

# CONNECTION

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On the first day of the 2022-2023 school year, Officer Murn of the Fairfax County Police Department directs vehicular, pedestrian, and cycling traffic in front of Herndon High School, a Fairfax County Public School.



## Back to School

PAGE 2

Saying No to McDonald's Drive Thru  
PAGE 3

Searing Student Art about Addiction  
PAGE 8

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OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 6 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 7

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## NEWS



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

On the first day of the 2022-2023 school year, Officer Murn of the Fairfax County Police Department directs vehicular, pedestrian, and cycling traffic in front of Herndon High School, a Fairfax County Public School.

# Local FCPS Students Head off for SY2022-2023

**Keeping students safe getting to and from school.**

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

The first days of school bring jitters and joy to local students and their loved ones as they make their way to and from school. Students are entrusted to bus drivers and crossing guards each school day and are responsible for their safety.

Fairfax County Public Schools runs more than 1,600 school buses daily.

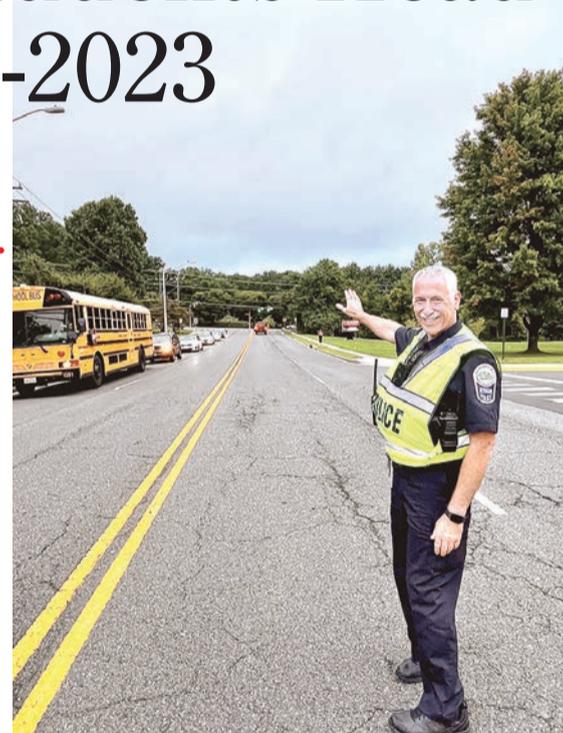
The rule for Code of Virginia § 46.2-859. Passing a stopped school bus; prima facie evidence is simple to remember. Unless there is a median between their vehicle and the bus, drivers must stop when approaching a school bus with flashing red lights from any direction. Driving past a stopped school bus while loading and unloading children is considered reckless driving — a criminal offense. It is not worth risking the safety and lives of others to get to a destination a few seconds faster. The penalty includes \$2,500 in fines and loss of your license for six months and up to 180 days in jail.

Pay attention to school zones, especially where they start and end. Follow the speed limit when the lights are flashing. The lights start 30 minutes before the start of school and remain on 30 minutes after dismissal.

Another way drivers can help keep students safe is by paying attention to the whistles and waves of school crossing guards.

According to Fairfax County Career Pages, a school crossing guard's annual salary is \$32,699-\$54,499. Visit the website for more information.

Fairfax County's Free Student Bus Pass + Metrobus program is expanded to include five schools this



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year. Joining Justice High School are Annandale, Falls Church George C. Marshall high schools, and Davis Center. Students who attend these schools can ride Metrobus for free seven days a week between 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. in Northern Virginia, along with Fairfax Connector and City of Fairfax CUE.

WATA's Trip Planner and Google Maps™ mapping service can help plan travel. For additional information, visit Free Student Bus Pass + Metrobus.

MANY MORE BACK TO SCHOOL STORIES  
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# NEWS

## 'Does This Really Benefit the Community or McDonald's?'

Residents, land-use group oppose new McDonald's in Centreville.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

Once again, another deeply unpopular development proposal has landed on the doorsteps of Centreville residents. And it's leaving them feeling both outraged and betrayed.

McDonald's wants to build a free-standing restaurant with drive-through lanes in the Village Center shopping center along Stone and Braddock roads. But nearby residents say it'll bring them unwanted traffic and noise – and break a decades-old, legal pledge forbidding such uses there.

