

CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station

By Jason Yao, 10 years old, 5th Grade
White Oaks Elementary School, Burke
Art teacher: Yanshun Sui



Children's & Teens'
Connection 2022

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CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

White Oaks Elementary School

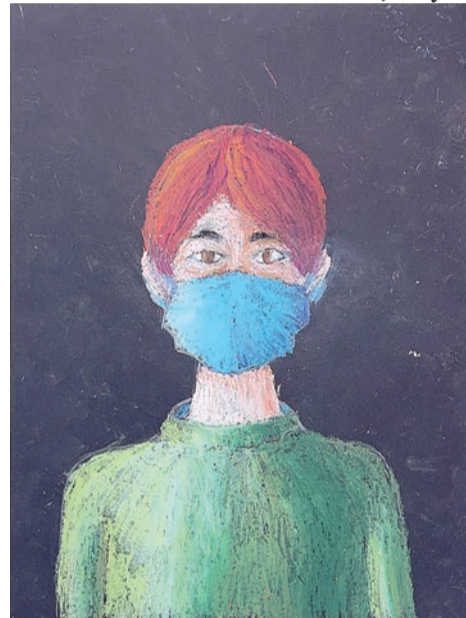
ART TEACHER: YANSHUN SUI



Claire Yao, 8-year-old, 3rd Grade



Jason Yao, 10-year-old, 5th Grade



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CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

Cherry Run Elementary School, Burke

MELANIE C RODAS
ART RESOURCE TEACHER



Alison Brady, grade 6



Wesley Phillips, grade 5



Landon Clark, grade 2



Joshua Collister, grade 1



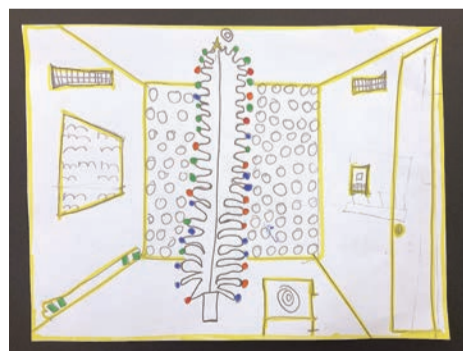
Lena Danosos, grade 2



Aiden Cyre, grade 2



Kolbe Bell, grade kindergarten



Kalen Lonetto, grade 6



Juliette Scepanzky, grade 4

CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

Browne Academy



"Endangered Species Oil Pastel," Danya Ousman, 11, of Lorton, 6th grade, Teacher Polly Beam



"Polar Bear," by Kailey Lubisco, 6, of Springfield, Kindergarten, Teacher Tietjen Alvarez



"Ceramic Alebrije," Divyaa Srikanth, 12, of Springfield, 7th grade, Teacher Polly Beam



"Light Box," Devika Srikanth, 14, of Springfield, 8th grade, Teacher Polly Beam



"Light Box," Grace Laha, 13, of Springfield, 8th grade, Teacher Polly Beam



"Dinosaur in my Neighborhood," by Beckett Siraguse, 7, of Burke, 1st grade, Teacher Tietjen Alvarez



"Bev Doolittle-Inspired Work," by Christopher Fairfax, 8, of Lorton, 2nd grade, Teacher Tietjen Alvarez

Hello, my name is Alex Cho, I am 11, in 6th grade, my teacher is Kim Trogdon, and I go to school at Willow Springs. I live in the Fairfax area. My poem is titled "Winter Twilight"

Winter Twilight

BY ALEX CHO

A single star shined bright
On the smooth newly-laid snow
A pristine white so clear and pure
In the crisp nightly glow
A lustrous shine in age-old cold
Soothing nature with its gentle hug
Beauty apparent in its tender ease
Filling the silence of whispering dreams

Walking upon the snowy hill
Feeling solitude oh so profound
Peace so deep within my soul
Memories drift on an endless breeze
Before the stars leave the skies
I peer into the glistening twilight
Where all the heavens seem to gleam
In the icy air of winter



"Amy Sherald-Inspired Portrait," Khalid Ousman, 13, of Lorton, 8th grade, Teacher Polly Beam



"Value Study," by Olivia Song, 8, of Burke, 3rd grade, Teacher Tietjen Alvarez

BRIEFS

Fairfax City Celebrates Chanukah Dec. 18

Fairfax City will hold a Main Street Chanukah Gelt Drop, on Sunday, Dec. 18, from 4:30-7 p.m., in Old Town Square, 10415 North St. The festivities will include a menorah lighting; doughnuts, hot chocolate and latkes; fire-safety activities, firefighters and a firetruck; children's crafts; prizes and live entertainment. There'll also be live music and dancing, and children will be able to catch and collect chocolate coins (gelt) dropped by firefighters from 25 feet high in the air.

