

CONNECTION

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Mount Vernon District Police Captain Fred Chambers speaks to the community with Supervisor Dan Storck, Police Chief Kevin Davis, Deputy County Executive Tom Arnold and Lt. Veva Wallace at the Public Safety community meeting Nov. 9 at Walt Whitman Middle School.

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Going to the Dogs? PAGE 4

Threat to County's Drinking Water PAGE 10

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Read Still Fairfax City's Mayor-Elect

A week after Fairfax City's elections for mayor and City Council, the official results had still not been certified at press time. But with the provisional and late-absentee ballots added to each candidate's tally after the election was over, their vote totals changed.

Mayor-elect Catherine Read's totals improved to 4,882 votes, or 50.76 percent; City Councilmember Sang Yi's totals went to 4,699 votes, or 48.86 percent.

Furthermore, in the race for City Council, the additional votes helped Billy Bates leapfrog over Ana Renner to become the sixth member of the new City Council. He received 4,213 votes for 10.17 percent, while she received 4,198 votes for 10.13 percent. Bates will join So Lim, Tom Ross, Jon Stehle, Jeff Greenfield and Kate Doyle Feingold on the Council on Jan. 1, 2023.

— BONNIE HOBBS



Catherine Read

PHOTO COURTESY OF SARAH HEATON



Billy Bates

Fairfax City Results at a Glance

Mayor		
Catherine S. Read	4,882	50.76%
Sang H. Yi	4,699	48.86%
City Council		
So Lim	6,369	15.38%
Tom Ross	5,338	12.89%
Jon Stehle	5,037	12.16%
Kate Doyle Feingold	4,582	11.06%
Jeff Greenfield	4,214	10.17%
Billy Bates	4,213	10.17%

Note: At press time, the election had still not been officially certified, but an employee in the City Registrar's office said just five mail-in ballots had yet to be counted.

The Lamb Center Is in Need of Supplies

The Lamb Center in Fairfax City is a daytime, drop-in shelter serving the local poor and homeless. But supplies often run out, so the center seeking the community's help to keep them in stock. Items especially needed during November and December are as follows:

Sturdy, 9-inch paper plates and sturdy, 8-ounce paper bowls (no Styrofoam); disposable hot-drink cups (no Styrofoam); disposable, 8-ounce cold-drink cups; paper napkins; heavy-duty, plastic cutlery (no knives); fruit cups; applesauce cups; jelly packets; and salt and pepper packets. Also needed are gift cards in \$25 or \$50 denominations to Walmart, Target, Safeway or Giant.

All supplies may be delivered to or dropped off at The Lamb Center at 3160 Campbell Drive in Fairfax, Monday-Friday, from 8 a.m.-3 p.m., and Saturdays from 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Fatal Crash in W. Springfield

A 37-year-old Maryland man died in a three-vehicle crash on the morning of Nov. 11.

At 7:40 a.m., officers responded to the crash on Fairfax County Parkway near Whitlers Creek Drive. Detectives from the Crash Reconstruction Unit preliminarily determined Noe Solis Espinoza was driving a 1999 Ford Ranger northbound on the Fairfax County Parkway. Solis Espinoza lost control of his vehicle, crossed over the raised median and entered the southbound lanes near Whitlers Creek Drive. Solis Espinoza struck the driver of a 2018 Ford Escape, continued southbound and collided with the driver of a 2019 Honda Ridgeline. Solis Espinoza was taken to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced deceased. The driver of the Ridgeline was taken to the hospital for injuries not considered life threatening. Detectives do not believe alcohol was a factor in the crash. Detectives continue to investigate to determine if speed was a factor in the crash.

Anyone with information about this crash is asked to contact our Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone – 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477)

'Magic of the Holiday Season'

Fairfax City's Small Business Saturday is Nov. 26.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Small Business Saturday returns to Fairfax City on Nov. 26, the Saturday after Thanksgiving. This annual event encourages residents to patronize local, City businesses, while checking off some gift purchases on their holiday shopping lists.

The fun also includes the City's annual Elf on the Shelf Scavenger Hunt and Welcome Station that day from 9 a.m.-noon, at Old Town Square, 10415 North St. Visitors there may enjoy treats, receive giveaways, have a photo taken with Santa, and pick up an elf scavenger-hunt passport.

The passport identifies 30 businesses throughout the City that have hidden an elf in their business. Shoppers who find five or more elves and make a purchase at one participating business by Monday, Dec. 5, can email their passport to economicdevelopment@fairfaxva.gov to have their names entered into a drawing to win one of 10 Fairfax City Flex eGift Cards valued at \$50 each.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

The Flex eGift Card is a fully digital, community-based, eGift Card program delivered via text or email. The card is available in amounts starting at \$5 and is redeemable at 20 Fairfax City businesses and counting. For more information, go to fairfaxcityconnected.com/flex.

And to further encourage shoppers to Shop Small on Nov. 26, many businesses are also offering special promotions. New this year, customers are invited to share their experiences on social media at #FairfaxCityElf for a chance to win Fairfax City Flex eGift Cards valued at \$10 each, during daily drawings.

"Small Business Saturday is an important national event," said Economic Development Director Chris Bruno. "But here in Fairfax City, it has also turned into a holiday tradition of supporting small and local businesses. And Small Business Saturday is the perfect opportunity to celebrate the business community that makes this City the center of small businesses in Northern Virginia."

The whole promotion is hosted by the

Fairfax City Economic Development Office in partnership with the Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce and the Old Town Fairfax Business Assn. And during its Tuesday night, Nov. 15 meeting, Fairfax City Council officially proclaimed Nov. 26 as "Small Business Saturday."

"The Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce is thrilled to participate in Small Business Saturday and the City's annual Elf Hunt," said Jennifer Rose, the Chamber's executive director. "It's a fun, family-friendly way to support our Fairfax City businesses. Now, more than ever, our small-business community needs our support. Shop small, shop local."

Introduced in 2010, Small Business Saturday serves as the ceremonial kickoff to the holiday shopping season for small and locally owned businesses across the country. And by bringing together its small business-



Fairfax City's Small Business Saturday and Elf scavenger hunt are Nov. 26.

es for this event, the City is highlighting and underscoring the impact they have on the community.

"Small businesses are an integral part of our City," said Tess Rollins, executive director of the Old Town Fairfax Business Assn. "They're comprised of our neighbors – and keeping their businesses healthy and viable keeps our local economy strong. We're excited to invite residents to join us for Small Business Saturday to connect with their neighbors and discover the magic of the holiday season in Fairfax City."

To learn more about how the City is supporting its small businesses via this event, visit fairfaxcityconnected.com/22elf.

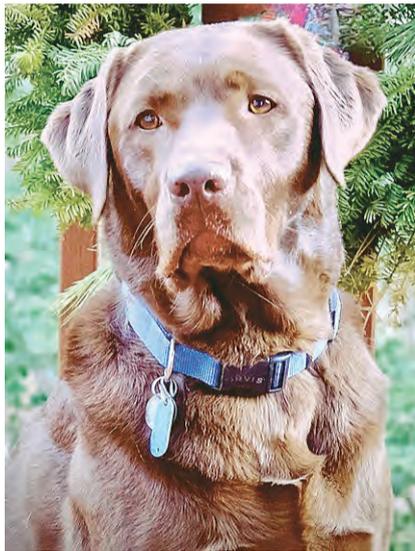
New Dog License Contract Catches Some By Surprise

Fairfax County to pay for contracted processing so department can focus on 'higher revenue generating tasks.'

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County dog owners may have noticed something different when they opened this year's annual dog license renewal letter. The payment return is not addressed to the county's tax administration department, but to a servicing company in Irving, Texas, called PetData. While the license fee, dog name/s, and rabies information appear as before, the form directs that payments go to PetData's address, and requests for information and questions go to their website or toll free number.

Dog owners received no direct and little advance notice of this service contract. The post-contract notice on the county's Government NewsCenter appeared on Nov. 1, just as renewal notices began arriving in mailboxes. Without forewarning, some owners were concerned that the renewal notice might be a scam. The county's Animal Services Advisory Commission, which serves in an advisory capacity to the Shelter Director and the Board of Supervisors on issues relating to animal health and welfare, also was not informed of the change in advance or given opportunity for prior input. Nor was notice given to the animal shelter's Friends group, a non-profit fundraising partner of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter.