So it's no wonder they packed the Aug. 15 meeting of the Sully District Council (SDC)/West Fairfax County Citizens Assn. (WFCCA) Joint Land-Use Committee. And after a presentation by McDonald's representatives and comments from the citizens, the committee voted unanimously to oppose the project.

"There are far too many issues raised by the community that have not been resolved," said Sully District Council's Lewis Grimm. "So we can't support it."

At the outset, land-use planner Sheri Akin, representing McDonald's, said the applicant wants the shopping center's proffers changed so it can repurpose an existing, unused, drive-through-bank site there. Then McDonald's would move from its current, inline restaurant at the Village Center to this remodeled, drive-through restaurant at the Stone/Braddock intersection.

"McDonald's has been there since 1995, but people still have COVID concerns and like being in a larger dining area with more room for separation," explained Akin. "The drive-through lanes will be reconfigured for fast-food use, with dual ordering lanes for efficiency."

She said McDonald's would improve pedestrian circulation and add 141 shrubs, 32 deciduous trees and five evergreens. There'd be no lighted arches and, in response to residents' concerns at recent homeowners' meeting, McDonald's withdrew its original request to be open 24 hours/day. "The existing proffers [for uses at that center] say 6 a.m.-10 p.m.," said Akin. "So we changed it to 6 a.m.-midnight for the drive-through."

"We don't expect any sound spillover to go into nearby residences because of new technology," she added. "Employees can turn up the volume on their headsets to hear the customers better. And existing berms and additional landscaping will also help mitigate sound. There'll be a fully enclosed, secured, trash enclosure, and the restaurant manager and others will walk the site regularly to keep it well-maintained."

Traffic engineer Les Adkins said a sidewalk would be added by the Giant Food store, plus a new, striped, pedestrian crossing with scored concrete and signage. And a tree at the exit site would be removed so people could better see oncoming traffic.

He said double ordering lanes will help



Artist's rendition of the front of the new McDonald's at the Village Center.

keep waiting, customer vehicles from affecting onsite parking. And site engineer Nick Georges said there's stacking room for 18 vehicles before they'd get into the parking area.

"Have you assessed the difference between parking supply and demand?" asked Grimm. "Where would disabled-parking spaces be located, and how many would there be?" Akin said two such spaces would have direct access to the front door, and Adkins said the shopping center has ample, shared parking.

"When this shopping center was first built [in the late 1980s], there were proffers regarding no fast-food restaurants," said SDC's Jay Johnston. "What's the justification now?"

"Over the years, there have been amendments to the proffers to allow inline, fast-food restaurants and a drive-through bank," replied Akin. "So things have evolved."

But, countered Johnston, "Homeowners bought property nearby, knowing those [original] proffers were in place. And a bank doesn't have the long hours a restaurant does. You're putting a fast-food restaurant in the middle of several residential communities and impacting them with all the traffic it'll bring. And Braddock Road has more traffic now coming from Loudoun County, so it's already congested. So who does this really benefit – the community or McDonald's?"

In response, several residents in the audience said, "Not us."

Adkins said it'll benefit the community and Braddock's traffic will continue, regardless. During morning and afternoon peak hours, he said the restaurant would generate about 60 cars, or 120 total during those periods. "Over 24 hours, there's approximately a net increase of 570 vehicles – which doesn't meet VDOT's 5,000 trips per day requirement for an external traffic study," he said. "That's why we're focusing on the shopping-center traffic to make it as safe as possible."

"The issue is the exit," said WFCCA's Steve

Chulick. "Some people are making rights, and others, lefts, and some are coming in," he said. "And a major intersection is right there. It's a mess, and you're making it worse with cars exiting the drive-through, coming in from Braddock and exiting onto Braddock. And at rush hour, cars are backed up northbound on Braddock to get to the Braddock/Stone/Westfields Boulevard intersection."

Akin said the crosswalk and signage will help pedestrians cross, and "We'll work with VDOT and Fairfax County on traffic-calming measures."

"You might want to consider a right turn only there," said SDC President Jeff Parnes. "It's an accident waiting to happen." Adkins said they'd also look at possible signal timing or other improvements at that intersection.

Earlier, Akin and Adkins said the residents and customer base favor this new, drive-through, but Johnston strongly disagreed. "I live one block from the site, at Braddock Ridge and Westfields," he said. "The neighborhood doesn't want this. We already get trash and loitering there, and we like it when the noise dies down. We want to feel safe and not have to have noise late at night."