Help Britepaths Provide Meals and Gifts

Fairfax-based nonprofit Britepaths is still seeking donations to share holiday hope and help provide local children and families in need with holiday dinners and gifts. Otherwise they may be forced to go without.

Britepaths needs monetary donations so that it can give gift cards to these families with identified need. Individual contributions, as well as sponsorships by companies and organizations are all greatly welcome. A \$50 donation will help purchase small gifts for children, and \$100 will provide festive meals for the family.

"Any amount you can give will make a big difference for a family near you," said Britepaths Executive Director Lisa Whetzel. "We all enjoyed our own Thanksgiving meals so much more, knowing that our neighbors were able to share in the bounty. And now, we're hoping to do the same for these families in December."

To make a donation, go to <https://e.givesmart.com/events/tc1/>. Or mail checks payable to Britepaths to: Britepaths, 3959 Pender Drive, Suite 200, Fairfax, VA 22030. For more information, contact Shannon Bryant at sbryant@britepaths.org or call 703-273-8829.

Fairfax Man Charged: Felony Hit-and-Run

City of Fairfax police have charged a 94-year-old man with felony hit-and-run, saying he allegedly struck a pedestrian with his vehicle and then left the scene. He is Timoleon Spiliotopoulos, of 3238 Cambridge Court in Fairfax. The incident occurred in November, but police weren't able to identify and arrest the suspect until December.

The incident occurred Nov. 29, at 5:50 p.m., at the intersection of Fairfax Boulevard and Pickett Road. Police say investigation revealed that a vehicle traveling west in the right through lane of Fairfax Boulevard struck a pedestrian who was in the crosswalk trying to cross Fairfax Boulevard.

According to police, "The driver of the striking vehicle left the area without identifying themselves." The victim sustained non-life-threatening injuries and was transported to Inova Fairfax Hospital for treatment. Following further investigation, police arrested and charged Spiliotopoulos, last Friday, Dec. 9. He was later released from the Adult Detention Center on \$5,000 bond.

Pedestrian Struck by Fairfax Man Dies

The 70-year-old pedestrian injured in a Nov. 15 crash at Kings Park Drive and Braddock Road succumbed to her injuries on Dec. 4. Fairfax County police have charged Willy Vaca Cardozo, 33, of Fairfax with a traffic infraction in connection with her death.

According to police, Ly Tran of Springfield was crossing Braddock Road from south to north within the crosswalk. Meanwhile, driving a 2012 Toyota Rav4, "Cardozo made a right turn from Kings Park Drive onto eastbound Braddock Road and struck Tran."

She was taken to the hospital for injuries originally not considered life-threatening. However, she died Dec. 4. Cardozo was charged the day of the crash with failing to yield to pedestrians with the right of way. Police say speed and alcohol were not factors in the crash.

Anyone with information about this incident is asked to contact the Crash Reconstruction Unit at 703-280-0543. Tips may also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by calling 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477).

Fairfax Lions Club Donates to Toys for Toys

Representatives of the Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots program visited the Fairfax Lions Club for a special dinner, Tuesday, Dec. 6, at American Legion Post 177 in Fairfax. At that time, Gunnery Sergeant Simon Hebert and Hospital Corpsman Leonard Harding spoke to the Fairfax Lions about Toys for Tots and picked up toys donated by Lions Club members.



COURTESY OF GORDON TILLERY

The Lions also presented Toys for Tots with a check for \$500, and individual Lions made their own monetary donations, as

Fairfax Lion Karen Parker receives a certificate of appreciation from Toys for Tots from Gunnery Sergeant Simon Hebert.

well. Toys for Tots recognized the Fairfax Lions Club with a certificate of appreciation.

The Lions Club motto is "We Serve." To learn more about Lions service in the Fairfax community, go to <https://www.fairfaxlions.org/>. Guests are welcome at any meeting.

Toys for Tots began in 1947 and, each holiday season, provides toys to deserving children across the U.S. More than 627 million toys have been delivered to those children since 1947 – averaging more than 8 million toys each year.

