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News

County Budget Committee Projected Shortfall

Uncertainty clouds the county and schools FY 2024 forecast.

he Board of Supervisors Budget Policy Committee held a joint meeting with the School Board on Nov. 22, 2022, for the Presentation of the Joint County and Schools FY 2024 Fiscal Forecast. According to current information with projections based on the current tax rates of \$1.11 per \$100 of assessed value, Fairfax County staff predict FY 2024 revenue to increase by only \$264 million. The preliminary result is a budgetary shortfall of \$81.2 million for the County and a \$43.8 million shortfall for Fairfax County Public Schools.

Christina Jackson, Fairfax County chief financial officer, and Leigh Burden, FCPS assistant superintendent, Financial Services, presented to the supervisors and school board representatives; Bryan Hill, county executive; Dr. Michelle C. Reid, Schools Superintendent; and Marty Smith, FCPS chief operating officer, and others. The Fairfax County budget is the largest municipal budget in Virginia and is larger than the budgets of some states.

Last May, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors adopted a \$4.8 billion budget for FY 2023. The board lowered the county's tax rate for homes from \$1.14 to \$1.11 per \$100 of assessed value. However, homeowners paid an average of \$465 more per year.

"We're still really early in the process," Jackson said. "(Projections are) subject to change as we take into consideration the impact on our homeowners and our residents as we go through this budget process."

Jackson noted that everyone is aware of the high levels of inflation, the real estate market is rapidly changing, and the county anticipates that there could be further softening of the market in the next couple of months.

BUDGET TIMELINE

COUNTY DATES		FCPS DATES
	Superintendent releases FY 2024 Proposed Budget	January 12, 2023
	School Board holds public hearings on budget (January 24 if needed)	January 23, 2023
	School Board adopts FY 2024 Advertised Budget	February 23, 2023
February 21, 2023	County Executive presents FY 2024 Advertised Budget	
February 28, 2023	Joint County/Schools Budget Committee Meeting to discuss FY 2024 budget and tax rate	February 28, 2023
March 7, 2023	Board of Supervisors advertises FY 2024 tax rates	
April 11-13, 2023	Board of Supervisors holds public hearings on FY 2024 Budget	
May 2, 2023	Board of Supervisors marks up FY 2024 Budget	
May 9, 2023	Board of Supervisors adopts FY 2024 Adopted Budget	
	School Board holds public hearings on budget	May 16, 2023
	School Board adopts FY 2024 Approved Budget	May 25, 2023
July 1, 2023	FY 2024 Budget Year begins	July 1, 2023

FY 2024 FAIRFAX COUNTY and SCHOOLS FISCAL FORECAST

Screensho^{*}

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and School Board Representatives meet.

The focus will be on employee salaries as recruitment and retention issues remain, Jackson said. There is limited flexibility for other priorities, and important items are not included in the forecast because of "significant revenue constraints."

The FCPS Superintendent's Budget Re-

leases on Jan. 12, 2023, and the County Executive's Advertised Budget Release is on February 21, 2023.

Economic Outlook and Revenue Projections

With an uncertain economic outlook, staff

conservatively approached the FY 2024 revenue forecasting, Jackson said.

Inflation rates above 8 percent, rising mortgage interest rates above 7 percent which impact the real estate market. disruptions in the energy supply, a persistently tight labor market, and declining consumer confidence are among the challenges.

Real estate tax revenue is the

most significant component of General Fund revenue, comprising more than 67 percent. Jackson noted that the number of home sales in October was down 22.1 percent in the county.

Budget Timeline

The budget timeline for January and February 2023 has the superintendent releasing the FY 2024 Proposed Budget on Jan. 12; the school board holds a public hearing on Jan. 23 and Jan. 24 if needed. On Feb. 23, the School Board adopts the FY 2024 Advertised Budget.

On Feb. 21, the county executive will present the FY 2024 Advertised Budget; on Feb. 28, there will be a Joint County/Schools Budget Committee Meeting to discuss the FY 2024 County and Schools Advertised Budgets and tax rate.

Additional meetings occur March-May leading to when the Board of Supervisors adopts the FY 2024 Adopted Budget on May 9, and the School Board adopts the FY 2024 Approved Budget on May 25. The FY 2024 Budget Year begins July 1, 2023.