Then residents – who mainly just gave their first names – commented both in person and via the meeting's online stream. "We don't want all the extra noise and traffic this'll create," said Jessica. "But we feel McDonald's isn't hearing us."

"People zoom fast when leaving the Giant, and there are school buses that pick up kids nearby," said Kim. "Loitering will increase substantially. High-school students after a football game will say, 'Hey, let's go to McDonalds.' These are serious concerns."

Madeline Towle lives a half-mile away on Stone Road. "We're working on our traffic problems and don't need a corporation to come in and exacerbate them," she said. Regarding McDonald's proposed pedestrian improvements, Toll said, "Middle-school kids are going to ignore them and go across the parking lot, and they could get hurt."

Sully Station II's John Walser asked how many cars leaving the shopping center could stack at that site before impeding traffic there, and Johnston answered, "Three."

Furthermore, said Christina Vazquez, "Since cars exiting the drive-through cannot see incoming traffic, they won't have enough reaction time to avoid cars speeding into the shopping center."

Noting McDonald's "well-branded trash" is already visible throughout the Village Center, Walser asked, "Why do you think you'll be able to monitor trash in a drive-through, when you can't do it for your inline restaurant now?"

His wife Kate wondered how the added shrubbery would affect drivers turning left from Stone onto Braddock, plus going in and coming out of the center. "It's hard to see now," she said. Adkins said they won't put anything there that would impede people's vision.

She also stressed that noise from people ordering "is the least of the problems. The noise is mainly from the cars coming in – honking, radios blasting, and loud mufflers well past when we're trying to go to bed."

Besides, added Cynthia Long, "This isn't a community that goes out for dinner between 10 p.m. and midnight."

Sequoia Farms resident Marsha said, "If two lanes of ordering will go into one lane of food delivery, it won't work – and people won't want to go there again. Why does McDonald's want to go there, with so many barriers to overcome?"

McDonald's land-use attorney Scott Adams said the move is favored by people who responded to "broad-based market surveys." And Adkins said McDonald's wants to better serve its existing customer base, not attract new customers here.

But Centreville's Michael Leahy said, "We don't live in our community to advance McDonald's business model. McDonald's makes sunny pledges, with no guarantees to fix the problems it'll inevitably bring to the community." He then urged residents to email the Board of Supervisors and ask it to oppose this issue, too.

"Vehicles entering the drive through will need to cross in front of those ready to exit, where there's also a pedestrian crosswalk," said Carol Hawn. "There's too much going on [there]. McDonald's needs to admit they're doing this, not for the 'neighborhood,' but for the thousands of vehicles that'll be using the new, improved Braddock 'speedway' from Loudoun to the 28/66 interchange."

"According to the county zoning ordinance, 'Pedestrian and vehicular traffic associated with the use must not be hazardous or conflict with existing and anticipated traffic in the neighborhood,'" said Jim Hart. "The bank had very little traffic, compared to a McDonalds drive-through."

"And even if they drop the 24-hour request, how many uses get approved and then come back, a few years later, trying to expand operations to 24 hours? Given the pattern of incremental weakening of the promises, why should anyone expect otherwise?"

## Rewriting Virginia History (Again)

BY DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN"  
PLUM



The Superintendent of Instruction in the Virginia Department of Education responsible for standards for K-12 schools asked the state Board of Education to postpone adoption for what was described as "glaring deficiencies" in a new 400-page set of standards for history instruction that had been written by teachers and scholars over a period of a couple of years.

The action by Jillian Balow who was the elected school chief in Wyoming before being brought to Virginia as Superintendent of Public Instruction was no surprise as she has a national reputation as being opposed to "critical race theory" that has been described in one press account as a "conservative catch-all term for racial equity and diversity initiatives in public schools." On his first day in office Governor Glenn Youngkin who appointed Balow said in his first executive order that he wanted "inherently divisive concepts like critical race theory" removed from instruction in the public schools. In delaying the adoption of new social

studies standards, Balow said she would be working with the Fordham Institute on revising the standards. The Fordham Institute is a conservative think-tank group that lists on its website that in Ohio it is "an authorizer of community schools" which is what charter schools are called in that state. Governor Youngkin and his appointees are supporters of charter schools that they call lab schools because of the unpopularity of the concept of charter schools in Virginia that operate outside standards that public schools must meet.

