

CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station

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PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



A Wheely Good Time

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Protect Car Parts from Theft

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From left, Vaughn Wilson, 4, and sister Bodhi, 6, strike a pose by a 1947 Ford pickup 23rd annual Labor Day Car Show in Fairfax City.



Catalytic Converter Thefts are Up in Fairfax County

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

When the family car is still out in the driveway in the morning, it doesn't necessarily mean a theft has not occurred. Thieves are now targeting the catalytic converter underneath the car as a quick way to make a few bucks, costing the owner hundreds of dollars when it comes time to replace it.

In 2021, there were 409 reported catalytic converter thefts in Fairfax County, and 119 so far this year, Fairfax County Police said.

The thefts are rising nationwide but at the FCPD, there is a new catalytic converter task force to address this crime spree, consisting of Criminal Investigations Division and Special Investigations Division. They look for patterns and keep up with theft numbers to try and get an edge on the culprits using a multi-faceted and proactive approach, said Sgt. Lance Hamilton. "We've had directed patrols in the County to deter and apprehend those responsible, put out new educational information to inform the community, collaborated with media members on joint messaging, and engaged the public directly to help stop these thefts from happening," Hamilton said.

On a FCPD catalytic converter video, police were called to the scene on Loisdale Road in the Springfield area last winter and three men had a jack, and ran when the police arrived but were caught shortly after.

At Wright's Complete Automotive in the Springfield area, they've had drivers come in to get the catalytic converter replaced because theirs was stolen. It can run anywhere from \$500-3000 because many times, when a thief takes it off, other parts of the muffler system get damaged and the whole muffler system has to be replaced. "It can be pretty expensive," said the Wright's mechanic.

Catalytic converters are designed to turn harmful exhaust emissions into less harmful gasses, using precious metals like platinum, palladium or rhodium in this process. These metals can be a valuable item to steal and resell. This makes hybrid cars a good target for thieves because hybrid cars don't run as hot as gas-powered vehicles, so their catalytic converters offer an even greater supply of precious metals. Prius, Tacoma, Lexus SUVs, Accords and vans are some of the most targeted cars for catalytic-converter thefts.

According to Allstate Insurance, vehicles manufactured after 1974 have catalytic converters, so there are a lot of cars on the road that might appeal to catalytic converter thieves. However, thieves often target taller vehicles, like pickup trucks or SUVs, because they can easily fit under the vehicle to access the catalytic converter.

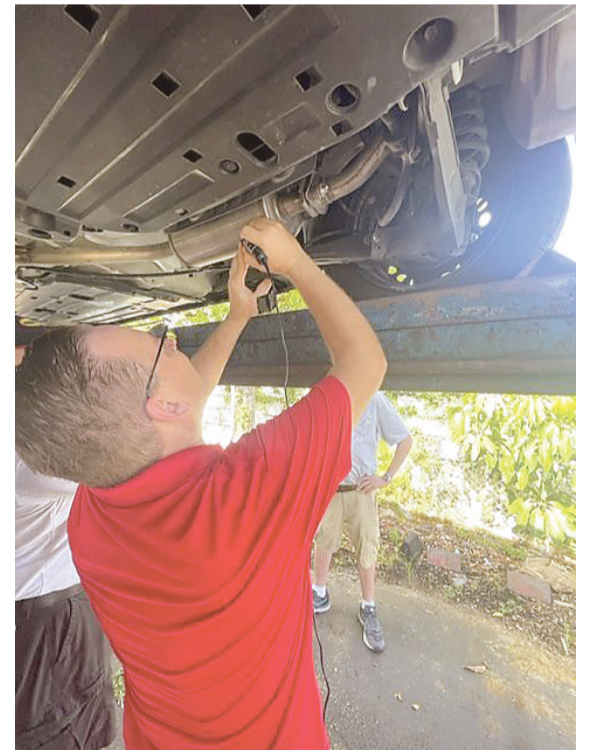
There is a way to fight back though. Earlier this spring, the Crime Prevention Unit from the Sully District Police Station partnered with G&C Tire and Auto Service in Chantilly, to apply free anti-theft labels to people's catalytic converters. These are designated as ultra-destruct labels, laser cut with a unique code and the URL of a secure, accredited database - the International Security Register (ISR) - on to the catalytic converter. It will break into pieces if an attempt is made to remove them. In addition, a fluid that etches into metal is applied to the labels so that, even if they are removed, the code and URL will remain clearly readable.

Certain Midas dealers have been etching identifica-



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

At Midas, some of their stores are holding events to etch an identification mark on the catalytic converter to thwart the thieves.



The county catalytic converter task force recommends a tag for the converters.

Consider these tips to help protect your car from catalytic converter theft: Source: Allstate Insurance

Know if your car is a likely target: hybrids, SUVs and trucks have valuable or easily removable catalytic converters. Etch your license plate number or VIN onto your catalytic converter — this may help alert a scrap dealer that it was stolen and make it easier to identify the owner.

Park in well-lit areas close to public entrances, regularly move your car's spot or use a closed garage.

Install an anti-theft device

Install motion-sensitive lights and cameras in your parking area

Paint your catalytic converter to deter buyers — some local police departments even offer free programs for painting

tion on the catalytic converters during their "etching events." At these events, they etch an ID into the converter for identification, not necessarily for any kind of action if they are removed.

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Volunteers are needed to support service projects across Fairfax County.



Join 100s of volunteers of all ages & abilities for **VolunteerFest**, a community wide day of service event. Volunteers can register to participate in a wide variety of both in-person and virtual projects serving local nonprofit partners across Fairfax County. *Projects kick-off on 9/11*

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NEWS



Jake Fisher, 13, inspects the engine of a 2013 Boss 302 Mustang owned by Tyler Ahern.



T.K. Luu stands in front of this 1930 Ford Coupe.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Charlie Roberts is proud of his 1976 Honda motorcycle.

Cool Cars Sizzle on a Hot Summer Day

More than 6,500 people attended the 23rd annual Labor Day Car Show in Fairfax City.



From left, John Cole and Mark Hawkins check out this 1971 Chevy Malibu SS.



From left, Vaughn Wilson, 4, and sister Bodhi, 6, strike a pose by a 1947 Ford pickup.



Jeremy Johnson, 7, beside a 2014 Corvette Stingray.

COMMUNITY



PHOTO COURTESY PATRICIA GREENBERG

“Weed warriors,” muddied but satisfied, after Patricia Greenberg directed her battalion of regulars and volunteers in her latest assault on invasive Water Chestnut plants at Lake Accotink. Pictured: Patricia Greenberg (FC IMA), Ben Rhoades (Reston Association, Watershed Manager), Nelson DeBarros (FC Natural Resources), Darko Veljkovic (FC Natural Resources), Stephanie Lamb (NPS), Gloria Medina (FC IMA), Scott Baron (NoVa Soil and Water Conservation District), Kim Grubbs (IMA vol), Philip Latassa (Friends of Accotink Creek)



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Volunteer sandwich makers Rita Bellitto and Bill Belden add to the food provided year round to those in need by Sydenstricker United Methodist Church, gathering the first Thursday morning of each month to make a variety of edible constructions. (Photo Nov 2021)

Saluting Volunteer Labor

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

The first national observance of Labor Day was celebrated the first Monday in September in 1894, and each year since, after President Grover Cleveland signed into law the national recognition enacted by Congress.