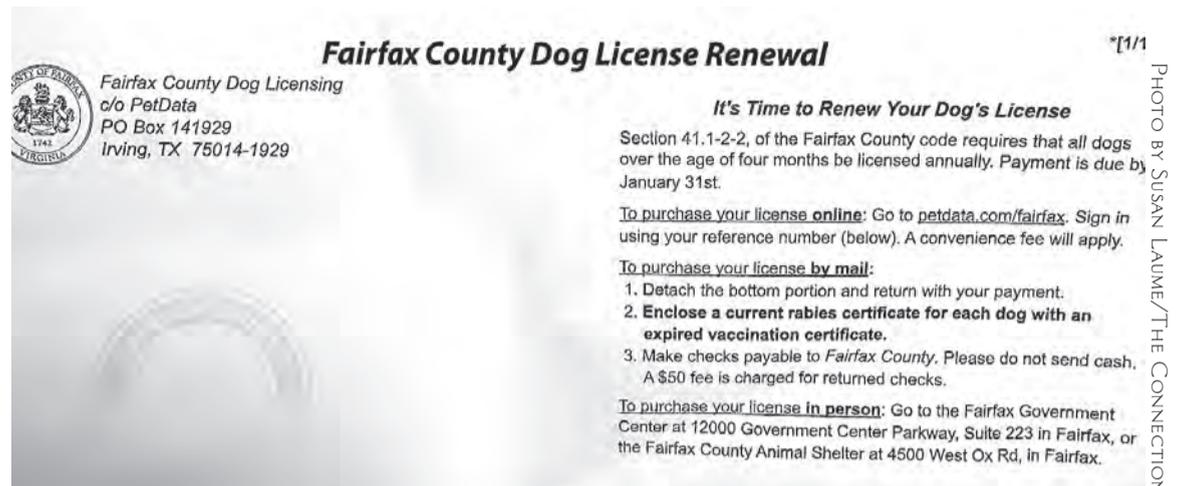


County code requires all dogs over the age of four months be licensed annually.

The Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter <https://ffcas.org/> relies on including messaging in the annual renewal notice to dog owners as a means of fundraising. Calls to the tax office related to dog licensing were being referred to PetData early in the month. The county has updated their tax administration and animal shelter website pages now with the new contact information.

Director of Tax Administration, Jay Doshi, said the change is "intended to enhance service."

Doshi indicates using a third party system for the relatively small funds generated by dog licensing "allows our staff to refocus on higher revenue generating tasks." Dog licensing represents a very small percentage of the county's \$4.85



Fairfax County dog owners received 2023 license renewals with a surprise return address to Texas this year.

billion general fund revenues, 95 percent of which his department is responsible for collecting.

As for enhanced customer service, the tax administration says that for dog owners registering a dog for the first time, physically visiting the animal shelter or a tax office with rabies certificate in hand will no longer be required. First time license issuance, and renewals, now can be accomplished online or by mail, by providing a copy of rabies certifications, if not previously provided, or if expired. Those choosing to pay the \$10 license fee by credit or debit card are assessed a \$2 convenience fee. Service dogs are eligible for a free license. The brunt of this tax collection work occurs within the limited window between distribution of the annual notice in November and the Jan. 31 due date to display the license.

Will the new system save taxpayers money?

No, in fact the new license service system will cost taxpayers more since there are no offsetting position savings. Tax department clerks will continue to staff the department's walk-in windows and receive dog license payments

as well as other collections for business licenses, personal property tax, etc. The animal shelter employees also will continue to collect walk-in payments along with performing their myriad of other duties. In fact, the shelter had already had assistance from non-paid volunteers to set up special windows for licenses during the peak period to relieve shelter permanent staff to perform more complex duties. So no dedicated staff positions existed or will be reduced at either department.

The county will pay PetData a \$4.20 fee per license; about 40 percent of the individual payer collection, according to Doshi. At the county's current licensed dog level, over 65,000 in 2022, the Texas provider will reap over \$275,000 per year, or over \$1 million over the course of the five year contract.

Will the animal shelter lose funds as a result of payment of contract license servicing fees?

No. Doshi and animal shelter director Reasa Currier say no since the shelter is funded from the county's general budget fund. However, since the dog license tax contributes to the general fund,

there will be a reduction in total county revenues of over \$1 million, unless staff refocusing on higher revenue generating tasks makes up the difference.

Are there any other positives which drove the county's contracting decision? PetData touts its ability to increase licensing of unlicensed dogs in the county. PetData estimates there are over 90,000 unlicensed dogs here; however they offer no indication of how they arrived at that estimate. The company also suggests it can reduce euthanasia, presumably through improved identification of lost dog ownership. However, Fairfax County does not euthanize lost dogs and currently has over a 90 percent live release rate.

State law caps the amount that may be charged for dog license tax by localities at \$10 [§3.2-6528]. State law also dictates the uses to which such funds may be put [§3.2-6534]. Dog tax collections are intended to fund animal control and shelter operations, and spay/neuter and rabies programs. Fairfax County's collection of these funds has never been sufficient to cover current animal shelter operating costs.

Virginia Puppy Stores Face Regulation, Inspection

Public invited to comment on new requirements.

BY SUSAN LAUME
THE CONNECTION

After decades without regulated inspection, retail stores selling dogs and cats soon will receive regular checks. The Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (VDACS) has published a set of draft inspection regulations for puppy stores. Appearing in "The Virginia Register of Regulations," Oct. 24 issue, the formal notice invites public comment during the



Gina Marie Lynch, of Humane Society of Fairfax County, urges public to weigh in on need for pet shop regulation and inspection to call for improved animal welfare

period from Oct. 24 until Dec. 23; with a public hearing in Richmond on Dec. 9. (See the proposed regulation at: <http://register.dls.>

virginia.gov/details.aspx?id=10445)

Although animal shelters, both public and private, have been regulated and inspected with penalties for non-compliance for decades, puppy stores in the Commonwealth had escaped review. New regulations, once finalized,

will affect existing pet shops which may not be in compliance with the regulations and which could incur increased costs in order to come

into compliance. VDACS, the agency charged with conducting annual inspections of public and private shelters, also will be responsible for pet shop inspections under the new regulations. Officials of the department also will inspect for compliance with Virginia's Comprehensive Animal Care Law.

Pet shops selling dogs typically source from large breeding operations, dubbed puppy mills. The animal welfare watchdog group, Bailing Out Benji, is one of several
SEE VIRGINIA PUPPY, PAGE 12

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME



Pet advocates have complained to the Virginia Office of Veterinary Services about common puppy store practices such as use of small mammal drip bottles for extended periods for dogs.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

From left, Ms. Sieber (mom), Caroline Sieber (Lady Fairfax) Supervisor Pat Herrity, Sam Gray (Lord Fairfax) and Sam Gray's family.

America Recycles Day, Reminder that Recycling Is Forever

Reduce, reuse, recycle.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Recycling in Fairfax County has become a multi-pronged effort, led by the Purple Can Club for glass recycling, the food scrap program, the household hazardous waste, and the weekly curbside recycling programs through the community trash collection. Nov. 15 was America Recycles Day and its programs like these that keep recycling on the radar.

"We need everyone to help us reduce waste and to become a Zero Waste community, which is vital to our environmental efforts and keeping our streams and roadways clean," said Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon) in his November 2022 newsletter.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website, the recycling rate in America has increased from less than 7% since 1960 to a current rate of 32%. Recycling and reuse activities account for 681,000 jobs and \$37.8 billion in wages, cited on the Fairfax County website.

Recycling started out as an option in the early days and was implemented into the Fairfax County Code Chapter 109.1 which requires residents to separate recyclables from trash for placement at the curb for collection. Both waste and recyclables are required by Chapter 109.1 to be collected weekly with residential trash collection. Sometimes that is through the county or a private trash collection service.

The county has an electronic notification system called "Fairfax Recycles" to inform subscribers of Fairfax County recycling www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

events and news items from the Fairfax County Solid Waste Management Program. Fairfax Recycles has an e-newsletter to highlight the recycling program. In the Fall 2022 edition, there is information about pumpkin disposal after Halloween, A collector spotlight story, highlights Sandra Miranda, a Trash Away route supervisor who urges everyone to take part in trash collecting and recycling.

On Nov. 1 at the Board of Supervisors regular meeting, the Board recognized Nov. 15 as Fairfax Recycles Day and encouraged residents to improve the recycling stream and Recycle Right. Supervisor Pat Herrity nominated Caroline Sieber for Lady Fairfax for her recycling efforts. She's a Centreville High School student who dedicated hundreds of hours to service the environment with the LRR Glass Recycling Network, which she formed with her sister in 2021 while schools were closed due to the pandemic. They were motivated to help promote glass recycling when curbside recycling no longer included glass.

"Each year, I ask the Board of Supervisors to recognize Nov. 15 as Recycles Day in the County to encourage our residents to recycle," Herrity said. "County staff and organizations like the Glass Recycling Network do amazing work in educating our residents on recycling efforts, especially with the popular Purple Bin Program." Herrity announced the opening of two new purple bin glass collection sites, one at Saratoga Park & Ride.