The effort by the Youngkin administration to rewrite Virginia history to minimize slavery and race among other divisive issues is not new. During the 1950s the dominant political force in Virginia was the Byrd Machine, followers of Senator Harry F. Byrd who were Dixiecrats that supported massive resistance as a way to prevent the integration of public schools. Three textbooks on Virginia history to be used at the fourth, seventh and eleventh grades were filled with Lost Cause ideas that glorified the Confederacy and minimized the effects of slavery. While granite statues were being erected on

courthouse grounds across the Commonwealth, textbooks were being written by politicians to justify the Civil War as a war of Northern aggression and states' rights with little to do about slavery or how slaves were treated.

The current emphasis on critical race theory that has little to do with the academic study of history. It is, I believe, what we can term a descendant of the Lost Cause movement and its effort to whitewash history of the Civil War and race relations. Rather than teach children to think and not be indoctrinated as Youngkin and his followers profess to want to do, I believe they want to do the opposite—give children their narrow view of history and indoctrinate them to believe it.

As an intern teacher in 1965 I was given the state-written textbooks from which to teach history. I and many other teachers refused to use the books for their distortions and inaccuracies of the state's history. There was so much opposition that the textbooks were dropped by the 1970s. We must resist the current attempt to fictionalize the Commonwealth's history.

Note: There will be a virtual discussion of the Virginia History and Textbook Commission on Sept. 21, noon to 1 p.m. Details are available at <https://virginiahumanities.org/events/2022/09/who-controls-the-past/>

## 'It Did Not Go Well for McDonald's'

BY MICHAEL LEAHY



A law firm representing the McDonald's Corporation, hoping to ease the anxieties of residents in our community, conducted a zoom call this past week. It was part of the fast-food giant's public relations effort to win local support for the construction of a McDonald's drive-thru restaurant at the corner of Stone Road and Braddock Road, in Centreville.

It did not go well for McDonald's.

One by one, residents on the call, most of whom live within a half-mile of the proposed site, informed the McDonald's spokespersons of their adamant opposition to the drive-thru plan, vigorously pushing back when the spokespersons sought to minimize their concerns.

The reasons behind the residents' disapproval were the familiar ones to observers aware of the attendant problems associated with fast-food drive-thrus in American residential communities: (a) disturbingly enhanced noise and traffic that have made life miser-

able for nearby residents who suddenly encounter the reality of their daytime peace invaded, their commutes lengthened, and their late-night sleep compromised (some have spoken bitterly of futile attempts to ward off the maddening new noise by installing special glass); (b) strewn garbage in and around the drive-thrus; (c) late-hour loitering and vandalism; and (d) additional traffic accidents.

Our community has been down this road before with the McDonald's Corporation. In 2002, the corporation sought to build a drive-thru in proximity to the same shopping center, only to see its proposal fail to get off the ground following an intense backlash.

The residents on the zoom call made no effort to hide their frustrations with the McDonald's spokespersons' mix of carefully hedged assurances and sunny pledges. The patience of one resident finally frayed: "You are dismissing the people who are already living here."

It went downhill from there for McDonald's. More than ninety per-

cent of listeners expressed their opposition to the plan.

In politics, such numbers are generally fatal, the kind of damning feedback that typically makes politicians realize that a proposal is dead on arrival, or ought to be.

Which begs the question: Why are we still having a debate on this matter when the opposition among residents and grassroots activists to the McDonald's drive-thru proposal is so one-sided and emphatic? (The Sully District Council of Citizen Associations added its voice this past week, voting to deny its support for the McDonald's plan.)

Why haven't those holding the power that matters most here, particularly Fairfax County bureaucrats and current members of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (who will ultimately decide the proposed drive-thru's fate), already signaled to McDonald's executives that their proposal is going nowhere with residents and ought to be quietly buried?

The reason is simple. Three power players have kept McDonald's drive-thru prospects alive in our community. The first is the

SEE LEAHY, PAGE 5

### 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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## NEWS

### Should the Sully District Be Renamed?

In March, the Fairfax County Redistricting Advisory Committee recommended that Sully District's name be changed. But many people disagree. So to get community feedback, Supervisor Kathy Smith (D-Sully) will hold a virtual meeting on this subject, on Thursday, Sept. 1, at 7 p.m. At that time, following a brief presentation from county staff, residents will be able to share their opinions during an online forum.