The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, Sept. 5, 1882, in New York City, in accordance with the plans of the Central Labor Union. The Central Labor Union held its second Labor Day holiday just a year later, on Sept. 5, 1883.

By 1894, 23 more states had adopted the holiday, and on June 28, 1894, President Grover Cleveland signed a law making the

first Monday in September of each year a national holiday.

Labor activists successfully pushed for a holiday “for the laboring classes” in recognition of the contributions and achievements of American workers. The holiday came during the height of the Industrial Revolution, when the average work day was 12 hours, in a seven day work week.

Today, the Labor Day holiday also has come to mark the unofficial end of summer, and in many areas, the start of a new school year; along with a plethora of holiday sales.

While the holiday was created with factory workers and tradesmen in mind, here we also note the contributions of unpaid workers; those who volunteer their time to improve their communities.



PHOTO BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

Laurel Hill Park Volunteer Team members tackle weeds, trash and seed heads during their labors on a typical Saturday morning. Pictured: Olivia and Amanda Castellucci, David Lowry, Binalew Dessalegn, Renee Sinkez, Nick Hengen, Mathew Oswald, Lael Dessalegn, Branly, Boris and Alaina Flores-Lopez, (seated) Ben Castellucci, Tia.

Highs and Lows Hits a High with New Store in Springfield

Mount Vernon store paves way to Town Center location with an international flare.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

The “Highs and Lows” novelty Mecca recently found a new Mecca when they expanded from their Mount Vernon location to a second store inside Springfield Town Center. It has all the quirkiness of the original store but they’re selling mainly the snacks and soda drinks and leaving out

the Star Wars and Hollywood memorabilia that the Mount Vernon store is known for.

The snacks and drinks aren’t the average fare that is on the shelves of 7-11 though. Ever had fish flavored potato chips from Korea? Or Fanta soda from Bosnia?

“It’s an American brand from another country,” said the owner, who goes by the name Fresh.

SEE HIGHS AND LOWS, PAGE 14



Inside Springfield Town Center.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION



“Fresh,” with internationally labeled chips and sodas.



Katherine Hayek

FCPD Names New Head of Public Affairs

Katherine Hayek is the new Director of the Fairfax County Police Department's Public Affairs Bureau, effective immediately.

In this role, Hayek will work with Chief Davis to develop and implement an overall communications strategy and direct efforts to expand and amplify the FCPD's standing as a premier police department in the nation. She will be responsible for providing oversight and direction to Public Affairs Bureau staff, establishing priorities, developing core messaging, strengthening public relations, web presence, internal messaging, and media.

There was no word in the initial release about Hayek's appointment about a process for community involvement in guiding the "overall communications strategy."

Prior to joining FCPD, Hayek

served as spokesperson and communications advisor for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's Washington Division. There, she developed and implemented award-winning strategic communication plans, media relations programs, communications support for area partners, and broadened agency media coverage – best practices of which are now used across the country.

Hayek received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from University of Maryland, College Park, and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in both Strategy and Leadership from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. A Lebanese American and D.C. Metro native, she is looking forward to working back in her home area, after spending over a decade working in Federal law enforcement.

BRIEFS

Fairfax City Celebrating National Dance Day

National Dance Day is Saturday, Sept. 17, and Fairfax City is celebrating it with a dance event, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m., in Old Town Square. It's at 10415 North St., at the University Drive intersection. This family-friendly event will showcase different dance groups with a variety of styles.

Many of them will even offer mini dance lessons after their performances, so attendees are encouraged to bring along their dancing shoes and get ready to kick up their heels. Dance genres will include modern, ballet, tap and Irish, and among the groups will be the Fairfax High Dance Academy, which will perform at 1:15 p.m.

How to Become a Confident Bicyclist

Many people know how to ride a bike but want to feel more confident doing so. Toward that end, the Fairfax Alliance for Better Bicycling (FABB) and the City of Fairfax are offering a Confident City Cycling Class to help riders learn how to maneuver safely and ride in spaces shared with other road users.

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20th Annual

ALEXANDRIA OLD TOWN ART FESTIVAL


(previously on King St.)

Sept. 17th - 18th


Sat./Sun. 10am - 5pm

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SEALED BID SALE
SALE OF REAL ESTATE
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PMI 6798

Sealed bids will be accepted by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) in the office of the Northern Virginia District Right of Way and Utilities Division located at 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, Virginia 22030, until, but no later than, September 27, 2022 for the following property:

Wooded lot, located at 8846 Ox Road (Tax Map #1062-02-0001C) in the Springfield Magisterial District of Fairfax County, on the corner of Route 123 and Rommel Drive. The lot consists of 0.4484 acre, more or less, land, is relatively level at an elevated grade with a slight slope towards the rear of the property. Percs for a conventional three bedroom septic system.

The value placed on this parcel is \$298,000.00.

Employees of VDOT, their immediate families or any person employed with the valuation and/or acquisition of this property are ineligible to bid. The property is being sold "as is" with conveyance by deed without warranty. For further information and proposals, contact VDOT at the above address or call Jordan Cheresnowsky at (703) 259-2971.

988: It's a Lifesaver

BY JOSEPH GETCH
CEO, PRS

Suicide is a public health issue in our communities which we are growing in our capacity to openly discuss. When someone in your own life dies by suicide, the pain and grief can feel immeasurable. In my work, I hear from many individuals that share their personal stories of how a friend or family member died by suicide. In July, a friend of one of my daughters died by suicide, and I saw firsthand how it affected her.

As a culture, we are increasingly more conscious and accepting of discussing mental health, environmental, and social challenges contributing to suicide. This is good news given that the stressors we face are high — especially as we continue to navigate through this pandemic era. In fact, data collected by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration shows how vulnerable we are:

- ❖ Suicide is the second leading cause of death among people aged 10–34 and the 12th

leading cause of death overall in the U.S

- ❖ 1.2 million adults attempt to end their lives each year

- ❖ 12.2 million adults have serious thoughts of suicide each year

We can all contribute to a suicide safer community by educating ourselves about improving mental wellness, talking openly about suicide and pain to help reduce the stigma and increase help seeking, and being a resource to family and friends by connecting them with services and supports. You can also get involved directly by supporting or volunteering with organizations like PRS.

During September—which is National Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month, it is a time when we reflect, educate, and remind about how to keep our loved ones and community safe from suicide through our #CallTextLive Campaign. Throughout the month, PRS will be offering tools, tips, resources, and volunteer opportunities. We encourage our community to visit our Facebook page and website (www.prsinc.org/calltextlive) to engage.

One of the biggest ways each of us can help is

to make sure our loved ones and friends know there is a quick way to connect: 988, the new national suicide prevention number to link people with suicide prevention and mental health crisis counselors.