Beware of Cash-for-gold Robbery Scheme

Fairfax County detectives seek additional victims in ruse.

n Oct. 29, a victim was driving home, when he saw three people on the side of Interstate 495. The victim stopped to provide aid. A woman said the stranded group needed money to continue their travels. She showed the victim a watch and gold jewelry. She requested cash in exchange for the items. The woman convinced the victim to drive to an ATM. Two men in a black SUV followed the victim and woman. The victim began driving and quickly realized this was likely a scam. The victim stopped in a parking lot and exited his www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

car. One of the men from the other vehicle exited their car and told the victim to sit in the driver's seat while he drove the victim to obtain money.

The suspect then drove the victim to four locations in the county. Through intimidation, the crew forced the man to withdraw money. Once the victim's accounts were empty, the suspects left the victim, and he called 911.

Officers believed this group was likely operating in the area and continued to search for the black SUV used in the crime. On Nov.

3, an officer saw a gray Chevrolet Tahoe that appeared to be disabled on the Dulles Toll Road. The officer conducted a traffic stop and identified the occupants as Magdalena Mazil, 39, Hagi Voinescu, 36, and Romeo Voinescu, 23 all from Baltimore. Officers obtained consent to search the vehicle and located large amounts of fake gold jewelry.

After further investigation, officers obtained warrants for abduction and four counts of robbery for all three individuals. An additional two warrants for preventing someone from calling 911 was issued for

Hagi Voinescu. Two additional warrants for preventing a telephone call were obtained for Magdalena Mazil. An additional warrant for driver failing to report an accident was issued for Romeo Voinescu. On Nov. 22, Baltimore City detectives arrested both Hagi and Magdalena. Romeo remains outstanding.

Detectives believe the suspects are related to other crimes in the area. Anyone with information about this crime or believe they were victim to their scheme, please call 703-691-2131. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by phone – 1-866-411-TIPS.

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BULLETIN

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

TUESDAY/DEC. 13

Travel with a Dementia Patient – How to Guide Families. Virtual event. 2-3:15 p.m. Featuring Jennifer L. FitzPatrick MSW, LCSW-C, CSP of Jenerations Health Education. Panelist: Kiersten Parsons; Moderator: Ni'Asia Griffin. For more information and to register, visit: https://www.jenerationshealth.com/Inglesideaugust

MCLEAN COMMUNITY CENTER SEEKS AMBASSADORS

To assist in fulfilling its mission to provide programs of interest to area teens, the McLean Community Center (MCC) is launching a new initiative, MCC Youth Ambassadors. The purpose of the new initiative is to empower teens to collect and share their classmates' ideas and feedback with the MCC Governing Board. McLean and Langley high school students enrolled in 9th-12th grades who reside in Dranesville Small District 1A are eligible to apply for the volunteer positions. The deadline to apply is Friday, Dec. 9. MCC is located at 1234 Ingleside Ave.

Youth Ambassadors will serve as liaisons between community youth and the two youth members of the MCC Governing Board, Sarah Tran (Langley High boundary area) and Charlotte Loving (McLean High boundary area). The ambassadors will promote MCC activities via their social media platforms and through resources at their respective schools. They will also assist

- in planning events and activities targeted to the youth of McLean in support of acquiring their growing participation in MCC programs. Ambassadors will meet monthly at MCC or the Old Firehouse Center to discuss public feedback and plan future activities.
- MCC Youth Ambassador Applications are posted on the MCC website, www.mcleancenter.org. Completed applications should be emailed to MCC General Programs Director Michael Fisher at michael.fisher@fairfaxcounty.gov no later than Friday, Dec. 9.
- For more information, students may contact MCC Governing Board member Sarah Tran (McLean High School Boundary Area) at sarah. tran2@fairfaxcounty.gov or Charlotte Loving (Langley High School Boundary Area) at charlotte. loving@fairfaxcounty.gov.

DULLES TOLL ROAD RATES WILL RISE IN 2023

The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority board of directors voted last week to increase rates for two-axle vehicles on the Dulles Toll Road from the current \$3.25 to \$4.00 at the main toll plaza and from \$1.50 to \$2.00 on ramps. The increase becomes effective January 1, 2023. Rates on the Dulles Toll Road have not increased since January 1, 2019. Toll revenue follows a long-standing plan of finance to fund highway operating and maintenance costs plus a portion of construction costs for Metrorail's Silver Line, which began service to Dulles International Airport on November 15. Funding of the Metrorail project is governed by an agreement between the Airports Authority and partners in Fairfax and Loudoun counties, the Commonwealth of Virginia and the federal government.

FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT PARTIC-IPATING 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.