To participate, email [sully@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:sully@fairfaxcounty.gov) and ask to receive a meeting link – which will be sent out, the week of the meeting. Those unable to join the forum may also share their thoughts by emailing Smith's office at that same address or by calling her at 703-814-7100.

### Shoestring Theatre Co. Presents "Celtic Spring"

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The Shoestring Theatre Co. presents the new play, Celtic Spring, which fuses Irish folk music and storytelling and takes you along on the journey. When Anu the highest goddess of Irish mythology challenges Lugh to find a new land, he must learn how to live on his own and to conquer his own demons. If Lugh fails, he can never go home to Ireland again.

The world premiere of "Celtic Spring" will be at Arts Herndon, 750 Center St. in Herndon, Saturday, Aug. 27, at 2 and 7 p.m. and Sunday, Aug. 28, at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$20 in advance or at the door.

3178 Summit Square Drive, Oakton, 22124; 703.731.2895

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/celtic-spring-arts-herndon-tickets-373752573007?aff=odcleoeventsincollection>

#### OPINION

### Leahy

FROM PAGE 4

mammoth Chicago-based McDonald's Corporation itself. It employs the second power player, McGuireWoods, a U.S.-based international law firm, whose attorneys in this matter come from its Tysons, Virginia location.

In her silence to this point on the issue, the third power player is our local Fairfax County supervisor Kathy Smith, a developer-friendly politician who has seemingly met few development projects she doesn't love. As the chairman of the Board of Supervisors' powerful Land Use Policy Committee, Smith has acquired a reputation over the years for assiduously staying out of touch with groups of residents impacted by and alarmed over controversial local development projects. Her Me Alone style and unchecked power mean that nowadays she is essentially a decision-making board of One, with her pronouncements on development issues regularly rubber-stamped by her colleagues on the Board of Supervisors. It's anyone's guess how Smith will ultimately come down on the drive-thru controversy – though, given

her past, residents believe they have ample reason to be concerned.

Meanwhile, residents have asked several pointed questions that revolve around the basic perception of McDonald's greed here – and that, ultimately, are reducible to a pair of questions: How many restaurants should McDonald's (or any other fast-food chain) be permitted to build in a community? When does someone in local governance finally work up the principled courage to say to the fast-food giant and Kathy Smith, Enough is enough. McDonald's already has a drive-thru restaurant near the intersection of Route 28 and Route 29, in Centreville. It has another one, less than a five-minute drive away, off the Willard Avenue exit of Route 28. And, finally, there is a McDonald's restaurant in our own shopping center at Stone and Braddock Roads. Enough.

As our local supervisor, Smith has a duty to heed the will of our community. It is vital, in the coming days and weeks, that we remind her of the level and intensity of our opposition to the McDonald's drive-thru plan.

*Michael Leahy is a former staff writer for the Washington Post and a Centreville resident*



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River-Sea LLC, trading as River-Sea Chocolates, 4520 Daly Dr Suite 100, Chantilly, VA 20151-3735, is applying to the VIRGINIA ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Retail Off Premises license to sell Wine and Beer alcoholic beverages. Christina & Mariano D'Aguiar, Owners. Date notice posted at establishment 8/16/2022. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or (800) 552-3200.

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**THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS**

# CALENDAR



The 29th Middle Eastern Food Festival will take place Sept. 3-4 at Holy Transfiguration Church in McLean.

## REGISTRATION OPEN

2022 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics. Sept. 10-24. Register online at [www.nvso.us](http://www.nvso.us), \$20 for unlimited events. Go to the website for events, rules, eligibility, photos, past results. For information, email [nvso1982@gmail.com](mailto:nvso1982@gmail.com).

## SATURDAY MORNINGS

Summer Programming for Kids. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Reston Museum, 1639 Washington Plaza, Reston. Reston Museum is launching new summer programming for kids! Visit the Reston Museum to participate in fun and creative activities inspired by Reston's history. Program is free and everyone will receive an Explore Reston packet.