America Recycles Day holds a photo contest to promote recycling also. Last year's winner in the "Overall Message," category was Pinidi Kahandawa Mudiyansele; Grade 6, followed by McClain Caswell, 4th Grader in the "Fun Message," and Kathleen McLane in the "Graphic Art," category.

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Public Safety: A Community Conversation

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

BY SUPERVISOR DAN STORCK



Last week I held an important community-wide meeting with Police Chief Kevin Davis and Mount Vernon District Commander Fred Chambers to discuss safety and staffing in the Mount Vernon Police District, which also includes a large portion of the Franconia District. While some categories of crime are rising, Chief Davis explained that in many cases, the victims are known to each other, and most cases have been closed and the suspects arrested. Davis asked residents to be proactive by locking their homes and cars, reporting suspicious activity (703-691-2131) and creating Neighborhood Watch groups (703-360-8400). He also noted the best way to keep up with County Police information is to follow the police Twitter account: @FairfaxCountyPD.

Mount Vernon District School Board Member Karen Corbett Sanders joined us for a discussion about the recent incidents in and near our schools. I also appreciated Sen. Scott Surovell joining us and reviewing new state laws and legislative efforts related to noisy car exhaust. The meeting was live streamed on Facebook and can be viewed here <https://www.facebook.com/SupervisorDanStorck/videos>

During our conversation, we discussed police staffing issues, recent events in our schools and current crime statistics. I recognized our



Mount Vernon District Police Captain Fred Chambers speaks to the community with Supervisor Dan Storck, Police Chief Kevin Davis, Deputy County Executive Tom Arnold and Lt. Veva Wallace at the Public Safety community meeting Nov. 9 at Walt Whitman Middle School.

excellent police force, officers and their many successes. The role of police officers in our community has evolved over time, with a focus on serving the community by making as many positive connections as possible. Davis noted that

in successful and safer communities, the police protect the community, not “police” the community. This is an important distinction and one we

SEE PUBLIC SAFETY, PAGE 7

An Exceptional Community Hospital

BY DEL. PAUL KRIZEK



Across the 44th District, we are fortunate to have wonderful, diverse businesses, community organizations and charities, and a supportive Mount Vernon-Springfield Chamber of Commerce, that all contribute to our thriving and growing community. As proud as I am to represent them, I am equally proud of how they have stepped up over these challenging couple of years to support our neighbors. We are truly a community that sticks together and supports each other, and that’s why I love being your Delegate in Virginia’s General Assembly.

Due to the unique nature of healthcare in the past two years — first, the COVID-19 pandemic and now record levels of flu and other respiratory illness — perhaps there’s no better example of “neighbors helping neighbors” in our community than Inova Mount Vernon Hospital.

Like many in our community, there was a time when I was con-

cerned about the future of our community hospital. Thankfully, due to leadership and investment from the Inova Health System, our Mount Vernon Hospital is not only surviving, but thriving. I sleep well knowing that the hospital is here to serve our community well into the future.

We should all be proud of our nationally-recognized community hospital. The federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the agency that oversees federal health insurance programs, ranks every hospital in the country for quality and safety. Inova Mount Vernon has its highest ranking: five-stars. This recognition was earned by just eight other hospitals in the Commonwealth and by just 13.8% of hospitals in the country.

Earlier this year, Inova Mount Vernon also earned “Magnet” designation by the American Nurses Credentialing Center, considered the highest recognition in the nation for nursing excellence. In ad-

dition to that honor, Inova Mount Vernon nurses were recognized as “exemplars” for top performance in nursing satisfaction, infection prevention, care coordination, and patient satisfaction. I can tell you from personal experience just last year how wonderful the nurses were in caring for my mother.

Since 2019, Inova has invested \$40 million in the hospital to improve facilities, equipment, and

patient experience. In recent years, you may have visited their state-of-the-art new Emergency Room, or spent time with a family member in the new patient tower. This past year, Inova committed \$2.5 million to expand operating rooms and to purchase the hospital’s first DaVinci Robot, enabling robotic-assisted,

SEE COMMUNITY HOSPITAL, PAGE 7

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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
kmoore@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





Residents listen to an update on public safety in the Mount Vernon District and had the opportunity to ask questions at the Public Safety community meeting Nov. 9 at Walt Whitman Middle School.

Public Safety: A Community Conversation

FROM PAGE 6

recognize here in Fairfax. He discussed that police officers are human beings and have good days and bad days, just like the rest of us. We are all aware of the need to recruit more officers to ensure responsiveness and we all agreed that sharing critical information in a timely manner is important.

Even through COVID times, and ups and downs in our crime data trends, Fairfax County continues to be the safest jurisdiction of its size in the United States. We are preparing for the newest police station to open in Lorton in spring 2023. This will better align our police precincts and support the growing Lorton community.

I have been a strong advocate with Davis and our public safety leadership for sharing monthly public safety statistics with the community. I believe this transparency and an understanding of the data help us all make better decisions and respond to concerns in real time. The best way to stay up to date with police issues in our community is to follow the Fairfax Police Department news <https://fcpdnews.wordpress.com/>.

What can you do? Lock your cars and homes. Don't leave valuables in plain sight. And, if you see something, say something! Call the police non-emergency number at 703-691-2131 or, of course, in an emergency, call 911.

An Exceptional Community Hospital

FROM PAGE 6

minimally invasive surgery at Inova Mount Vernon for the first time.

Right now, there are two major projects underway to upgrade the hospital and expand services to the community. Opening early next year, the hospital is adding 20 additional inpatient behavioral health beds, a 15% increase to Inova's regional psychiatric bed capacity. As we navigate a community mental health crisis exacerbated by the pandemic, this is a critically important investment.

Additionally, Inova is establishing Northern Virginia's first Critical Illness Recovery Hospital at Mount Vernon to serve patients who need a longer stay for specialized care, but who no longer need to be in an intensive care unit. Prior to the establishment of this service at Inova Mount Vernon, patients need to be transferred to facilities in Richmond, Charlottesville, or even out of state. This will make a huge difference for patients and families

in our community who need this level of care but want it close to home. When combined with Inova Mount Vernon's well-established and recognized excellence in rehabilitation programs, the hospital will be a regional center of excellence which will serve patients with complex needs from across our region, while at the same time providing excellent everyday care to our community.

All these investments at our Mount Vernon hospital are part of Inova's broader effort to reinvest resources to improve and expand services to the communities in what it calls its "Eastern Region." This includes the replacement of the current Inova Alexandria Hospital at two sites — the former Landmark Mall, and adjacent to their current Franconia-Springfield Healthplex. The goal, once completed, is to provide healthcare services in state-of-the-art facilities in the eastern part of Northern Virginia. In addition to the enhancements in our community hospital,

these investments will result in world-class care that is even more accessible to our community.

On a recent visit to my office in Richmond, Inova President and CEO Dr. J. Stephen Jones said to me, "For as long as I'm CEO of Inova, you have my commitment that the Mount Vernon community will have a thriving community hospital at Inova Mount Vernon." I am grateful for that pledge, and you can be sure I will hold Inova to it.

Whether you are a patient, a patient's family member, or just a community member that may one day need medical care, rest assured that our local hospital is here for you and is, quite literally, a five-star, exceptional, world-class hospital. Many members of our community have jobs there too that allow them to deliver timely, high-quality, and compassionate care to our neighbors. I am so glad our Mount Vernon hospital continues to grow and excel, and I commend Inova in its commitment to continue to serve as a community pillar for decades to come

DR. GENE SWEETNAM
DR. GRACE CHANG DR. KAREN JINYOUNG KIM
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‘Live in a Way that Honors our Veterans’

Fairfax City celebrates Veterans Day.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Veterans Day ceremonies in Fairfax City are always moving and heartfelt – and the one last Friday, Nov. 11, at American Legion Post 177 was no exception. That post, plus VFW Post 8469, hosted the event before a packed room.

Besides local residents, attendees included U.S. Rep Gerry Connolly (D-11th), Del. David Bulova (D-37th), Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34th), Del. Dan Helmer (D-40th),

Fairfax Mayor David Meyer, Mayor-Elect Catherine Read, and City Councilmembers Sang Yi, Janice Miller, Joe Harmon and Tom Ross.

“Today we honor every man and woman who has proudly worn the uniform and bravely defended our nation, while protecting its people from the many threats we have faced – and will face – in the future,” said VFW Post 8469 Commander Mac McCarl. “The world is beautiful, fascinating and wonderful, but also dangerous.”

He said nowhere is that fact clearer than in the current conflict in Ukraine, “where a supposedly responsible nation, occupying a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council, has chosen to invade and destroy another sovereign nation, with only the flimsiest of justifications. These threats are real and omnipresent and, on occasion, necessitate a call to duty of our own armed forces.”