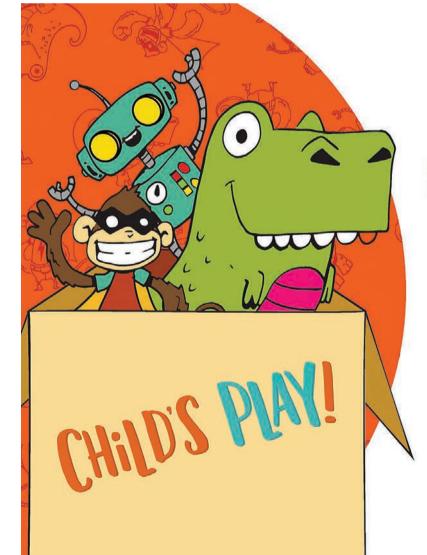
Collection boxes will be placed outside the front door of each fire and rescue station every morning. Residents will be able to drop off toys until 8 p.m., each evening.

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.

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

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News

Workshop Performance Of Student-Written Play

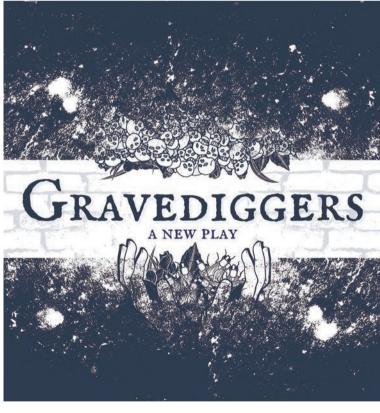


axon Stage After Hours presents a workshop performance of a brand new, student-written play, "Gravediggers." "Gravediggers" is an original dark comedy play following six inhabitants of a run-down historic estate in rural Montana and the secrets they bury down deep in the ground.

On one side of the Boothe Estate lies a graveyard, garden, gift shop, and mansion, home to aging property owner, Boothe, and lonely gravedigger employee, Pete. On the other side stands a small church and clergy house, now a part-time chapel, run by Reverend Margot, and a funeral home, run by her sister-in-law, Audrey, and Audrey's teenage niece, Joyce.

When new groundskeeper Nellie arrives at the Boothe Estate, plants suddenly die, invasive insects take over, and a new romance rewrites tombstones, leaving secrets scrawled out across the overgrown lawn. The Boothe Estate's odd occupants and even odder staff members must learn to let their skeletons out of the closet in a story of love, destruction and obsessions with death.

"Gravediggers" is produced by Saxon Stage After Hours, Langley High School's student-run production group. A short excerpt of "Gravediggers" was originally performed in November 2022 at Closing Time, a night of staged script readings written and per-



formed by the students of Saxon Stage After Hours. This December 2022 performance of Gravediggers will feature the full, two-act script, performed in a bare-bones workshop-style setting.

Cast includes Sarah Hilton as Nellie, Atlas Zecca as Pete, Lily Bowers as Joyce, Conor Farah as Boothe, Ava Carter as Audrey, and Lorna Evans as Margot.

Crew includes writer/direc-

tor Tess Jannery-Barney, stage managers Jenny Mears and Izzy Steenburgh, set design by Killian Korchnak, and lighting design by Cassie Keating.

"Gravediggers" performs on Saturday, December 10th at 3 pm & 6:30 pm in the Langley High School Black Box Theater at 6520 Georgetown Pike, McLean, VA 22101. Tickets \$5 at the door. www.saxonstage.com



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Calendar

ONGOING

Town of Vienna Holiday Decorating Contest. Ring in the holiday season by participating in the 2022 Town of Vienna Holiday Decorating Contest. This year's theme is "Shine Bright, Vienna!" As in past years, the contest is open to residents and businesses located in the Town of Vienna who are encouraged to create a festive, holiday display that will draw visitors to the town. Displays will be judged by the Town Business Liaison Committee (TBLC) judging panel and voted on by community members. The TBLC judging panel will select business winners on Dec. 8. Community members will also have an opportunity to vote online for the resident and business "People's Choice Award" through Dec. 9 at 12 p.m., and winners will be announced at the regular Town Council meeting at Town Hall on Dec. 9 beginning at 8 p.m., and via social media and the Town website.

NOW THRU DEC. 11

"The Rainmaker." At 1st Stage, 1524
Spring Hill Road, Tysons. "The
Rainmaker," written by N. Richard
Nash and directed by Deidra LaWan Starnes. Not only is the Curry
family farm being paralyzed by
a devastating drought, but Lizzie
Curry, to the chagrin of her father
and brothers, is unmarried with
no viable prospects. A charming,
confident trickster named Starbuck

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 7



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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 6

comes to town and promises to bring rain in exchange for \$100, setting off a series of events that enable Lizzie to see herself in a new light. Show times are Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 and 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. Tickets: Tickets: \$50 general admission, \$47 seniors (65+), \$15 students, educators, and military. Purchase online at www.1ststage.org or 703-854-1856.