## 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)

## SATURDAYS UNTIL DECEMBER

The Reston Farmers Market (sponsored by the Fairfax Co. Park Authority) will take place at Lake Anne Village in Reston 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.fairfaxcounty.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/>

[www.connectionnewspapers.com](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com)

## NOW THRU 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](http://www.restonmuseum.org).

## SATURDAY/AUG. 27

Rotary Satellite Club of Herndon-Reston Non-perishable Food and Hygiene Collection. 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Drop off nonperishable food and hygiene items: ArtsHerndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. ([www.ArtsHerndon.org](http://www.ArtsHerndon.org)). Your support addresses food insecurity in our community benefiting LINK, <https://www.link-againsthunger.org> and F.A.I.T.H. <https://www.faithus.org>. Contact Elysa: [Elysa@Herndon-Tech.com](mailto:Elysa@Herndon-Tech.com) or Pat: [PatriciaRhoads@aol.com](mailto:PatriciaRhoads@aol.com).

## SATURDAY/AUG. 27

Over the Edge Urban Rappelling Fundraiser. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At The Plaza at Tysons Corner Center. Helping Haitian Angels and the Hyatt Regency Tysons Corner Center in partnership with Helping Haitian Angels and the Hyatt Regency Tysons Corner Center will host the 2nd Annual Over The Edge Urban Rappelling Fundraiser to Benefit Orphaned and Abandoned Children in Haiti.

Helping Haitian Angels (HHA), a local nonprofit caring for orphaned and abandoned children in Haiti, is partnering with Over The Edge (OTE), an adventure experience company based in Nova Scotia, Canada, to host an outdoor urban rappelling fundraiser on Saturday, August 27, 2022. Participants raising a minimum of \$1,200 for the nonprofit are invited to rappel 14 stories over the side of the Hyatt Regency Tysons Corner Center to a Landing Zone just above the Tysons Corner Center plaza, allowing their Courage to Create Opportunities for children who need help. Those interested in rappelling can register at <https://www.helpinghaitianangels.org/over-the-edge/>.

## SUNDAY/AUG. 28

Concerts on the Green. 6-8 p.m. At the Village Centre Green, Great Falls. Featuring Mike Terpak Blues Explosion - Industrial strength eclectic electric blues  
Hosted by AOG Wealth Management. Come relax at the Village Centre Green and enjoy laid-back evenings of good music and good times with your neighbors.

# BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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**CENTRE VIEW**

Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped to keep all your Connection Newspapers alive throughout Alexandria, Fairfax County, Arlington County and Potomac, Md. along with affiliated websites and digital media. Now we need help again in 2022.

Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

Please, help save these historical papers. All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk. The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Connection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyper local news to residents. It feels like no small miracle to be looking forward into 2022.

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## Four Weeks and Counting



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

To invoke one of my late mother's favorite expressions, which most definitely applies to this patient's current tenure in the hospital: "It's enough already." But it's not, unfortunately. It is about slow incremental progress which enables the doctors to contemplate a more substantive plan going forward. The next two steps (not literally) involve the patient being able to breathe on his own, and in so doing, disconnect him from the ventilator. Then, and in what order I haven't a clue, eliminate the need for kidney dialysis. Once the patient can breathe normally and exhibit stable kidney function, he will have succeeded where none of the doctors initially treating him in SICU thought he would. I remember one critical care doctor's assessment of this patient very clearly: "He's the sickest patient in the hospital." (At last check, there are over 900 beds in this hospital.) And yet, here we are, relative calm with the patient getting better every day or so it seems (comparatively speaking). As his recovery continues to improve, a different physician from his treatment past and present: critical care, internal medicine, pulmonology, cardiology, nephrology, general surgery, and burn surgery to the physical, occupational, and respiratory therapists, and of the course all the nurses who have seen him at his worst; and to a man/woman, they are all amazed at how far he's come. Apparently, septic shock is all it's cracked up to be.

We are so proud of his will to survive and we're constantly reminding him of how amazing his progress has been. Nevertheless, it's not having the desired effect. Oddly enough, the better and more back to normal he gets, the more aware he is of situation/hospital confinement. Though he's hooked up to a lot less stuff (at one time, he had eight different I.V.s connected to his body, plus a feeding tube, a 24-7 dialysis machine, a heart monitor with a 24-7 heart rate, pulse, and oxygen measures, along with a full time blood pressure cup, a ventilator and a wound vac for the leg where the infection that precipitated this near disaster in the first place and what am I forgetting? Something, I'm sure. In addition, his arms are still restrained (because he's pulling at - and out, some of his tubes) and so he can hardly move and certainly hasn't had any food or water down his throat because of the trach tube inserted just below his Adam's apple. And what's worse, as he improves every day and becomes more aware of his current condition, he is becoming increasingly frustrated by his limitations. And what's even worse, we can't do anything about any of it except talk and try to reassure and encourage him. But as they say: "Talk don't feed the bulldog."