“In August 1990, I never imagined that six months later, I’d be crossing into Iraq with the 1st Armored Division and engaging in the second-largest tank battle in history,” said McCarl. “It serves as a reminder that the veteran’s job is never done. But just as the security of our nation is a continuous process, so is the support to those who stepped up to ensure that security.”

“Last year, I stood here and noted the need to pass the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act. That bill expanded the conditions experienced by veterans from toxic exposures like burn pits for treatment by the VA [Veterans Administration]. I’m happy that legislation passed, and I thank Congressman Connolly for his, and all the other votes, from both parties that passed that bill into law. It’s an example of what right looks like.”

Basically, said McCarl, “This contract between the veteran and the government is as critical to national security as any new weapon system, because it’s central to morale and the future readiness of the force. Today we celebrate and honor our veterans, along with thousands of others across this country, in cities large and small, in a way that transcends our differences. Let that continue to be our collective way forward as citizens of this great country.”

Next, Connolly said, “No conflict in history equaled what soldiers went through in WWI. In every way, until that point, we were unprepared. And today we witness the power



Mac McCarl



Jeff White

of war begun by one, delusional man who doesn’t recognize Ukraine’s independence. The Ukraine people desire to do what we did – become free. It’s a battle between liberal, democratic values vs. authoritarianism – and we must win it.”

So, continued Connolly, “As we celebrate and remember Veterans Day, we must also remember our country, its role in the world and how it can help others. Those veterans fought and died for the republic we were given in the Constitution of the United States. We pledge in the Constitution to be indivisible, and we’ve fought and died for that liberty.”

Noting that Fairfax High – which opened in 1935 – was built with grant funding from the federal government, Sen. Petersen said, “A lot of the boys who graduated from Fairfax and grew up served in WWII in the 29th Infantry Division. And that was one of the divisions that landed on Omaha Beach [on D-Day, June 6, 1944].”

He also recalled that, when his father ran for Fairfax City Council, “He went to Fairfax Hardware first and shook hands with the veterans there who’d served. And we continue that legacy which began in our little town. The investments you make today create the heroes of tomorrow.”

Del. Bulova said he was honored to be part of the Nov. 11 ceremony and thanked the VFW and American Legion for all they do. “Last night, I spoke to a Cub Scout den, and I asked the Scouts what responsibilities we have as American citizens,” he said. “One said that someone has to protect and defend the democracy we have. That made me proud and gave me hope.”

“I’m so thankful for our veterans, who don’t know where they’ll be asked to serve, but they do it anyway. Our military families



Attendees stand somberly while listening to bugler Hank Roeder play ‘Taps.’

also do so much, and we need to make sure we support them, as well. And we need to make sure we pass laws so our veterans can get the health care and other services they need. We owe that to them. God bless our veterans and God bless America.”

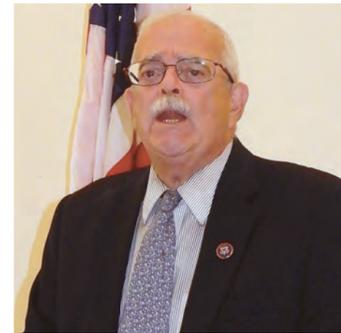
Speaking next, Del. Helmer noted he’s a proud VFW member. “My dad’s an immigrant and my family members are Holocaust survivors – and only in America could they survive,” he said. “I graduated from West Point and served tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. The freedoms we enjoy are ours to keep, and there’s a wall between those who’d take them away and us. We watch with alarm at what’s happening in Ukraine; but we raise our hands and say, ‘No more.’”

He thanked Virginia’s General Assembly

for passing a tax break on former military members’ retired pay and also for exempting 100-percent, service-disabled veterans from paying the car tax. “We want to make Virginia the best state for veterans,” said Helmer. “And we want to raise another generation of people proud to be here for you and proud of our veterans.”

At previous Veterans Day ceremonies in Fairfax, Mayor Meyer said his father-in-law, Charles Collins – an Air Force veteran who transported agent orange in Vietnam – later contracted bladder cancer. This year, he related that Collins died in July.

“He served 31 years in the Air Force, from 1953-1985, including in the Korean War and in Vietnam,” said Meyer. “And my wife’s sister, Pamela Rhodes, also served 31 years in



Gerry Connolly



Chap Petersen



David Bulova



Dan Helmer



David Meyer



Sang Yi

the Air Force and participated in Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom. We depend on our veterans to ensure that our civil liberties are protected and passed down to the next generation. Thank you to all our veterans.”

Next at the podium, Councilmember Yi said Friday’s event was probably the largest crowd the City has ever had for this event. Noting that his father served with the Korean army in Vietnam, Yi said his dad encouraged him to join the military and serve his new country, America. Yi did, attending the Naval Academy.

“And now, 19 years in, the community I’m proudest to be in is the veterans community because they’re some of the most selfless people and because veterans have grit,” he explained. “And when people thank me for my service, I thank them for being worth serving. So be that American worth serving so that spirit of those veterans can live on in America. What all our veterans have done has impacted millions of people – and for generations. Thank you.”

Post 177 Commander Jeff White also thanked the politicians who passed the PACT Act. “We civilians should live in a way that honors our veterans,” he said. “For example, on Election Day, voters in Fairfax City had a nearly 70-percent turnout, and I’m proud of that. To make sure our veterans’ sacrifices weren’t made in vain, live the rights that you were given.”

Next, female barbershop group, The Sound Advice, performed an armed forces medley, with veterans in the audience standing when they heard their branch of the service’s song. Then VFW Post 8469’s Hank Roeder played “Taps” from another room.

Giving the closing prayer, VFW Chaplain Marcus Kuiper asked God to bless the veterans and their families and friends. “Fill their homes with Your strength and love,” he said. “Help us to remember and respect their sacrifices, which can carry forward in the present with physical and mental battlefield scars. Bring healing to those that still hurt and help them know You to find peace and happiness in their hearts.”



Vera Daniel

Vera Daniel Is New Director of FCPD Incident Support Services

Vera Daniel’s role is to support officers who may have been impacted by traumatic events.

Vera Daniel will join the Fairfax County Police Department as Director of FCPD’s Incident Support Services, supporting officers who may have been impacted by traumatic events.

Daniel will work with Major Greg Fried to develop prevention strategies, techniques, and training aimed at helping these officers. Daniel will be responsible for exploring specialized studies and research to support the departmental mission as it relates to behavioral health and wellness for law enforcement officers.

Prior to joining the FCPD, Daniel worked with the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board in various roles with Diversion First Programs such as the Compliance and Competency Dock-

et, Court Assessment Team, and supervised Jail Based Services team within the Adult Detention Center.

Prior to joining Fairfax County, Daniel worked with Hampton-Newport News Community Services Board for 12 years providing oversight to case management programs, assisted with the development and implementation of the first Veterans Treatment Docket in Hampton, participated in the first Family Drug Treatment Docket in Newport News, Virginia, and worked as the Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity (NGRI) Coordinator for the agency.

Daniel graduated from George Mason University with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, received her master’s degree in Social Work from Norfolk State University, and is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. She has over 16 years of experience of working in the field of mental health, substance use, intellectual disability, and developmental disabilities, along with law enforcement, and the justice system.

Daniel is Trinidadian-American and comes from a military family, where her parents retired from their service in the United States Army, according to the FCPD release announcing Daniel’s appointment.

BULLETIN BOARD

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

FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT PARTICIPATING IN TOYS FOR TOTS CAMPAIGN

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department will be participating in the Annual National Capital Region Fire and EMS Departments’ 2022 TOYS FOR TOTS Campaign. The intent of the campaign is to “bring holiday joy and deliver a message of hope to children.” Stations will accept donations now through Sunday, December 11, 2022. Collection boxes will be placed outside the front door of each fire and rescue station every morning. Residents will be able to drop off toys until 8 p.m., each evening.

Please help us to help those less fortunate this holiday season. Thanks to the generosity of those who live and work in Fairfax County, FCFRD was able to provide the Marines with approximately 25,000 toys last year! Children who are served by this campaign include toddlers and youths through age 17. The campaign will only accept new, unwrapped toys. Toys used as weapons or considered to be weapons (i.e., toy guns or knives of any kind) will not be accepted. Checks or money orders for donations must be made payable to TOYS FOR TOTS.