DEC. 9-11

Capital Art & Craft Festival. At Dulles Expo Center in Chantilly. The Winter Capital Art & Craft Festival will feature art in more than a dozen mediums including glass, jewelry, leather, paintings, prints, photography, pottery, wearable art and wood. Show times: Friday, Dec. 9: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 10: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 11: 10 a.m. -4 p.m. Tickets: \$10 in advance; \$12 at the door Senior discount available; children under 12 free. Ticket information: www.CapitalArtAnd-CraftFestivals.com

FRIDAY/DEC. 9

Santa's Ride. Vienna residents who wish to support Santa's Ride can drop off new, unwrapped toys, games, books, and gifts at the Vienna Police Department, 301 Center St. S; the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., SE; or Vienna Town Hall during normal business hours. All items must be dropped off by 3 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 9, 2022. Police officers on motorcycle from multiple jurisdictions will escort Santa to local schools and government buildings to pick up the donated items and deliver them to hospitals and to community children in need. Santa's Ride 2022 is supported by the Fairfax County Police Department, Fairfax County Sheriff's Office, City of Fairfax Police Department, Falls Church Sheriff's Office, Herndon Police Department, Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, Vienna Police Department and Virginia State Police.

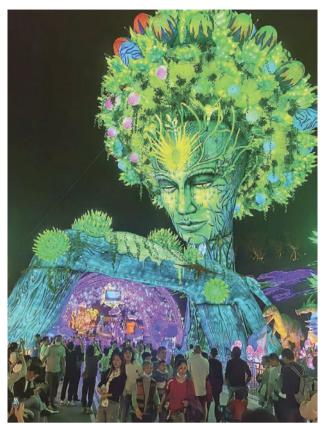
FRIDAY/DEC. 9

Ugly Sweater Party. 7–9:30 p.m. At 1440 Chain Bridge Rd, McLean. The Old Firehouse 5th & 6th Grader Parties are themed and decorated accordingly. Partygoers can enjoy catered food and beverages, a DJ spinning the latest tunes, an open dance floor and a variety of other attractions and activities

HUNTERS WOODS AT RAILS EDGE WINTER EVENTS

Wednesday evenings from 4-6 p.m. Dec. 7 -- Holiday Shopping: Local Craft Market Dec. 21 -- Welcome Party (New residents) and Karaoke

Dec. 28 -- Cooking Demo with Chef RSVP required. RSVP to HWTEMarketing@IntegraCare.com or call 703-429-1130.



The Winter Lantern Festival will be held Dec. 16 Thru Feb. 12, 2023 in Tysons Corner.

SUNDAY/DEC. 11

Traditional Celtic Music. 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. At the Old Brogue Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Featuring Jody Marshall's Holiday Celebration: One of the top hammered dulcimer players in America, Jody Marshall has been performing for more than a quarter century. She is accompanied by Jim Queen on fiddle, banjo and vocals, Susan Queen on bass guitar and vocals, and Paul Nahay on piano, bringing us holiday favorites old and new. Visit jodymarshall.net.

DEC. 16 THRU FEB. 12

Winter Lantern Festival will debut a spectacular holiday light adventure at the Lerner Town Square, 8025 Galleria Drive in Tysons starting December 16 through February 12th. Created by Kaleido Arts & Entertainment Group, Winter Lantern Festival will feature a total of over 10,000 of LED Chinese-inspired artisan lanterns, along with live performances and onsite food vendors. Guests will wander through a wonderland of light that includes Chinese myths, legends, and zodiacs. In addition, they will view handmade lanterns encompassing a world of ice, including displays of mammoths, polar bears, and penguins. There will also be interactive light swings, see-saws, and tunnels. Be prepared to indulge your friends, family, and yourself in photo opportunities! Hours are Fridays to Sundays from 5-10 p.m. Visit www. winterlanternfestival.com.

NOW THRU DEC. 31

Crafts for Kids. 10 a.m. to 12 noon. At Reston Art Gallery and Studios, 11400 Washington Plaza W at Lake Anne, Reston. Free, themed art projects for children (with guardian) are offered at Reston Art Gallery and Studios every Saturday from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. Visit the website: www.restonartgallery.com





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"IN THE GRASP"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

(Recent emails have prompted this column.) "In the grasp" is a football expression most often associated with quarterbacks being "sacked," (a defensive player having a secure hold of the quarterback). This basically means that the play is over/"the play is dead." It could also characterize an online scam. (I should know.) It occurs when you are speaking with someone at the end of an 800 number who is asking for remote control of your computer to install, upgrade, download, upload, and/or fix whatever computer problem precipitated this call. You're asking/needing help and consequently, you might be putting yourself at risk.