PRS operates the crisis call center for most of Virginia — including Northern Virginia — and is a national back-up center and core chat center for the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. If someone in crisis reaches out, PRS trained crisis workers evaluate their call, help deescalate the crisis when possible, and work collaboratively with local jurisdictions to connect individuals to appropriate services.

Reaching out to a trained and empathetic person can ensure someone in crisis moves beyond their darkness moment. A call to a crisis hotline, 988, text to 988, or sending a chat via 988lifeline.org/chat can save a life. Throughout September, learn more about being a lifesaver by participating in our #CallTextLive campaign.

Joseph Getch is CEO of PRS, a mental health nonprofit serving Virginia.

Help Ease Pain During Sickle Cell Awareness Month

During Sickle Cell Awareness Month in September, the American Red Cross emphasizes the importance of a diverse blood supply to help meet the needs of those with sickle cell disease — the most common inherited blood disorder in the U.S.

Sickle cell disease impacts more than 100,000 people across the country, most of whom are of African descent. Regular blood transfusions are critical to managing extreme pain and life-threatening complications faced by many. Unfortunately, they may develop an immune response against blood from donors that is not closely matched to their own. However, because most individuals who are Black have unique structures on their red blood cells that are not often found in other donor populations, 1 in 3 African American blood donors is a match for people with sickle cell disease.

Seasonal changes can trigger pain crises for those battling sickle cell — possibly increasing the need for lifesaving blood transfusions. As summer ends, book a time to give blood by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org or by calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). As a thank-you, all who come to give through Sept. 18 will get an exclusive Red Cross T-shirt, while supplies last.

Life-threatening complications

Sickle cell disease distorts soft, round blood cells and turns them

hard and crescent-shaped, which can cause severe pain. “When cells harden, they can get caught in blood vessels, potentially leading to stroke and organ failure,” says Lisa Macaluso, Regional Donor Executive for the Red Cross in the DMV. “Transfusions provide healthy blood cells, unblocking blood vessels and delivering oxygen, minimizing crises patients with sickle cell may face.”

Teanika Hoffman's Story

Teanika was diagnosed with Sickle Cell Type SC Disease around the age of two. By the time she was 10 years old she had already had four surgeries. And as part of the pre-operative care for each, she underwent a blood transfusion.

“I remember watching Sesame Street while being transfused and thinking I'm a big girl and I can handle this,” Teanika said. “But in reality, it was the blood transfusions—they were necessary to keep me alive on the operating table.”

Teanika remembers a turning point in her fight, the first time she experienced a severe sickle cell pain crisis. It occurred when she was in the fifth grade.

“I was in English class and remember raising my hand, but I couldn't describe what I was feeling or what was happening to my body,” Teanika said. “Somehow I was able to stand and walk to the hallway, but in the hallway I just collapsed. It was like time slowed down — and I'm not sure how I made it to the nurse's office, but I did.”

Joined by Blood

To help ensure patients have the blood products they need, the American Red Cross is working with partners in the Black community to grow the number of blood donors who are Black through the sickle cell initiative, which launched in 2021. In the first year of the initiative, the number of first-time African American blood donors who gave with the Red Cross increased by 60%. In September and October 2022, the Red Cross is launching Joined by Blood, a fall component of the initiative where the Red Cross is teaming up with community organizations, like the National Pan-Hellenic Council and others, to host blood drives and inspire donors who are Black to give blood to support patients with sickle cell disease. To learn more, visit RedCrossBlood.org/OurBlood.

To find an upcoming blood donation opportunities, enter your

zip-code at RedCrossBlood.org

Testing for Sickle Cell Trait

At a time when health information has never been more important, the Red Cross is screening all blood, platelet and plasma donations from self-identified African American donors for the sickle cell trait. This additional screening will provide Black donors with an additional health insight and help the Red Cross identify compatible blood types more quickly to help patients with sickle cell disease. Donors can expect to receive sickle cell trait screening results, if applicable, within one to two weeks through the Red Cross Blood Donor App and the online donor portal at RedCrossBlood.org.

How to Donate Blood

Simply download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org, call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767)

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 DEPARTMENT:
south@connectionnewspapers.com

Mary Kimm
Editor and Publisher
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com

Bonnie Hobbs
Community Reporter, 703-778-9415
bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com

Mercia Hobson
Staff Reporter
mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com

Mike Salmon
Contributing Writer
msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com

Ken Moore
Contributing Writer
kmoores@connectionnewspapers.com

Susan Laume
Contributing Writer

ADVERTISING:

For advertising information

sales@connectionnewspapers.com
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk

Display Advertising/National Sales
703-778-9444
debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com

David Griffin

Marketing Assistant
703-778-9431
dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com

Classified & Employment
Advertising
703-778-9431

Editor & Publisher

Mary Kimm
mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com
@MaryKimm

Publisher

Jerry Vernon
703-549-0004
jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com

In Memoriam

Managing Editor
Kemal Kurspahic

Art/Design:

Laurence Foong
Production Manager:
Geovani Flores

CIRCULATION

Circulation Manager:

Ann Oliver
circulation@connectionnewspapers.com



League of Women Voters Registers More Than 2,300 New Citizens in Northern Virginia

A cooperative effort by multiple local Leagues in the Northern Virginia area is underway to register new citizens at naturalization ceremonies.

Following a two-year break due to COVID-19, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) once again welcomed League of Women Voters (LWV) in-person participation at Northern Virginia's naturalization ceremonies. Since April, more than 160 local League volunteers have spent close to 600 hours registering over 2,300 new citizens.

Many of the new citizens have prepared for years to meet the stringent requirements to take the oath of citizenship, in which they commit to supporting and defending the Constitution and, when required by law, bearing arms, doing noncombatant service, and performing work of national importance under civilian direction. Before being allowed to take the oath, applicants for naturalization must have demonstrated an ability to read, write and speak basic English, good moral character and a knowledge and understanding of U.S. history and government, among other requirements.

In the words of one newly minted citizen, "I have worked and waited for this day for so long. And now I can vote as an American. What an honor." Another said, "In my old country, we could not vote – we had no voice. Now I have a voice and I want to use it. This is a great country – the best country."

Members from the Leagues of Fairfax Area, Arlington-Alexandria City, Falls Church City, Prince William-Fauquier Area, and Loudoun County all participated in the voter registration effort.

As the nation's largest and longest-standing grassroots voter registration organization, LWV volunteers across the country register hundreds of thousands of voters each year. For the second year, LWV of the Fairfax Area will be hosting voter registration events at each of Fairfax County's 21 public libraries on Sept. 20 in honor of National Voter Registration Day.



Since April, more than 160 local League volunteers have spent close to 600 hours registering over 2,300 new citizens to vote.

LWV volunteers will also provide information about voter registration and the Nov. 8 national election at the

- ❖ Sept. 10 Burke Center Festival,
- ❖ Sept. 17 Reston Multicultural Festival,
- ❖ Sept. 24-25 Merrifield-Mosaic District Fall Festival, and the
- ❖ Oct. 1 Vienna Oktoberfest.

