2022 in McLean.

WEDNESDAY/JULY 27

Town Hall Meeting. 6:30 p.m. At 9818 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The Great Falls Grange Foundation will host a Town Hall Meeting open to the public at the Grange. Come and learn about all the exciting things happening there. Board members will provide an update on investments, introduce the new program director and announce an expansion of board members. Email info@grange.org.

JULY 28-AUG. 7

The Logan Festival of Solo Performance. Presented by 1st Stage of Tysons. In the show, "Tomatoes Tried to Kill Me but Banjos Saved My Life" by Keith Alessi, Keith tells the story of his boyhood, meteoric rise in the boardroom, and the startling news that changed his life forever. He candidly reveals how he used that obstacle to find a new passion in music and a cathartic outlet in storytelling. It will run on July 29 at 8 p.m., July 30 and 31 at 2 p.m., and on August 2 at 7:30 p.m.

In "Spanking Machine" by Marga Gomez, Marga performs her by turns funny, intense, and heart-rending memoir of growing up brown and queer in Washington Heights. Devil Dogs, sadistic nuns on poppers, childhood pranks, assault, and suppressed memory play their parts in Marga's shift across gender, latitudes, and generations. It will run on August 3 at 7:30 p.m., August 5 and 6 at 8 p.m., and August 7 at 2 p.m.

"Wanda's Way" by Caleen Sinnette Jennings is the first of 1st Stage's Commissions of Solo Work to premiere at the Logan Festival. Based on real interviews, Wanda's Way explores the journey of a Black female police officer as she explains how and why she got into law enforcement. This intricately woven tale is one of corrupted dreams, seemingly impenetrable systems, and the extreme consequences of both acting and failing to act. It will run on July 28 at 7:30 p.m., July 30 at 8 p.m., July 31 at 7 p.m., August 4 at 7:30 p.m., and August 6 at 2 p.m.

Visit www.1ststage.org or by calling the 1st Stage box office at 703-854-1856.

THURSDAY/JULY 28

Seth Kibel & The Kleztet. 7:30 p.m. At Nottoway Park, 9537 Courthouse Road, Vienna. The Alexandria Kleztet is a genre-bending klezmer band founded by Seth Kibel in the Baltimore/Washington area. Kibel was named "Best World Music Instrumentalist" by WAMA every year from 2003 through 2011. Call 703-324-SHOW (7469) for inclement weather updates.

FRIDAY/JULY 29

"Cruella" Movie. 7 p.m. At Tysons Corner Center, www.connectionnewspapers.com

McLean. Part of the Outdoor Family Movie Night on the last Friday of the month. Make sure to bring your chairs and blankets for a movie under the stars! Complimentary popcorn and soft drinks will be provided (while supplies last).

FRIDAY/JULY 29

"The History of the African American Spiritual" with Calvin Earl. 7 p.m. At The Alden Theater, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Presented in partnership with the Fairfax County Public Library. Singer-songwriter, guitarist, storyteller and activist Calvin Earl is a champion of the African American spiritual and has devised this program about the history and legacy of how enslaved Africans in America created an original music known today as African American spirituals. Created in the cotton fields of the Old South, it is the foundation of many popular American music genres.

SUNDAY/JULY 31

Concerts on the Green. 6-8 p.m. At the Village Centre Green, Great Falls. Featuring Hit or Miss - Classic folk and rock songs from the '60s, '70s, and today
Hosted by TD Bank, Great Falls. Come relax at the Village Centre Green and enjoy laid-back evenings of good music and good times with your neighbors.

SUNDAY/JULY 31

DuPont Brass Performs. 3 p.m. At McLean Central Park, 1468 Dolley Madison Blvd, McLean. DuPont Brass is a unique, soulful brass ensemble hailing from the DMV. Originally composed of five Howard University music majors working to raise money for tuition, the rising supergroup now tours nationally and has developed a sound that mixes varied genres of music, including jazz, hip-hop and R&B.

AUG. 4-7

4-H Fair and Carnival. At Frying Pan Farm Park, 2709 West Ox Road Herndon. The carnival runs 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Big Truck Night is Friday from 5-7 p.m. The 4-H Static and Animal exhibits run Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Educational Community Tables run 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

SUNDAY/AUG. 7

Concerts on the Green. 6-8 p.m. At the Village Centre Green, Great Falls. Featuring The Ozymorons - New Orleans funk, soulful blues, Americana roots and classic rock. Hosted by Bic DeCaro & Associates, eXp Realty. Come relax at the Village Centre Green and enjoy laid-back evenings of good music and good times with your neighbors.

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No Guessing



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I'm having a difficult time this week finding a topic to write about. I don't think it's writer's block, although after nearly 25 years a of publishing columns, I imagine it's possible. No, the problem is that the topic I want to write about weekly, whether it's cancer related or not, is what I feel. And this week, what I feel, I can't write about out of respect for the subject. I just can't discuss it publicly. I can only deal with it privately. If it were about me/my health, I'd feel free to elaborate. But it's not. And so, writing about what I couldn't write about seemed like a compromise of sorts. Given the intensity of my feelings right now, it would be impossible for me to write about anything else other than what I'm not writing about. I hope you all understand. If not, see this space in the future for an update. I'll try to be more clear next time.

Not that you all read my column for breaking news or Jack Anderson-type muckraking, but I know you expect honesty. And in this column, I am being honest. I just can't talk about what I'm not being honest about. I can only admit to remaining silent, on the advice of counsel you might say, and try to write between the lines in a way that communicates to you regular readers the weight I'm carrying. Though I am not alone in this burden, I can only mention, indirectly, how it's affecting me.

My late father used to say about me that I have broad shoulders, that I can take it. Well, the subject that I'm not talking about this week will definitely test my father's very reassuring assertion about his baby son. And in an odd way, though his statement goes back more than 20 years (he's been deceased since Dec. '06 and suffered his first stroke approximately 18 months prior), it's helpful to repeat it to myself and to write about it as well. Because what it is I'm not writing about is the fear of the unknown.

The unknown to which I vaguely refer is future feelings. I'm not exactly worried per se, as I've held up pretty well over these last 13 and a half years of being a cancer patient, and one who might have been misdiagnosed at that; and previous to my diagnosis, having both my parents die within two years of one another. Still, life goes on and it has gone on so I'd like to believe it will continue to go on even if this worst-case scenario plays out and reaches its ultimate end.

I remember when my father, the first of my parents to die, finally succumbed to his illness/age (he was 87). I was nervous and afraid how I'd respond, how I'd live my life without one of the most important influences in it. I survived it. But I think I survived it because my mother (another major influence in my life) was still alive, as she was for another two years until she succumbed to her illness/age (she was 86). However, when she died, my brother Richard I became orphans, as it were. That feeling of finality, the end of an era, both parents being deceased, never quite leaves you. There's always a missing piece, but it is sort of the natural progression of things, so over time, at least for my brother and I, you find a place for your grief and eventually wonderful memories come flooding back and you smile when you think of them.

Well, I'm trying to smile now. That's all I'm not going to say.

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