SCREENSHOT

Supervisor Daniel Storck (D- Mount Vernon)



SCREENSHOT

Supervisor James Walkinshaw (D- Braddock)



SCREENSHOT

Supervisor Pat Herry (R- Springfield)

Fairfax County Objects to Rezoning in Occoquan Watershed

Prince William approves massive data complex in sensitive watershed, threatening drinking water supply.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

So, what's in your water? Action earlier in November by one of Fairfax County's neighbors may negatively impact the Occoquan Watershed, primary source of water for Fairfax Water's Occoquan Reservoir.

The Comprehensive Plan Amendment #CPA2021-00004, PW Digital Gateway with changes approved on Nov. 2 by Prince William County allows for a technology corridor generally along Pageland Lane south of Sudley Road; north of Route 29; east of Conway Robinson Memorial State Park, Heritage Hunt and Catharpin Valley subdivisions; and west of Manassas National Battlefield Park and Sudley Mountain subdivision. It is where about 2,139 acres of the 80,000 acre Rural Crescent for the controversial PW Digital Gateway can be built. The massive size of the data complex could rival Loudoun County's global notoriety.

The proposal generated concern and intense opposition from Fairfax Supervisor Pat Herry (R-Springfield) and the other supervisors on the board, the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations and the HOA Roundtable of Prince William County as seen in letter by Sridhar Ganesan president of Fairfax Federation to the Boards of Supervisors of Prince William and Fairfax counties, and many others.

After a grueling 14-hour public hearing and discussion, that began Nov. 1 and continued to 10 a.m. the following day, the Prince William County Board of Supervisors voted 5-2 along Democratic party lines and approved the controversial Gateway. The amendment with changes rezones the land from Agriculture or Estate and Environmental Resource to "Technology / Flex with a T-3 Transect, POS, Parks and Open Space, CRHS, County Registered Historic Site, and an Environmental Resource Overlay."

The Prince William data center build is expected to generate hundreds of millions of dollars in tax revenue for the county. In 2021, the current Prince William data center hub generated approximately \$80 million in tax revenue. Loudoun receives approximately \$576 million. Estimates published in February by Prince William deputy finance director Tim Leclerc showed that the Gateway's revenue could be \$400 million per year at the end of 20 years.

"I am very disappointed that the Prince William Board of Supervisors voted 5-2 to approve the Digital Gateway Comprehensive Plan Amendment before fully studying and understanding the impacts on the Occoquan Watershed, the water supply for millions of Northern Virginians, or taking the time to fully consider the testimony of the 200 that testified last night," said Herry on Wednesday, Nov. 2, reacting to news of approval of the Comprehensive Plan Amendment #CPA2021-00004, PW Digital Gateway, Item 3A,

The Occoquan Watershed is a 570-square-mile basin. Three major impoundments are located in the watershed: Lake Jackson, Lake Manassas, and the Occoquan Reservoir. A dam in the Occoquan River forms the Occoquan Reservoir, one of the primary sources of water for Fairfax Water. It is the main water purveyor for the area, supplying water to nearly two million people, according "An Analysis of the Occoquan Watershed and Reservoir System" by Virginia Tech Apr. 15, 2021.

The 2,100-acre Fairfax Water Authority impoundment reservoir supplies the water source for portions of Fairfax County, Fort Belvoir, and the City of Alexandria. Water from the reservoir is withdrawn by Fairfax Water at its Griffiths Treatment Plant at Lor-

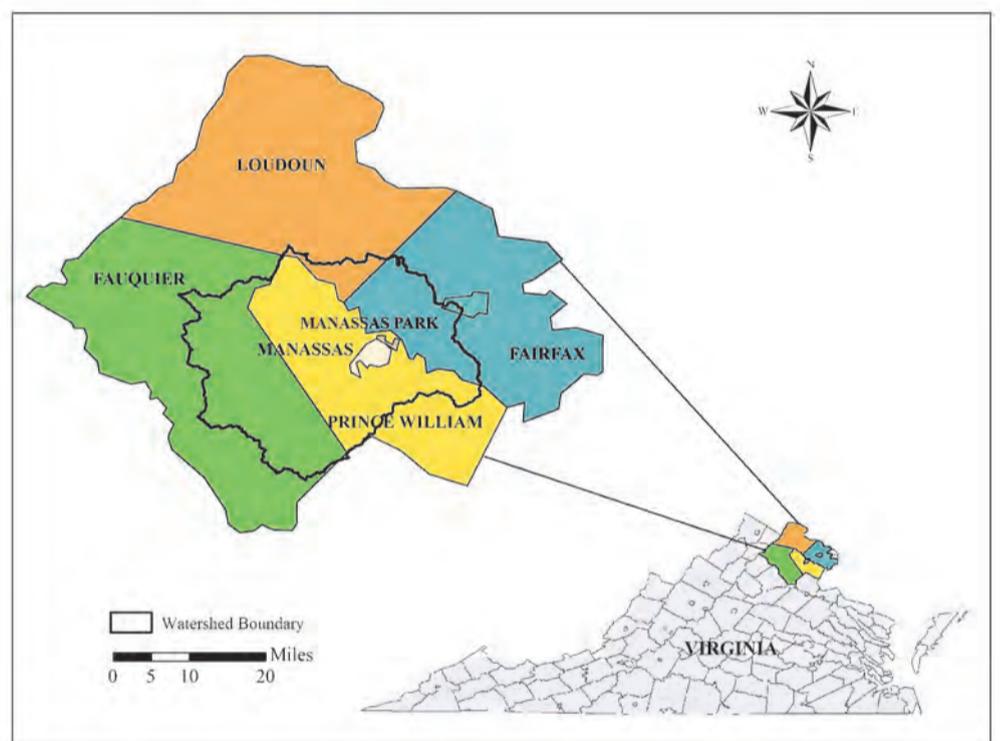


Figure 1-1. Map of the Occoquan Watershed

"AN ANALYSIS OF THE OCCOQUAN WATERSHED AND RESERVOIR SYSTEM"

Location of the Occoquan Watershed in Northern Virginia by county.

ton, Virginia, and distributed for potable uses.

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors moved swiftly on the motion by Herry concerning the downzoned Occoquan Watershed as a critical natural resource during Nov. 1 regular meeting. Herry jointly presented the board matter with Chairman Jeff McKay (D), Supervisor Kathy Smith (D-Sully), and Supervisor Dan Storck (D-Mount Vernon).

Herry said, "The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, on behalf of all citizens of Fairfax County, reaffirm its commitment to the continued efforts by the county, related agencies, and residents to protect and preserve this critical natural resource for future generations just as the previous Board did in 2016."

Supervisor Daniel Storck (D-Mount Vernon) said that water is truly life. "The quality of that water makes a difference to all of us, whether to our youngest children or

the oldest of us. ... Because of the amount of drinking water pulled from the Occoquan, it's even more critical."

Supervisor James R. Walkinshaw (D-Braddock) said, "It's timely we affirm our commitment to that." The Fairfax County supervisors unanimously approved the Herry's motion.

The Board Matter came late and did nothing to sway not more than two supervisors on the Prince William County (PWC) board.

Neither did earlier comments by many Fairfax County groups and others.

On Feb 23, 2022, a memo coordinated among the Fairfax County Departments of Transportation, Public Works and Environmental Services, and Planning and Development to Rebecca Horner, deputy county executive of Prince William Planning Office, said that critical to Fairfax County is the protection of the Occoquan Watershed. "The

SEE THREAT, PAGE 11

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Threat to Fairfax County Water

FROM PAGE 10

proposal to expand public sewer and water to serve the proposed data centers would not be compatible with the critical need to protect the Occoquan Reservoir ... We have an overarching concern about the proposal to permit higher density development within the larger Occoquan Watershed due to cumulative impacts on the Reservoir, which provides drinking water to a large portion of Northern Virginia.”

In a letter dated March 21, 2022, the Fairfax County Water Authority said, “Substantial changes in land-use patterns in areas of Prince William County (PWC) will impact water quality in the watershed and reservoir.”

On April 29, 2022, Kyle W. Hart, field representative of Mid Atlantic National Parks Conservation Association, wrote that if the Prince William Digital Gateway were fully developed, sediment loss from the development could “be expected to be up to 57,000 tons, the equivalent of approximately 4,000 large dump trucks of sediment being dumped into the Occoquan Watershed.”

“The additional sediment would lead to decreased water quality in Bull Run and the Occoquan Reservoir, negative impacts to the recreational angling the lake offers, and decreased storage capacity of the Occoquan Reservoir. Additional impervious surfaces created by this development would cause an additional 280 million gallons of additional stormwater runoff into the Occoquan Watershed annually, thus increasing the risk

of flash flooding downstream and decreasing groundwater and aquifer recharge,” said Hart.