For additional information about the LWV of the Fairfax Area, go to: www.lwv-fairfax.org.

In order to register to vote in Virginia, go to: www.elections.virginia.gov

The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area is a non-partisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government and works to increase understanding of major public policy issues.

BULLETIN BOARD

SPRINGFIELD TOWN CENTER BACK TO SCHOOL DRIVE

Springfield Town Center is celebrating the upcoming academic year by encouraging our local community to "Pull Together!" Through a partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of the National Capital Area, Springfield Town Center is hoping to set local students up for a successful school year by collecting school supply donations.

From now through September 6, shoppers can drop off their donations of backpacks and assorted school supplies for students in need. The donation bin is conveniently located in Grand Court on the Lower Level, donations can also be dropped off at the mall's Management or Security offices.

Accepted donation items are:
Backpacks (must be new, regular or large sized, no mini backpacks

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

- or backpacks with wheels)
- 1" binders
- Notebooks
- Ballpoint Pens (Black or Blue)
- No. 2 Pencils
- Crayons (24-ct)

For more information on the Back To School Donation Drive or Get Together event, visit Springfield-TownCenter.com.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

GrandInvolve Seeks Volunteers.

Would you like a unique and interesting volunteer experience to make a difference in a school, classroom, or in one child's life? GrandInvolve.org facilitates rewarding, flexible adult volunteer opportunities at Fairfax County Title I elementary schools, providing classroom assistance with math, reading, and other simple educational tasks. Visit www.GrandInvolve.org/volunteer-with-us for details and to

complete an interest form. Or email info@grandinvolve.org.

SEPT. 13 TO NOV. 17

ESL Class. 7-9 p.m. At Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 5114 Twinbrook Road, Fairfax. Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced level English classes. Classes will be in-person or online. Classes will meet twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7 to 9 p.m. Books are included in class cost. Email: Heather@andberg.org.

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.

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Acro net training. It takes a team to make one acrobat propel another. Because it is such a big net, they would not go very high if it were one person jumping. It must be done precisely, with a team getting the bounce timing correct. The team can propel the acrobat up to 45 feet in the air.

Behind-the-Scenes at Cirque du Soleil KURIOS

Reopening the Cabinet of Curiosities in Tysons.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Spoiler alert. Before you take your seat at KURIOS, know you may want to run away and join Cirque du Soleil. It is billed as a contemporary circus of “rule breakers and moment makers in a world of wonder and magic.”

Cirque du Soleil “KURIOS-Cabinet of Curiosities” is touring under the Big Top in the round at Lerner Square, 8025 Galleria Drive, Tysons, through Sept. 25. Produced by Cirque du Soleil Entertainment Group, based in Montreal, Canada, the company is rebuilding its business after suspending all 44 shows in response to the COVID-19 shutdown. Gradually the company reopened in the summer of 2021. It is currently recapturing revenues by providing live entertainment globally, with over 20 shows, some of which are touring, such as KURIOS, and others of which are resident.

“We are thrilled that Cirque du Soleil is returning to Washington, D.C. for the first time since 2019,” said Mike Newquist, president of Cirque du Soleil Entertainment Group’s Touring Show Division. Now more than ever, being reunited with our incredible audiences means the world (to us).”

The first thing through the gate for this reporter was a COVID test, and with its negative result, onto the entrance tent. What would follow would be a tour of the artistic tent featuring wardrobe, training, workouts, and warm-up, and a stop in the 2,500-seat performance tent to view the bounce and rebound of acro net training.

According to Becky Williams, the senior publicist at Cirque du Soleil, KURIOS three tents require a six-day setup and two-day teardown. There is staff for nearly every job. The kitchen team serves between 300



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Costumes are custom-made and fitted

and 400 meals a day. A front-of-house team welcomes guests. Engineers, electricians, IT technicians, riggers, and more ensure the special effects and world-class acrobatic feats go on.

Performers and others hired by Cirque du Soleil come from across the world. Outside the performance tent, the flags on top are all the countries the staff presents. Generally, the artists specialize in various disciplines. They are the athletes, clowns, dancers, action sports athletes, and musicians. Arias said that the entire staff to produce KURIOS is about 120.

Rachel Williams is KURIOS’s artistic director. “It does take a village of people to put this show on, and every single one of them does it because they have passion,” she said.

Touring shows, like KURIOS, typically perform 270 to 310 times a year. Artists train on average 12 hours a week in addition. They are on-site for approximately 9-weeks each tour. Lodging is a private room at a hotel, or staff can rent a home or apartment through a company like Airbnb, generally going in together. The company will ship up to three suitcases for each person.

This reporter witnessed some of the work that goes into the two-hour theatrical-style show that immerses the audience in the explosive and strangely confounding curio cabinet of an industrial-age inventor, the Seeker. His worldly characters like Klara, The Kurios, and Mr. Microcosmos enter the Seeker’s improvised mechanical world, which is set in the late 1800s.

The Seeker’s curiosities come to life one

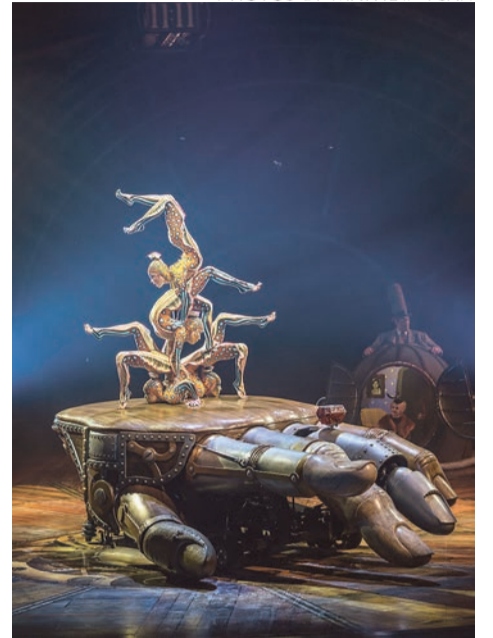
by one through the power of his imagination, and they create a world of curiosity “when anything seems possible.” When the audience enters, they should look for the clock set to 11:11 and double-check it when they leave.

The original music by two composers sets the style and tone of the show’s steampunk-inspired universe. “The musicians perform everything from Mozart to a little bit of techno during different points in the show, but there is a coherent theme that attaches to the story,” Williams said.

The wardrobe department of KURIOS is housed in the artist tent along with a gym, performance equipment where the cast practice their routines, and a lounge area.

SEE KURIOS. PAGE 9

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Behind-the-Scenes at Cirque du Soleil KURIOS

FROM PAGE 8

A look at the process of maintaining the lavish costumes provided a glimpse into the world of the untraditional big top that defies convention.

All designer costumes are custom-made in Montreal, three for each performer. They must be washed and dried after each use of the up to three daily shows, six days a week. Because they are on stage so frequently, even the technicians wear costumes. Seven people work as permanent staff in the wardrobe department. The company hires two locals to launder and iron.