Moreover, I know he's sick of us talking, trying to keep his spirits up. We try to keep him current on news, weather, and sports, to the minimal extent to which he's interested. But mostly, he wants his car keys so he can go home. (To say that's not possible is the understatement of the year.) The dilemma is that what's likely to lead most to a speedy recovery and return home, is exactly what he or the doctors absolutely can't rush: time. Until his body/bodily functions become more normal, he can't do anything but lay in waiting, so to speak. There is a television in the room but his interest in watching anything is negligible. We can tell however that his mind is beginning to process information as he's asking more questions, especially the existential kind: "What am I doing here?" But it's only over time that we'll be able to put his thoughts, plans, hopes and dreams into practice. And on his best day, before any of this happened, he's kind of impatient. On his worst days: now; well, let's just say it's becoming increasingly more difficult to placate him (understandably so). He's come so far, but I worry that these next few steps (some literally, actually), might be his toughest yet. However, from what I've witnessed over this last month, I have no doubts that he'll be up and at'em eventually. It just won't be soon enough for him. Still, he's lucky to be alive, really, and you can be sure that we'll tell him, repeatedly.

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

## COMMUNITY

# Reshaping Stereotypical Profiling and Stigma of Substance Use Disorder

Local juried art show and auction support recovery.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**C**yrus Rivers of Reston, a Thomas Jefferson School for Science and Technology senior, is hosting a one-day art exhibition and auction, “Art for Recovery,” at Reston Art Gallery and Studios (RAGS). It features juried works created and contributed by Northern Virginia high school artists. The juried artwork speaks to the exhibit’s theme, “Humanizing Addiction.” It is meant to meet a person with a substance abuse disorder where they are and without judgment.

In his artist entry form, Cyrus told how the stigma and dehumanization of addiction keep those with substance abuse disorders misunderstood, underdiagnosed, and undertreated. The result is “tremendous suffering and death.” “I’ve witnessed this first hand through the loss of multiple family members in the past few years,” Cyrus said.

Funds from the show and auction will benefit the non-profit organization Recovery Program Solutions of Virginia. It offers Northern Virginia adults and seniors struggling with addiction a safe place to receive support and services.

On Friday, Aug. 19, Cyrus talked about the show on the steps of RAGS, where the auction will take place. It is lakeside at 11400 Washington Plaza West, Reston, at the orange “ART” sign. For a brief moment, Cyrus struggled to explain why he had organized the event. According to Cyrus, “it is easy to think of a person with an addiction as a product of their judgments made throughout their life.”

Cyrus described how families exhaust their financial resources to assist those



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Cyrus Rivers of Reston outside of Reston Art Gallery & Studio, site of the Aug. 28 art show and auction.

struggling with addiction. Families sap their mental strength, and it becomes easier to blame the person who uses substances for their medical condition and difficulties.

“What I’m trying to show here is that they

deserve to be seen how everybody else is seen. They deserve to be seen as somebody who struggles with a sickness (a brain disease that requires medical treatment). That is the big one. They shouldn’t be ignored for their issues,” Cyrus said.

Pat Macintyre, owner and director of RAGS, juried the submitted entries selected for display.

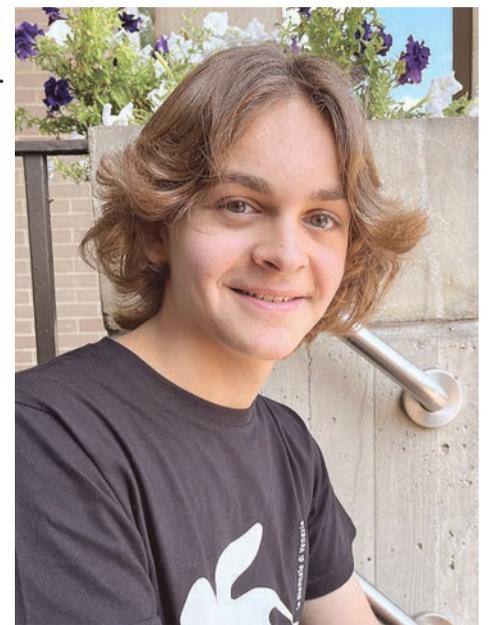


PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Artist Cyrus Rivers of Reston is producing an art show and auction to benefit Recovery Program Solutions of Virginia.