I experienced this circumstance one time and it nearly cost me \$3,000. I responded to an online solicitation that seemed to offer a reward/payout for something. It seemed harmless enough, so I made the call. Given how our consuming patterns have evolved with the internet, responding to emails from mostly familiar brands and buying some of what they're selling, "cyber-Monday" comes to mind, is how much of our consuming is done these days. And of course, you pay with a credit card to complete the transaction. However, sometimes the solicitations/ sites are not what they purport to be. It's difficult to discern, occasionally, whether "it's live or if its Memorex." Sometimes, it's hard to tell fact from fiction/ to know what's real or what's not (dangerous). (Beginning in the 70s, Memorex advertised Ella Fitzgerald 'scatting" into a microphone, live, and showing a glass breaking from her sound. Then they played their recording from the performance and again the wine glass shattered. And then the voice-over asked: "Is it Ĭive or Memorex?"

I think this is what happened to me when "I was in the grasp" after multiple hours on the phone. My innocent inquiry into the "real" offer lead me down more than just a garden path. Instead, it led very nearly to my bank - to pay the piper. It all started innocently enough (so I thought) with me giving control of my computer to this voice on the other end of the phone to process the purchase/payment due me. The payment was made to my bank, and I was told to go online and check my account. When I looked, I noticed a \$3,000 (not \$30) deposit. They made a mistake or so it seemed. Still on the phone with this far-away person, he admitted they made a mistake and to receive my real reward, I needed to repay them the \$3,000. I suggested that they simply retrieve the money the same way they deposited it. He said they couldn't do that - for whatever reason, and that I needed to repay them, this time said with a bit more urgency. I began to sense that I was being manipulated and slowed my roll accordingly.

Unfortunately, they sped up their roll and said if I didn't repay them, blah, blah, blah. I didn't agree and then their grip/manipulation got tighter. Having control of my computer, he deleted all my icons. I couldn't quite figure out what they were doing. Then when I asked for the icons to be returned, the scam took a nastier turn. He said, he was going to "lock" my computer unless I repaid the \$3,000. Being into the second hour of this negotiation, I began to get nervous – and flustered, realizing that unless I paid this ransom, my computer and all its memories would be gone, and since my computer is my business (and I have minimal computer skills/knowledge), I acquiesced and asked how what I should do to resolve this matter. He said I need to go to my bank and get a certified check (payable to whom I don't remember) and then go to a local Western Union office near me home and wire them the money. Now I officially realized that I was as in trouble/at risk of losing this \$3,000. With no alternatives, so far as I knew (which wasn't very far), I went outside and got into my car and started driving to my bank, while still on the cell phone with this "solicitor." About halfway there, I decided I didn't want to be a victim and so I told the man I was not going to pay him. He got mad and said he "was going to lock my computer," (I determined that the \$3,000 payment would be more harmful to me than the computer lock). I turned the car around and returned home to find out if I had suffered anu consequences for not paying. Sure enough, when I got home, I tried to turn on the computer, but I found it impossible to do so. Apparently, this man was indeed a man of his word, as far as locking my computer is concerned anyway. Now, whenever I receive emails from unfamiliar sites, they remain unseen. learned my lesson, very nearly the hard way (unlocking the computer simply required a trip to Best Buy, computer in hand and to pay a fee for unlocking services rendered). I may not be the sharpest knife in the drawer but thankfully I'm not the dullest, either.

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



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home on 4 finished levels w/ over 6500 fin sq. ft at the end of cul-de-sac. This home features a spacious floor plan; sparkling hdwds; high ceilings; stone fireplace in family room; gourmet kitchen w/ large breakfast area & sunroom with a wall of windows. Primary BR suite with gas fireplace; large picture window, large luxury BA. Attractive fenced .36/ acre lot. McLean HS pyramid!

SPECTACULAR 5BR/4.5 BA Craftsman-style home built in 2014 in sought-after FCC location! This like-new custom luxury home features sparkling hdwd floors throughout the main level; stylish plantation shutters; modern gourmet island kitchen w/ granite countertops; fam room off the kit includes gas frpl w/ walkout to large screened-in porch. This gorgeous home is situated on a lovely, level, .27/acre lot. Falls Church City Schools!

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