"We don't only have costumes as traditional fabric items that you wear over your body, we have props that artists wear, so they are considered part of the wardrobe department, including our big robot," Williams said. Other examples would be the Winch and Plunger.

Because so many other materials and processes go beyond what a wardrobe department traditionally uses, it takes much more craftsmanship than just sewing skills. Milli-
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ners and textile artists could be seen prepping costumes for performances.

The cast is taught how to apply their makeup, an integral part of their costumes. It can take anywhere from five minutes to two hours, depending on the steps they learn in Montreal.

According to Rachel Lancaster, artistic director of KURIOS, every Cirque du Soleil show is created by a different team of people. "We have five big top shows, but they are all different." Lancaster is a former artist who decided to leave the stage and make a career transition. Opportunities are offered to support artists throughout their careers with Cirque du Soleil.

For acrobat Anne who performs on a bicycle, it is about doing things at the right time for every trick. "It is about being calm and concentrating enough to trust that you have to wait for the right moment," she said.

For ticket information, visit <https://www.cirquedusoleil.com/usa/washington/kurios/buy-tickets> To view the official trailer, visit <https://youtu.be/RXSpuKIWeVs> [youtu.be].

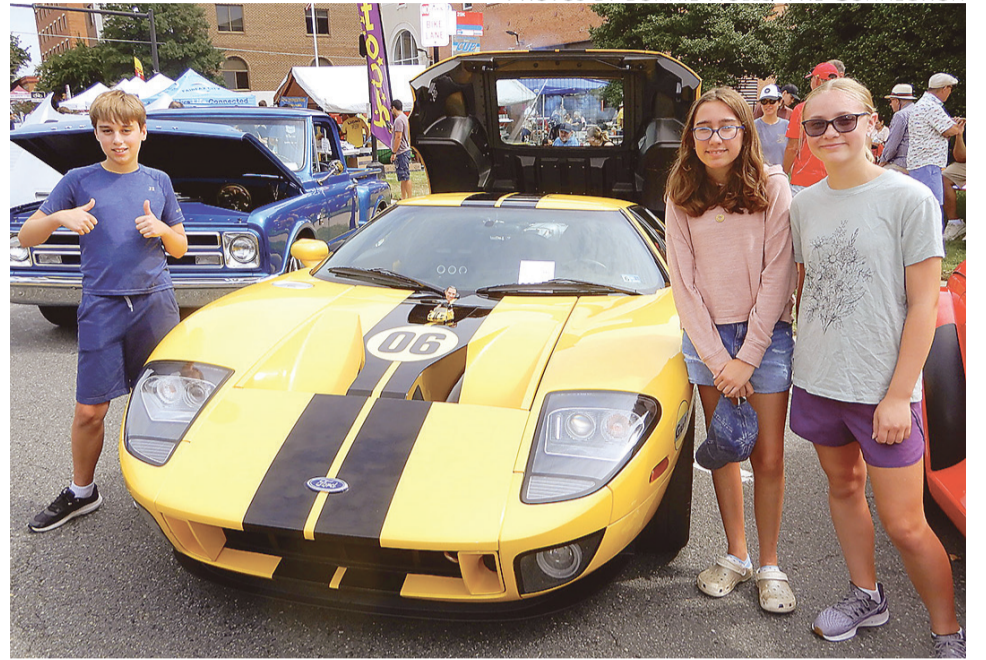


Cool Cars Sizzle on a Hot Summer Day

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Chilling against a 1955 Ford Sunliner convertible is Daisy Zhang.



Posing by this 2006 Ford GT are (from left) siblings Anderson and Claire Davis and cousin, Beatrix Maybury.



From left, Doug Lloyd and Al Blocker with a 1938 Chevy Coupe.



Bob Williams with his hand-built, 1979 Porsche. A Street 935 DP1, it's one of just a few hundred worldwide.



The Labor Day Car Show attracted more than 6,500 spectators.



All these trophies were awarded to the top vehicles in the show.

Updates About COVID-19 Testing

Know When to Get Tested.

There are still some key times to get a COVID-19 test:

If you have symptoms, test immediately.

If you were exposed to COVID-19 and do not have symptoms, wait at least five full days after your exposure before testing. If you test too early, you may be more likely to get an inaccurate result.

Consider testing before contact with someone at high risk for severe COVID-19, especially if you are in an area with a medium or high COVID-19 Community Level.

If your test is positive, isolate and take precautions and inform your close contacts. The CDC provides more guidance on testing, including what to do if you have already tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/testing.html#choosing-a-test>

Repeat Testing After a Negative Result on Any At-home COVID-19 Test

The FDA recently issued a recommen-

ation to perform repeat testing after a negative result on an at-home COVID-19 antigen test, whether or not you have symptoms.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms, test again 48 hours after the first negative test. If you get a negative result on the second test and you are concerned that you could have COVID-19, you may choose to test again 48 hours after the second test, consider getting a laboratory molecular-based test, or call your healthcare provider.

If you do not have COVID-19 symptoms and believe you have been exposed to COVID-19, test again 48 hours after the first negative test, then 48 hours after the second negative test.

Most at-home COVID-19 antigen tests do not detect the SARS-CoV-2 virus as well as molecular tests, like PCR tests. COVID-19 antigen tests may not detect the SARS-CoV-2 virus early in an infection, meaning testing soon after you were exposed to someone with COVID-19 could lead to a false-negative result (this means the test did not detect the virus when a person is infected), especially if you don't have symptoms.

Positive antigen test results are typically

accurate. If you receive a positive result initially or after a repeat test, this means the test detected the SARS-CoV-2 virus and you most likely have COVID-19.

Repeat testing reduces the risk an infection may be missed and to help prevent people from unknowingly spreading the virus. See the detailed guidance about when to repeat testing. <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/safety-communications/home-covid-19-antigen-tests-take-steps-reduce-your-risk-false-negative-fda-safety-communication>

Federal Free At-Home Test Program to be Suspended

The federal program offering free at-home COVID-19 tests has been suspended. The program allowed individuals to order 16 free at-home tests per residential address at www.covid.gov/tests.

If you need a COVID-19 test:

Pharmacies and healthcare providers continue to offer testing. Retailers and pharmacies also continue to make at-home tests available for purchase.

If you have health insurance, you can get paid back for 8 at-home tests each month for each person on your plan.

Learn more about how to get reimbursed. <https://www.cms.gov/how-to-get-your-at-home-OTC-COVID-19-test-for-free>

The Fairfax County Health Department offers PCR tests through its mobile laboratory partner Curative at locations throughout the Health District. Testing also continues to be available by appointment at Health Department clinics for people who do not have other options.

Stay Informed About COVID-19

Call Health Department Call Centers Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., for questions about COVID-19 (703-267-3511) or vaccines (703-324-7404). You also can email ffxcovid@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Text FFXCOVID to 888777 to receive updates from Fairfax County about COVID-19; text FFXCOVIDESP to 888777 for updates in Spanish.