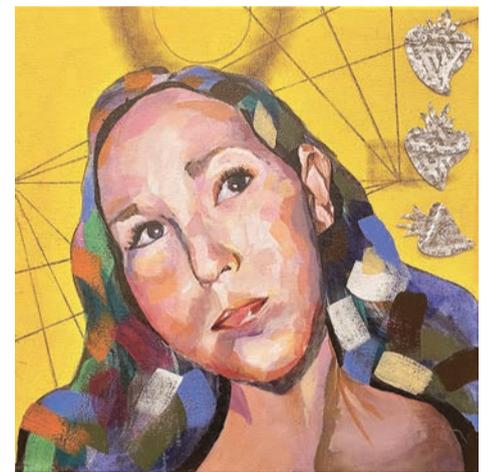


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Rivers, Cyrus. “Krissy” (2022), acrylic painting

She will judge the works and award prizes. “Cyrus has proven himself to be an outstanding member of our community,” Macintyre said.

Throughout the interview, Cyrus held a graphic painting of a woman. The colors boldly burst forth from the canvas. Later, when asked who it was, Cyrus said, “My aunt. She has passed. It was alcoholic liver cirrhosis.”

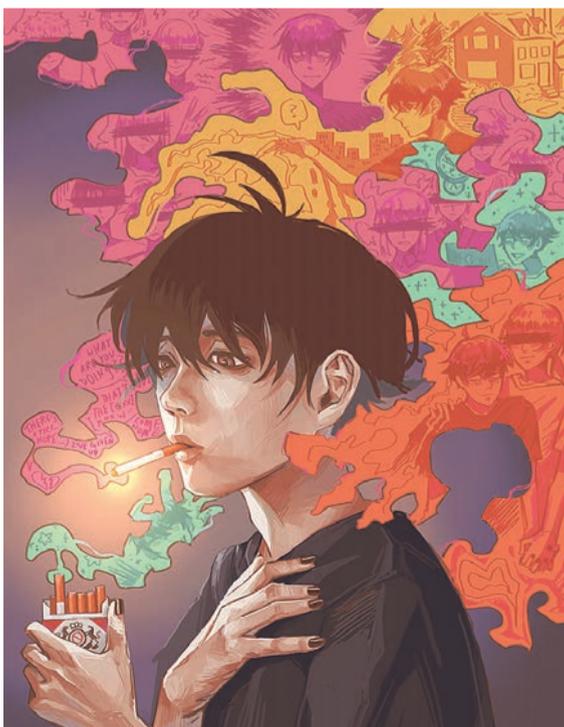


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Lin, Ryan. “addicted” (2022), digital painting

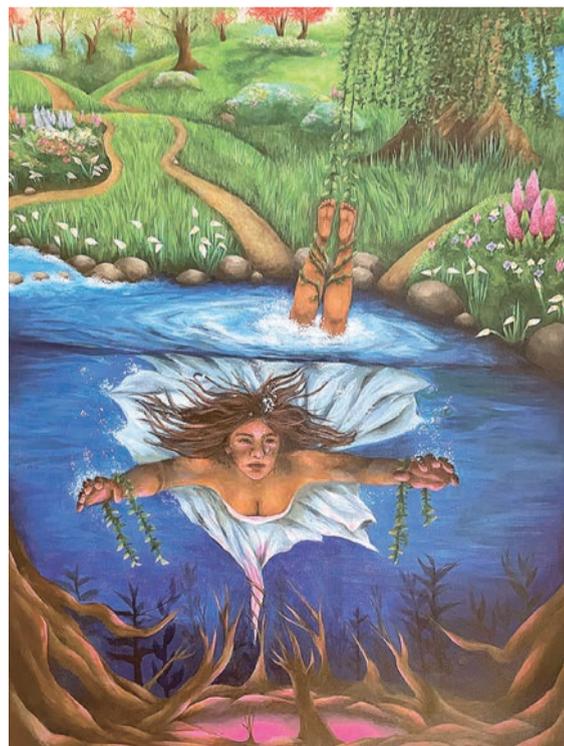


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Choi, Leah. “Untitled” (2022), acrylic painting



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Syu, Josephine. “Untitled” (2022), (Josephine Syu - Josephine)