Hart based his statements on findings by CEA Engineers with whom National Parks Conservation Association contracted about its growing concerns about the water quality. CEA is an environmental engineering firm with significant experience examining water quality impacts from development proposals

“On our side of the water, I will continue to work to protect the watershed and monitor any upcoming land use cases that may threaten its quality,” Herrity said in his Nov. 4 issue of “The Herrity Report.”

Man Dies in Police Custody

A man in police custody died on Friday, Nov. 11 while being taken to a nearby hospital.

At 4:18 p.m., officers responded to numerous calls for service for a man running into traffic and conducting himself in a disorderly manner in the 6500 block of Amherst Avenue, Springfield. An officer found Temiki Murray, 44, of Lorton, blocking southbound lanes of Amherst Avenue. The officer attempted to speak with him and guide him onto the sidewalk. Murray immediately ran back into traffic.

Officers followed from a distance directing additional officers to Murray’s location. Murray stopped running in a nearby parking lot. Officers reengaged and explained they were there to help him. Fire and rescue personnel were requested to re-

spond. Murray was then placed into handcuffs to prevent him from running back into traffic. No force was used while taking him into custody.

Murray was then taken to a nearby hospital in an ambulance. While enroute to the hospital, Murray suffered a medical emergency. He was pronounced deceased at the hospital. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will conduct an autopsy to determine the specific cause and manner of death.

Police will release the body camera footage and audio recordings within 30 days or when it no longer jeopardizes the integrity of the investigation.

All information provided in this release is based on preliminary investigative findings and may be subject to revision as the investigation progresses.



Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

County	Structure ID	Location	Updated Weight Limit	Effective Date
LEE	10829	624 RTE 624	CREEK	10/29/2022
GILES	8450	653 EATON CHAPEL RD/RTE 653	LITTLE SUGAR RUN	10/28/2022
ALBEMARLE	800	712 PLANK ROAD	HARDWARE RIVER	10/27/2022
BOTETOURT	3536	1001 UPDIKE LANE/RTE 1001	BRANCH OF TINKER CREEK	10/27/2022
FLOYD	7501	221 FLOYD HWY S/RTE 221	BR OF DOBBINS CREEK	10/27/2022
GILES	8478	700 MT LAKE RD/RTE 700	SINKING CREEK	10/27/2022
MONTGOMERY	12312	705 COAL HOLLOW RD/RTE 705	SLATE BRANCH	10/27/2022
MONTGOMERY	12294	669 UNION VALLEY R/RTE 669	ELLIOTT CREEK	10/27/2022
ROANOKE	14980	609 E. RURTAN RD/RTE 609	BR GLADE CREEK	10/27/2022
ROANOKE	15095	737 GLADDEH RD/Rte 737	BRANCH RNKE RIVER	10/27/2022
MONTGOMERY	12235	629 BRADSHAW RD/RTE 629	BRADSHAW CREEK	10/26/2022
MONTGOMERY	12285	657 MERRIMAC RD/RTE 657	SLATE CREEK	10/26/2022
MONTGOMERY	12279	654 BROOKSFIELD RD/RTE 654	TOMS CREEK	10/25/2022
MONTGOMERY	12264	641 WAYSIDE DRIVE/RTE 641	SPRING BRANCH	10/25/2022
MONTGOMERY	12265	641 WAYSIDE DRIVE/RTE 641	SPRING BRANCH	10/25/2022
MONTGOMERY	12271	643 YELL SULPH RD/RTE 643	MILL BRANCH	10/25/2022
FAUQUIER	7276	610 MIDLAND ROAD	ELK RUN	10/24/2022
PULASKI	14549	613 CHERRYBRANCHRD/RTE 613	BURKS RUN	10/24/2022
FLOYD	7487	221 FLOYD HWY S/RTE 221	GREASY CREEK	10/22/2022
BOTETOURT	3534	817 OLD RAIL ROAD/RTE 817	CRAIG CREEK	10/21/2022
ROANOKE	15070	677 WILLOW BR RD/RTE 677	BR BACK CREEK	10/21/2022
TAZEWELL	18486	91 RTE 91	LITTLE RIVER	10/20/2022
FLOYD	7477	8 PARKWAY LANE/RTE 8	W FORK DODD CREEK	10/19/2022
PATRICK	13246	103 DRY POND RD/RTE 103	BACK CREEK	10/19/2022
PATRICK	13229	58 JEB STUART HWY/RTE 58	LITTLE IVY CREEK	10/19/2022
PATRICK	13206	8 PATRICK AVENUE/RTE 8	BR SOUTH MAYO RIVER	10/19/2022
GRAYSON	8900	711 BATTLEFIELD DRIVE	SADDLE CREEK	10/18/2022
HENRY	10022	57 APPALACHIN DR/RTE 57	DANIELS CREEK	10/18/2022
HENRY	10021	57 FAIRYST. PK HW/RTE 57	SMITH RIVER	10/18/2022
HENRY	10057	220 RTE 220	NS RAILWAY	10/18/2022
MONTGOMERY	12113	11 RKE RD/460WBL11SBL	BR SOUTHFORKROANOKERIVER	10/18/2022
MONTGOMERY	12137	11 ROANOKE ROAD/RTE 11	WHITEHOUSE BRANCH	10/18/2022
PATRICK	13293	635 GOBLINTOWN CR/RTE 635	GOBLINTOWN CREEK	10/18/2022
BEDFORD (M)	22407	43 PEAKS RD/RTE 43	LITTLE OTTER RIVER	10/17/2022
BOTETOURT	3159	11 LEE HIGHWAY/RTE 11	THRASHERS BRANCH	10/17/2022
FRANKLIN	7777	220 V H GOODE HWY/RTE 220	SFORK LITTLE CHESTNUT CR	10/17/2022
FRANKLIN	7779	220 VIRGIL H. GOODE HY	MAGGODEE CREEK	10/17/2022
FRANKLIN	7776	220 V H GOOD HWY/RTE 220	N FORK CHESTNUT CREEK	10/15/2022
ROANOKE	14956	311 CATAWBA VLD/RTE 311	CATAWBA CREEK	10/15/2022
BEDFORD	2872	735 ROCK CLIFF RD/RTE 735	DIFFICULT CREEK	10/14/2022
BEDFORD	2896	755 SIMMONSML LRD/RTE755	BORE AUGER CREEK	10/14/2022
BEDFORD	2915	781 TABERNAACLELANE/RTE 781	IVY CREEK	10/14/2022
FRANKLIN	7780	220 SBL RTE 220	BLACKWATER RIVER	10/14/2022
ROANOKE	14933	220 FRANKLIN RD/RTE 220	NARROWS CREEK	10/14/2022
CRAIG	5477	311 PAINT BANK RD/RTE 311	BRANCH OF JOHNS CREEK	10/13/2022
GILES	8436	635 BIG STONY CK RD/RTE 635	LAUREL BRANCH	10/13/2022
GILES	8453	653 EATON CHAPL RD/RTE 653	SUGAR RUN	10/13/2022
GILES	8325	42 GILES/PULASKITPK/RTE 42	WABASH CREEK	10/13/2022
GILES	8488	722 GLEN ALTON RD/RTE 722	STONEY CREEK	10/13/2022
BOTETOURT	3406	628 PREASE RD/RTE 628	LONG RUN	10/11/2022
BEDFORD	2622	221 FOREST RD	LITTLE OTTER RIVER	10/8/2022
BEDFORD	2605	122 MONETA ROAD/RTE 122	STONY FORK CREEK	10/8/2022
BEDFORD	2621	221 FORREST RD/RTE 221	ELK CREEK	10/7/2022
BEDFORD	2577	24 STEWARTSVILLE RD/RTE 24	BEAVERDAM CREEK	10/7/2022
GILES	8487	720 GRAVELY HILL RD/RTE 720	STONEY CREEK	10/7/2022
BOTETOURT	3394	622 SOLITUDE RD/RTE 622	SPROUTS RUN	10/6/2022
MONTGOMERY	12236	629 BRADSHAW RD/RTE 629	BRANCH OF BRADSHAW CREEK	10/6/2022
MONTGOMERY	12208	614 TAN BARK RD/RTE 614	BRUSH CREEK	10/6/2022
PATRICK	13252	610 HELMS ROAD/RTE 610	BRANCH DAN RIVER	10/4/2022
BOTETOURT	3158	11 LEE HIGHWAY/RTE 11	LOONEY MILL CREEK	10/3/2022
BOTETOURT	3156	11 LEE HWY/RTE 11	JAMES RVR, CSX & RT 1318	10/3/2022

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth, but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit <https://www.virginiadot.org> and navigate to Info Center/Trucking Resources. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730.

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Be Part of 2022 Children's and Teens' Connection

One week of December for many years, this newspaper has devoted its pages to the creativity of local students, teens and children. The results are always remarkable. It is a keepsake edition for many families. Even readers without children of that age spend time admiring and chuckling over the issue. The annual Children's Connection, including Children's Gazette and Children's Almanac, is a long-time tradition.