Visit the Fairfax County web portal for coronavirus that serves as a one-stop online resource for information. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/covid19/>

Learn more about COVID-19 on the Health Department Coronavirus (COVID-19) Webpage or FAQ page. <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/novel-coronavirus/faq>


2022-2023 NEWCOMERS & COMMUNITY GUIDE

THE CONNECTION
Newspapers & Online

Alexandria
Gazette Packet

Mount Vernon
Gazette

Potomac
ALMANAC



Publishes: Sep 14, 2022 | Advertising Due: Sep 8, 2022

Our annual Newcomer's and Community Guides, for each of our 8 communities, provides inside facts on what makes each community special, their secret places, their real power players, how to get involved and more. Inside you'll find information about local history, schools, parks, libraries, local people, elected officials, county/city offices, how decisions are made, and other vital community information.

This year's guide will also include a SENIOR LIVING section. We'll cover topics like local senior services, senior villages, cultural and social activities like Senior Olympics, education, jobs and volunteering.

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Shoestring Theatre Co. Presents 'Celtic Spring'

After a successful premiere in Herndon, the Shoestring Theatre Co. is bringing its newest play, "Celtic Spring," to Fairfax audiences. One performance will be just the play, itself, and the other will be a dinner theater.

When Anu, the goddess of Irish mythology, challenges Lugh – the Irish god of the sun, art and music – to find a new land, he's forced to reckon with powers greater than his own. Lugh must learn how to live in the strange place; but first, he must conquer an enemy he's long denied – his own arrogance. And if he fails, he can never return home to his beloved Ireland.

Created by the late Howard Rhile and Amelia Townsend, "Celtic Spring" fuses storytelling, ancient Irish music and dance to bring the mythological god and his world to life in this original story set against the backdrop of the Appalachian Mountains.

Braden Aust portrays Lugh, Jess Rawls is The Storyteller, and Jennifer Rose plays Anu and Dawn. Directing is Michael Replogle, who founded the Fairfax Academy's Pro-



From left are Jess Rawls, Braden Aust and Jennifer Rose.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AMELIA TOWNSEND

fessional Musical Theatre & Actors Studio at Fairfax High. This play will be presented twice this week in Fairfax City.

❖ The Friday, Sept. 9, show is at 7 p.m. (doors open at 6:30 p.m.) at the Knights of Columbus Providence Hall, 3702 Old Lee Hwy. Seating is limited; tickets are \$10 via <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/celtic-spring-preview-night-tickets-373751720457?aff=erelexpmlt>.

Park in the lot between St. Leo the Great Catholic Church and School. Limited accessible parking is in the gravel strip at the chain-link fence across from Providence Hall.

❖ The Saturday, Sept. 10, show is a dinner theater in the gym at St. Leo the Great Catholic School, 3704 Old Lee Hwy. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the play begins at 7 p.m. The meal is Irish-themed. This event benefits KOVAR, a Knights of Columbus charity supporting people with intellectual disabilities. Tickets are \$20; for reservations/tickets, e-mail kofckitchen6292@gmail.com.

— BONNIE HOBBS

CALENDAR

NOW THRU OCT. 17

Hummingbird Photo Exhibition.
At Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria. For those who can't get enough of the beauty of hummingbirds, a group of local photographers are mounting an exhibition this summer at Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria. The title of the show is "A Bouquet of Hummingbirds," and it will feature works from more than 20 area artists and include hummingbirds from all over the Western Hemisphere. All profits from the sale of photos will be donated to the Friends of Green Spring, a non-profit organization devoted to maintaining the gardens and furthering public education and outreach. At the Historic House at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria,

THROUGH-NOV. 15

Fruit Sale Signup. 7-11 p.m. Signup now for Fairfax Lions notices and discounts for Lions Club Fruit Sales in November and December. They sell fresh Florida oranges, mandarins, grapefruit; maple syrup, peanuts to raise funds for charity. Website: <https://www.fairfaxlions.org/citrus-sale-notification/>

SEPT. 9-11

Every Brilliant Thing. 8-9:15 p.m. At The Historic Sydenstricker Schoolhouse, 8511 Hoopes Road, Springfield. A funny and heartwarming interactive play that shines a light on all things that make life worth living. All seats are \$20 each, general admission. Website: <http://everybrilliantthing.info>

SATURDAY/SEPT. 10

Second Saturday Art Walk September 2022 6-9 p.m. Visit the Workhouse Monthly Featured



PHOTO BY JANE GAMBLE

"A Bouquet of Hummingbirds," features works from more than 20 area artists and includes hummingbirds from all over the Western Hemisphere. Through Oct. 17, 2022, free to the public, at the Historic House at Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria

Artists. All campus studio buildings will be open from 6pm - 9pm. Chat with artists about their works and processes. Second Saturday Art Walk September 2022 <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/second-saturday-art-walk-june22-jwrkr-26nan-mebsy>

SATURDAY/SEPT. 10

Life@50+. From 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. OLLI Mason Campus, 4210 Roberts

Road, Fairfax. Life@50+ Planning for Your Health, Wealth and Happiness. AARP Virginia and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University (OLLI Mason) invite you to join us for a special half-day event designed to help you make plans for better living. Learn about the positive powers of lifelong learning, tips for determining if you are on track for a secure financial retirement,

practical strategies to help you maximize your Social Security and achieve retirement peace of mind, and more.

Workshop include:

- ❖ Six Pillars of Brain Health
 - ❖ Making Cents of Caregiving Costs
 - ❖ Medicare 101: Understanding Your Benefits
 - ❖ Social Security: Understanding Your Benefits
- Registration and more information:

aarp.org/boomeracademy

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 21

Film at Mason and the Visiting Filmmakers Series at 6 p.m. at the Johnson Center Cinema, GMU. Free and open to the public

SATURDAY, SEPT. 24

Commemoration of Founding of the Fairfax Independent Company of Volunteers, 2-3 p.m. outside Historic Fairfax Courthouse, 4110 Chain Bridge Road Fairfax. The Fairfax Resolves Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution will hold its inaugural commemoration of the Founding of the Fairfax Independent Company of Volunteers. The Company was an independent militia established by George Mason on September 21, 1774 and commanded by George Washington. No admission.

George Mason University Center for the Arts, 4373 Mason Pond Drive, GMU Campus, Fairfax at 5 p.m. Emmy and Tony Award-winning actress and singer Kristin Chenoweth makes her Center for the Arts debut in a one-night-only performance, as part of ARTS by George! Tickets are \$125, \$85, \$65

SATURDAY, SUNDAY, SEPT. 24, 25

The Annual Civil War Books, Relics and Memorabilia Show will be held at the Arlington-Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd, Fairfax, VA 22031, on Saturday and Sunday Sept. 24 and 25, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. both days. Admission is \$5 per person. Vendors are welcome. For information, call Bud Mayo, 703-389-1505 or mayo5304@cox.net

Deer Archery Program Begins Sept. 10

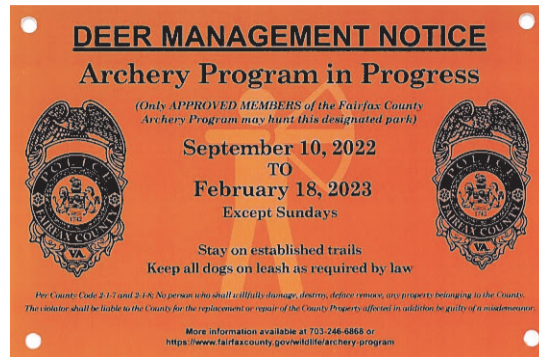
The Fairfax County Deer Management Archery Program begins Saturday, Sept. 10, 2022, and runs through Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023.

Under the oversight of the Fairfax County Police Department, in collaboration with the Fairfax County Park Authority, NOVA Parks, and other public landholders, the archery program is conducted in parks and other locations throughout Fairfax County.

The archery program began in FY 2010 and is part of an integrated Deer Management Program to reduce and stabilize the white-tailed deer population in Fairfax County in efforts to minimize safety and health hazards and other impacts related to an overabundance of deer. These impacts include deer-vehicle collisions, potential spread of diseases, and environmental damage attributed to deer that can impact the ecosystem. The program was approved by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in 2000 and is recognized as a safe and efficient method of deer population control by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

Because of its track record of safety, archery is a preferred deer management method in Fairfax County. Archery is a compatible use with residential areas and community parks, allowing for deer population management in urban and suburban areas. Since Virginia began tracking hunting injuries in 1959, no bystanders have been injured by an archer hunting deer anywhere in the Commonwealth. The Fairfax County Deer Management Program is conducted on approximately 100 properties countywide. Last year, 726 deer were harvested through the use of archery by hunters in the county program. The archery program accounted for 94% of the total deer harvests in the Fairfax County Deer Management Program.

Fairfax County's Archery Program standards require that all archers meet state hunter licensing, education and safety requirements and must pass qualifications to demonstrate skill and marksmanship, in addition to carrying program identification.



Signs are posted in archery program areas, at park entrances and trailheads.



Archers are also required to have completed additional training through the International Bowhunter Education Program to participate in the Fairfax County Deer Management Program. All archers must also pass a criminal background check to be eligible for the program. Only hunters that have gone through this screening and selection process



Fairfax County Deer Management Archery Program begins Sept. 10, 2022, and runs through Feb. 18, 2023.

with the Fairfax County Police Department may hunt within the designated parks. All archers must comply with state and federal game laws and regulations, local ordinances, and program

rules.

Parks remain open to the public during the archery program. Fluorescent orange signs are posted in parks where hunting is authorized. Hunters can only take shots at deer from elevated tree stands; hunting from the ground level is prohibited in county parks. Tree stands must not be located closer than

100 feet from property lines or closer than 50 feet from established park trails. Archers are not allowed on private property without permission by the owner or tenant. Archers are approved to hunt at assigned sites Monday through Saturday during legal hunting hours, 30 minutes prior to sunrise until 30 minutes after sunset.

No hunting is allowed on Sundays in county parks.

More information about the Fairfax County Deer Management Program can be found at: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/wildlife/deer-management-program>.

Here Come the Senior Olympians

The opening ceremonies of the 40th Northern Virginia Senior Olympics will take place Saturday, Sept. 10 at the Thomas Jefferson Community Center, 3501 S. 2nd St. Arlington. NVSO Chair Herb Levitan of Arlington, said, "The public is invited to attend the opening starting at 9:30 a.m. and stay for seven track events that will follow."

The annual competition is made possible by the sponsorship of eight Northern Virginia jurisdictions, the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax and Falls Church and the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun,

The oldest participant is Vera Punke of Arlington, age 107, who is registered to play duplicate bridge.

Fauquier and Prince William. Participants in NVSO must reside in one of the jurisdictions.

Competition will take place at 25 different venues throughout Northern Virginia and continue through Saturday, Sept. 14. Levitan reported that 831 senior adults have set a new record for participation. They will be competing in 70-plus events.

Pickleball, track, field and table tennis have garnered the most registrants. The oldest participant is Vera Punke of Arlington,

age 107 who is registered to play duplicate bridge, said Levitan. The complete schedule of events is on the NVSO website, www.nvso.us. Results of each event will be posted on the website as the competition continues. All events are open to the public.

"We are also fortunate to have 15 Gold Patrons this year who have contributed \$1,000 each," said Levitan.

The Patrons are Aarondale Assisted Living, Advanced Hearing Services, Anthem Health-

Keepers Plus, Ashleigh of Lansdowne, Chesterbrook Residences, Goodwin Living, Greenspring Retirement Community, Facial Plastic Surgery Center, Heatherwood Retirement Community, The Jefferson, Koons Toyota Arlington, Paul Spring Independent and Assisted Living, The Wellington by Lake Manassas and Westminster at Lake Ridge.

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

For more information, check the website www.nvso.us or email nvso1982@gmail.com.

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COMMUNITY

Highs and Lows

FROM PAGE 4

It's very niche cuisine that's popular with the younger crowd that feasts on things that are different. "It's very popular on social media," Fresh added.

The management at the Town Center didn't want just another version of the Mount Vernon store, and at the Town Center, they also have a kiosk out in the mall selling their sodas and other items. They cater to the younger crowd and thrive on social media, particularly on Instagram.

Over in Springfield, "A million things you never knew you needed," is their logo.

They've even been approached by the Tysons management, inviting them to open another location, Fresh said, but nothing is set on that yet.

To keep things fresh, they are always changing the décor or their chatter, and this time is no different. Their sticker is the Mona Lisa with a rocket launcher. Why not?

HIGHS AND LOWS
Springfield Town Center
On Instagram @highsandlows703
571-371-8231

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 7

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/healthyminds-fairfax or www.nami-northern-virginia.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 provides support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. To become a Haven volunteer, please call 703-941-7000 to request an orientation. Volunteers must complete a 30-hour training and commit to one year of service answering Haven phones (2.5 hours weekly). Next training is scheduled for fall 2017.

ONGOING
Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

NEWS BRIEFS

FROM PAGE 5

It's set for Saturday, Sept. 17, from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. in the Fairfax City Hall parking lot, 10455 Armstrong St. The cost is \$5, and participants must bring a bike helmet, plus a bike that fits them and is in good condition.

Participants will also learn and practice skills for improving bike handling, avoiding hazards and riding predictably. Then at the end of class, they'll enjoy a short group ride to apply their newly learned skills. Space is limited, so register soon at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/confident-city-cycling-tickets-375571353027>. For questions, contact education@fab-bikes.org.

Chubby Squirrel Hosts First Pierogi Contest

Chubby Squirrel Brewing Co. in Fairfax City is hosting its first-ever Pierogi-off. According to owner Boyd Harrison, "Chubby Squirrel has been a proud purveyor of pillowy, potato-y pierogies since we opened in 2018. You may have enjoyed our Old Bay Pierogies, Pierogi Nachos or Pho-Rogies. But now, it's your turn to shine."