You can see last year's editions by visiting <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/PDFs/> and scrolling down to Children's Edition.

We welcome contributions from public and private schools, art classes, individuals and homeschoolers. We publish artwork, poetry, essays, creative writing, opinion pieces, short stories, photography, photos of sculpture, gardens and any other creative efforts.

We ask that all submissions be digital

so they can be sent through email. Writing should be submitted in text format: docx or google docs, or pasted in the body of an email. Artwork should be photographed or scanned and provided in jpeg format. These can be submitted via google drive as well. Please share all google drive files with kimm.mary@gmail.com

Some suggestions, but different ideas are welcome:

- ❖ Drawings or paintings or photographs of your family, friends, pets or some favorite activity. These should be photographed or scanned and submitted in jpeg format. Photos of sculpture or larger art projects are also welcome.

- ❖ Short answers: What is one thing that you would change about school? What do you want to be when you grow up? What is your favorite animal? What is your favorite possession? What makes a good friend? What is the best gift you've ever received?

- ❖ Your opinion (100 words) about

movies, food, music, sports, restaurants, video games, toys, trends, politics, etc.

- ❖ Poetry, short story or other creative writing.

- ❖ News stories or photos from school newspapers.

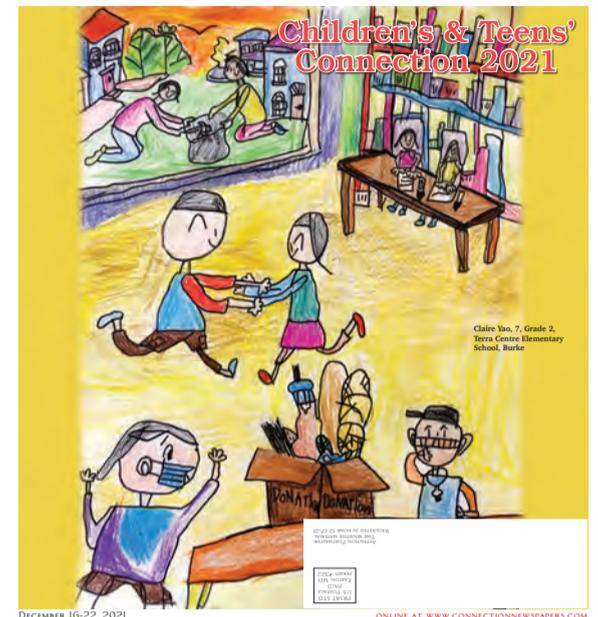
We must be able to print the full first and last name of the student artist/writer with the submission, along with student's age, grade and school or town name.

Identify each piece of writing or art, including the student's full name, age, grade and town of residence, plus the name of the school, name of teacher and town of school location. Home schoolers' contributions are welcomed.

Please send all submissions by Monday, Dec. 5, 2022. The Children's Connection/Gazette will publish the middle of December, the edition with publication date Dec. 14, 2022.

Email submissions for the Children's Connection to kimm.mary@gmail.com

CONNECTION
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Virginia Puppy Stores Face Regulation, Inspection

FROM PAGE 4

al groups which track movement of dogs from these large operations into pet stores in Virginia and other states by monitoring required federal/state transport documents. The Benji group has verified sourcing by Virginia pet shops from breeding facilities with 60 to 641 breeding dogs. Many have past Animal Welfare Act violations (<https://bailing-outbenji.com>).

In recent years, several states (California, Maine, Maryland, Illinois, Washington) have enacted legislation which prohibits sales of dogs, cats, and sometimes rabbits, in pet shops. Virginia has not. While Virginia's code has effectively stopped puppy mills from operating within its boundaries, puppy mill sales continue through pet shops and online sales. There are currently 20 retail puppy stores in Virginia, including three in Northern Virginia. In Fairfax County does not prohibit puppy store sales of dogs and cats; City of Fairfax requires a public hearing and obtaining a permit before starting a puppy shop business. Petland in Fairfax, Capital City Pups in Manassas, and Dreamy Puppy in Fairfax County, were closed after cruelty charges. Some area stores now are the subject of on-going investigations.

"There is a critical need for inspection of the operating procedures of businesses that hold and sell animals," said Gina Marie Lynch, Humane Society of Fairfax County's community outreach manager. "The multi-year inspec-



PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION

For the best chance of purchasing healthy, well-adjusted puppies, like Frankie and Bogey, animal welfare watchdog group, "Bailing Out Benji" recommends visiting the property to check conditions of the property and parents.

tions by the U.S. Department of Agriculture of the Envigo medical beagle breeding facility in central Virginia resulted in citing hundreds of animal welfare violations. ... Without inspections, the public would never know of the irregularities or abuses."

Bailing out Benji warns, "If you cannot visit the property to see for yourself the conditions in which puppies sold online or in a pet store were born and in which their parents are still living, chances are the puppies came from puppy mills."

The public can participate in the regulatory process and weigh in on the need for regulation, the draft regulations, and specific areas of

concern in multiple ways. Comments can be made in the public town hall forum found at <https://townhall.virginia.gov/L/comments.cfm?stageid=9390>. Comments also may be made to the agency contact:Carolynn Bissett, Program Manager, Office of Veterinary Services, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, P.O. Box 1163, Richmond, VA 23218, telephone (804) 786-2483, FAX (804) 371-2380, TDD (800) 828-1120, or by email carolynn.bissett@vdacs.virginia.gov.

A public hearing will be held on Dec. 9, 10 a.m., at the Patrick Henry Building, East Reading Room, 1111 East Broad Street, Richmond, Va.



Puppy stores in Virginia have avoided regular inspection for decades.

"Usually the laws governing treatment of animals are not as compassionate as we'd like," Lynch says. "The bare minimum standards of care are the norm. When unacceptable treatment is identi-

fied by concerned citizens, changes must be made — the public must be the source demanding that conditions improve."

The deadline for all public comment is Dec. 23, 2022.

NEWS

Inova Hospitals Earn All As

All five Inova hospitals have earned "A" Hospital Safety Grades from The Leapfrog Group, an independent national watchdog organization with a 10-year history of assigning letter grades to general hospitals throughout the United States.

The grades are based on a hospital's ability to prevent medical errors and harm to patients. The Leapfrog Group assigns an A, B, C, D, or F grade to all general hospitals across the country, using more than 30 measures of safety data including rates of preventable errors, injuries and infections, while also accounting for whether hospitals have systems in place to protect patients from harm.

"Our team members [are committed] every day to providing the highest level of care while always keeping patient safety at the forefront of their daily work," said Chapy Venkatesan, MD, Chief Quality and Safety Officer, Inova.

Only 37 hospitals in Virginia were awarded A grades for the Fall term 2022, five of which are

Inova hospitals

- ❖ Inova Loudoun Hospital is 1 of only 22 hospitals nationwide to earn "Straight As" since the program's launch – marking 22 consecutive A grades

- ❖ Inova Fair Oaks has earned 21 consecutive A grades

- ❖ Inova Mount Vernon has earned 17 consecutive A grades

- ❖ Inova Fairfax and Inova Alexandria Hospitals have earned 9 consecutive A grades

"The care that our team provides our community is extraordinary," said J. Stephen Jones, MD, President and CEO, Inova.

The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade is the only hospital ratings program based exclusively on hospital prevention of medical errors and harm to patients. The grading system is peer-reviewed, fully transparent and free to the public. Grades are updated twice annually, in the fall and spring.

To see more details on Inova's performance and to access hospital safety tips for patients, visit HospitalSafetyGrade.org

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 9

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Stations will accept donations through Sunday, December 11, 2022. Toys will not be accepted after this date.

ADOPT A WARRIOR FAMILY FOR CHRISTMAS

So many of our Military families today find themselves in financial crisis, now more than ever. This will be especially true during this Holiday Season. To give back, Able Forces Foundation (AFF) is once again sponsoring the Adopt-A-Warrior Family Christmas program. As in years past, Able Forces Foundation will adopt families from each of the five Military Service branches. All adopted families are identified by military Advocates on military bases or military Recovery programs in the Washington, DC Metro area. These families have been vetted and referred to AFF. Based on need, financial support will ensure each family will have:

- A Christmas Tree • Complete Christmas Dinner (for up to 8)
- Stocking Stuffers • the ability to provide up to 5 gifts per child

100% of all donations go directly to support this program. There are no administrative or overhead fees taken out of donations. All donations contributed between Oct. 25 and Christmas will go directly to support this program. If you can help, go to: www.ableforces.org/adopt to make a contribution.

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.