National Pierogi Day is Oct. 8, and that's the date of the pierogi cookoff. But people wanting to enter Chubby Squirrel's contest for the tastiest pierogies must register for it by emailing Boyd@ChubbySquirrelBrewing.com by Sept. 24. Entrants will vie for a chance to win a \$50 Chubby Squirrel gift card, swag bag and street cred for having the best pierogies.

Pierogies may be stuffed with any sweet or savory filling. But they must be prepared simply, with no toppings beyond just butter. Then at 11:30 a.m. on National Pierogi Day, contest participants must bring 12 of their pierogies to Chubby Squirrel at 10382 Willard Way, in Fairfax's Courthouse Plaza shopping center, for submission and tasting.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 14

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.

STEM Professionals Needed. Volunteers are needed to assist K-12 STEM teachers in northern Virginia as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, stemvolunteers.org, during the 2019-20 school year, beginning in September. Please contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488 or donaldrea@aol.com.

Docents Needed. Sundays 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Greet museum visitors and tell them about the exhibits, the museum and its railroad and Civil War history. Ideal for those interested in railroads, the Civil War and Northern Virginia history. Training and orientation provided. Other volunteer opportunities are gardening, publicity and exhibit planning. Call 703-945-7483.

Volunteer Adult Mentors Needed. Help assist the Department of Family Services' BeFriend-A-Child mentoring program. The mentors provide opportunities for companionship, guidance and support to children who have been abused and neglected, or who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Contact Ibrahim Khalil at Ibrahim.khalil@fairfaxcounty.gov or 703-324-4547.

Volunteers needed at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Museum offers a variety of exciting volunteer opportunities in Museum events, programs and administration. Contact volunteers@fairfax-station.org or 703-945-7483 to explore services that will fit your schedule and interests. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, or call 703-425-9225 for more.

RSVP a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP visit www.rsvpnova.org.

Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke serves those 50 and older who no longer drive. Volunteer drivers are needed for trips (Monday-Friday) to medical appointments and companion shopping within the Fairfax/Burke area. Office workers are needed to answer phones in the SCFB office (Monday-Friday) to match drivers and those who need rides. Call 703-323-4788.

Positive Parenting Strategies Course. At PHILLIPS, 7010 Braddock Road, Annandale. A series of classes and in home consultations taught by PHILLIPS' counselors. Open to all local families. Call Stacy Stryjewski at 703-658-9054.

Thermal Camera Loan Program. Learn where the energy is leaking out of the home with a special attachment for the iPhone or Android. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/energy or call 703-324-5955 for more.

Master Gardener Training. The Fairfax County Master Gardener Association offers plant clinics, home turf training or speakers for homeowner's meetings. Fees vary. Visit fairfaxgardening.org or call MG Help Desk at 703-324-8556 for more.

Fairfax Rotary Club Meeting 12:15-1:30 p.m. Mondays. American Legion, 3939 Oak St., Fairfax. Meetings with luncheon and program. fairfaxrotary.org.

Civil War Research scholarship to a public or private high school senior who resides in Fairfax, Fairfax City, Prince William County, Manassas City, or Manassas Park from the Bull Run Civil War Roundtable in Centreville, Va. Visit bullrunwrt.org for more.

Fairfax-based non-profit Britepaths offers free Financial Education Classes Sessions at various locations in the Fairfax County area to low- and middle-income adults who reside throughout Northern Virginia. The offerings are free and open to the public, but reservations are required. britepaths.org/news/get-financially-fit-new-year

Volunteers Needed. PRS is looking for empathetic and caring volunteers to make phone calls to older adults who may be feeling socially isolated. The commitment is one 3-hour shift per week for one year. Located in Arlington. Ages 21 & up. Intensive training provided. Learn more and apply: prsinc.org/caring-volunteering. Questions? Email lpadgett@prsinc.org.

Fairfax County needs volunteers to drive older adults to medical appointments and wellness programs. For these and other volunteer opportunities, call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults and click on Volunteer Solutions.

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Thank you to the hundreds of supporters who helped 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.

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now ominous clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide.

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And Now We Wait



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

When my sister-in-law Vanessa and I were first requested to attend a "family meeting" with the chief attending physician in SICU, the surgeon originally scheduled to perform the Colo-rectal surgery on Richard, the consulting oncologist, and the head of Palliative Care at the hospital, Richard's recovery was far from certain. Still, the hospital felt it timely and prudent to get feedback from the patient's immediate family.

Basically, they wanted to know what kind of person Richard was/what mattered to him. They were trying to gain an understanding from us - since Richard was unable then to express/indicate even his wishes concerning what he was willing to endure, risk and possibly live with should he recover from the surgery, a surgery which was fraught with danger and whose success, given the size and location of the tumor was hardly guaranteed. The surgeon offered up some percentages for success, which were still an estimate given the unknown/unpredictability of what and where they'd find the mass and, if there were other organs impacted. The scans can only show so much, unfortunately. Moreover, the surgeon said she won't know definitively my brother's prospects until she has him on the operating table. Given that "chemotherapy failed," according to his longtime primary care physician, the surgery may be his only option, as risky as it is.

Now, Richard is awake and talking and very much aware of his condition and his 'failure,' and that surgery, however frightening is the next and only remaining option. And barring any unexpected setbacks from his previous septic shock, and presuming he continues to "get stronger," per his surgeon's assessment, Richard will indeed have his surgery on Tuesday, Sept. 6, two days from when I'm writing this column. When that date was first mentioned at the family meeting, it seemed like an eternity before we'd ever get there, Richard's tenuous recovery notwithstanding. Now the surgery is very nearly here. It all seemed so unrealistic six weeks ago. Then, all we were thinking about was day to day. Now, almost seven weeks have passed. We were all afraid to hope for this day thinking it was too great a leap. Nevertheless, our faith in Richard and the staff has been rewarded and here we are two days before the date. As George Allen famously said in 1971 when he became coach of The Washington Redskins: "The future is now!"

I can't imagine the excruciating time (Vanessa and I) will endure as we sit idly by at the hospital waiting for the surgeon to come out of the operating room and update the family. (Covid rules mandate only two people can be present per day and as of a recent inquiry, those two people can't be visiting the patient/hospital at the same time. We've been so preoccupied even getting to this point that we haven't yet asked if we'll both be allowed in the hospital.) Somehow, we'll get through it. It will give us time to talk about Richard's next phase. We don't know exactly what his schedule will be or his whereabouts, either. I guess he'll return to SICU after surgery and whether he returns to a regular room on a hospital floor or is immediately transferred to a Rehabilitation Hospital, we also don't know. Whatever happens, we'll be ready to accommodate the patient. For what he's accomplished these past few weeks, surviving against difficult odds, it's the least we all can do to assist him in whatever help he needs to adjust to his new normal. He's made us all extremely proud to be a part of his extraordinary recovery. We'll do whatever we can now during his rehabilitation/recuperation to support him during this next challenge. He's certainly earned it.

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

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