NOW THRU 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. They provide reliable information that families can use in decision-making and are familiar with services and resources that can help families in distress. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/healthymindsfairfax or www.nami-northernvirginia.org/parent-peer-support.html.

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

Haven of Northern Virginia provides support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15

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Wellbeing pages, the first week of every month.

Delight in our **HomeLifeStyle** sections, the second week of every month. Peek at the top real estate sales, glimpse over-the-top remodeling projects, get practical suggestions for your home.

Celebrate students, camps, schools, enrichment programs, colleges and more in our **A-plus: Education, Learning, Fun** pages, the third week of every month.

Senior Living, fourth week of every month.

Questions?

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CALENDAR

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Let us know about an upcoming event

connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

CALENDAR

SANTA COMES TO SPRINGFIELD TOWN CENTER

Springfield Town Center is making it a season to remember for the Springfield community. Come out and celebrate with special festivities including family photos with Santa, "Kringling Mingle", and other seasonal events and performances by local community organizations. Santa will return to his seat at Springfield Town Center from November 12th through December 24th to listen to every child's holiday wish. Pets are again welcome to visit with Santa this year on Mondays starting November 14th. Feathered, whiskered and hooved pets are all welcome, animals must be kept on a leash or in a crate at all times when not visiting with Santa.

TUESDAY, NOV 15-17

Citrus Fruit Sale. 9 a.m.- 6 p.m. at the American Legion Parking Lot, 3939 Oak St., Fairfax. Fairfax Lions sell fresh Florida oranges, mandarins, grapefruit, maple syrup, peanuts; we raise funds for charity. Sign up now for notices and discounts on the web page.

FRIDAY/NOV 18

Jazz4Justice Concert. 8 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. The event raises funds to directly support vital legal services for low-income Northern Virginians as well as financial support for the Mason Jazz Studies department, including scholarships, trips, recordings, and student projects. This year's concert, Jazz & Blues in America, explores the roots and development of America's greatest contribution to the arts—Jazz. Information and tickets are currently available on the Center for the Arts website cfa.gmu.edu.

SATURDAY/NOV 19

Tammy Pescatelli. 7:30 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, W16, McGuireWoods Gallery, Lorton. An Italian American stand-up comedian, having learned her comedic skills growing up in a large Italian family outside of Cleveland, and subsequently marrying into an even bigger Italian family...you'll howl at her comedic slice of life.

SATURDAY/NOV 19

Pollution Control Plant Tour. 1:30 p.m. At Norman M. Cole Pollution Plant in Lorton. The festivities for the Thanksgiving Tour begin at noon with activities for children, including 'worker booths' where they'll be able to participate in hands-on activities with some of the plant's staff to learn about the important work they do to treat and process wastewater on a daily basis, in alignment with the Fairfax Countywide Strategic Plan, which proposes prioritizing stormwater and wastewater infrastructure. At 1:30 p.m. those high school age and older will tour the facility for approximately two hours. They will visit six of the plant's major operations; four of which involve seeing and learning about the actual wastewater treatment process. Partic-



Tammy Pescatelli will appear at the Workhouse Arts Center in Lorton on Saturday, Nov. 19, 2022.

ipation for the Thanksgiving Tours is limited to 50 attendees and registration is required. To register, visit: Noman.M.Cole.Jr.PollutionControlPlantTourRequest@va.gov

SUNDAY/NOV. 20

Keyboard Conversations with Jeffrey Siegel. 7 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. In Immortal Impromptu, Jeffrey explores what is at the heart of Romanticism with passion-filled, freestyling impromptu with Chopin, Schubert, and Fauré. Learn more about the artists, their time in history, and how they expressed the ideals of an era through their musical compositions. An interactive question and answer session will conclude this program.

SUNDAY/NOV. 20

International Children's Day. 1-2:30 p.m. At Hidden Oaks Nature Center, 7701 Royce Street, Annandale. Celebrate International Children's Day honoring children everywhere with a multicultural salute. Hidden Oaks will highlight fall festivals, including Mexico's Day of the Dead, India's Diwali and Native Indigenous Peoples harvest celebrations through crafts and performances. K-Harmony, a South Korean children's choir will perform. Call 703-941-1065 or visit Hidden Oaks Nature Center.

MONDAY/NOV. 21

Symphonic Band Concert. 8 p.m. At GMU's Dewberry School of Music, Fairfax. Tickets \$12 General Public; \$8 Seniors; \$5 Students.

MONDAY/NOV. 21

Mr. Gabe Music. 10:30 a.m.-11:15 a.m. At Old Town Hall, Fairfax City, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Mr. Gabe's shows are lively and the children love engaging with him! Join us for a whole lotta FUNday Monday! FUNDAY MONDAY is geared toward preschoolers but all children are welcome.

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.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 13

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 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

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We Need Your Help Again
We are sincerely grateful and thankful to you for helping in 2021 to save one of America's oldest newspapers, the Alexandria Gazette Packet, publishing continuously since 1784

Alexandria Gazette Packet
Publishing Since 1784

And affiliated newspapers
THE CONNECTION Newspapers & Online
Potomac Almanac
Mount Vernon Gazette 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.

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 has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

Visit connectionnewspapers.com or <https://www.gofundme.com/help-keep-your-newspaper-printing>
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Drugged, But in a Good Way



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I could get addicted to this. What is this, you ask? It's yours truly being rescued from financial oblivion, familial fracture and/or cancer progression.

When last we visited this subject, I had just been told in no uncertain dollars, that continuing my monthly thyroid cancer prescription medicine was going to start costing me \$984 and change. Though the pharmacist maintained that I was covered by my existing plan, the bonus plan (for the sake of brevity) that covered the entire \$20,000+ monthly retail cost (and my \$984 share) had not been renewed. In short, I no longer qualified. The means-tested evaluation had dumped me back on the mean streets.

Paying retail for the drug myself and/or not incurring the cost/not taking the medication at all were equally unattractive. I had to put my thinking cap on, maybe think outside of the box to attempt to remedy this potential hardship. First, I appealed my bonus plan denial by providing additional financial documentation – as requested. However, the automated message said that process would be complete 45 days after receipt. If that timeline was accurate, I would need two months of the medication (or go two months without the medicine) before my renewal was even considered. Two scenarios which were equally unpalatable.

I had about a week or so before this medication hammer was to come down: do or die, quite literally. A few sleepless nights into my life-changing-forever deadline (pun intended), it came to me, or rather I remembered something. Approximately eight years ago, I was prescribed a new heavy-duty chemotherapy drug after my previous medicine had stopped working. The oncologists suggested a drug (a daily pill, actually). I said sure, and he ordered the prescription. (This is all before I had ever heard of this 'bonus plan.') Within a few days, I received a text from the pharmacy advising me that my new lung cancer prescription was ready for pick up. At that time, my co-pays for my various prescription medications were \$10, \$20, et cetera. However, before I went to pick up my prescription, not wanting to assume too much, I thought I should call to find out the cost, just to be on the safe side. The cost: "\$2500." I was told. I asked: (sort of being a wise-ass – and hopeful at the same time): "Is that for a year?" "No. One month," I was told. I was shocked by the price – as I had health insurance/prescription drug coverage and stammered something like I had to get back to them.

I can't recall with whom I was sharing this drug cost problem, but it was suggested that I call the pharmaceutical company that makes the drug and explain my circumstances. Sometimes, I was told, the companies share the cost with the patient. I was still working full time then, had health insurance but was not on Medicare or Medicaid. I was not without means; I just didn't have an additional \$2,500 per month to spend out of the blue on medicine. I called the company and spoke with their patient liaison-type person and explained my dilemma. Amazingly, there was a cost-sharing program and even more amazingly, I was accepted into their program and ended up not paying a dime for the entire next year that I was prescribed this pill – before it stopped working (that's the nature of cancer treatment; the medicine is effective until it isn't and then you switch to a new treatment). It was a great year of not paying for my cancer medicine.

History repeated itself. Although this time, I thought to call the pharmaceutical company on my own. First, I went on their web site and saw "patient enrollment program." I read a little but wasn't certain I qualified. I decided to call and speak to a real person. And boy oh boy did that person understand my situation and appreciate my call. They couldn't have been nicer, any more sincere or more willing to help me navigate their process to determine if I qualified for assistance. I answered their questions, completed an online application, and was told, I'd receive and answer about possible enrollment in the next day. Sure enough, the next day came and so did multiple phone calls to confirm and coordinate my approval and receipt of my next month's prescription cancer medicine. Just like that, the deal was done, and my \$984 monthly prescription bill was eliminated. I received my pills on Thursday of the same week, one day before my last prescription would have run out.

If you heard something that sounded like a gigantic sigh of relief that day, that was me. Breathing normally once again.

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



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