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CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

Wakefield Forest Elementary School

CHRISTINE ROWADER
ART SPECIALIST



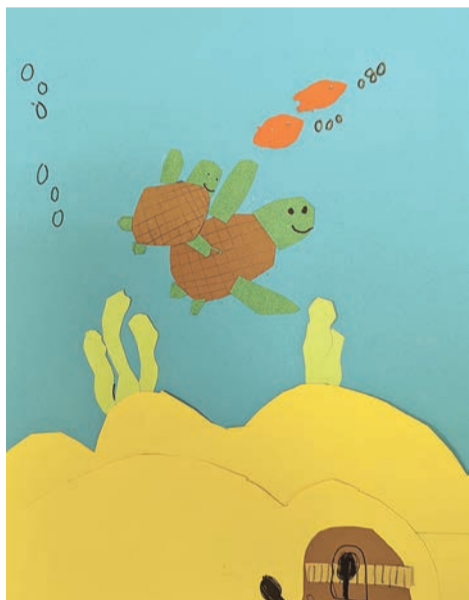
Lukas Yu, 5, Kindergarten



Sonali Armwood, 6, Kindergarten



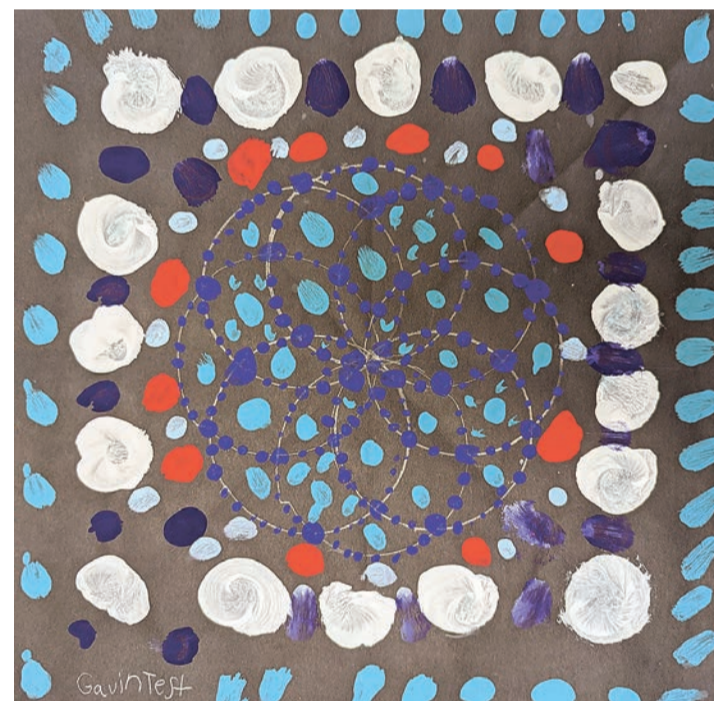
Norman Anderson, 8, 2nd grade



Felicity Hanlon, 7, 2nd grade



Milan Le, 10, 4th grade



Gavin Test, 9, 4th grade



Joy Tiggs, 7, 1st grade



Corbett Lee, 6, 1st grade



Amelia Ryder, 11, 6th grade



Callen Novack, 11, 6th grade

Motorcycle Officer Hurt in Crash near GMU

A Fairfax County police motorcycle officer was involved in a crash last Friday, Dec. 9, while responding to a call at 12:37 p.m. at Braddock Road and Roanoke River Road, near George Mason University. The 16-year-veteran officer was transported to a hospital with injuries considered serious but non-life-threatening.

Detectives from the Police Department's Crash Reconstruction Unit determined the officer and two additional motor units were responding with full emergency equipment to a priority call while westbound on Braddock Road. Due to stopped traffic ahead, the motor units were in the right turn lane, proceeding through the intersection of Braddock Road and Roanoke River Road.

"A 19-year-old man was driving a 2015 Jeep Cherokee and did not see or hear the motor units ap-

proaching," say police. "He made a right turn from Roanoke River Road and entered the middle travel lane of westbound Braddock Road. He then heard sirens and saw a motorcycle in his rearview mirror.

"He quickly merged into the right lane and began braking, intending to let the motor units pass. The motor officer could not avoid striking the rear of the Jeep as it changed lanes in front of him. The two other motor units were able to stop without making contact with any vehicles."

The driver of the Jeep was not injured and remained on the scene. According to police, speed and alcohol were not factors in the crash. On Saturday, Dec. 10, police said the injured officer was conscious and alert. And after being evaluated at the hospital, he was released that afternoon.

— BONNIE HOBBS



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.

Jurisdiction	Fed Struc Id	Route #	Route Name	Crossing	Posted Date
FRANKLIN	7795	220	V H GOODE HWY/RTE 220	BR. OF BIG CHESTNUT CREEK	11/28/2022
MONTGOMERY	12112	11	ROANOKE RD NBL/RTE 11	BR. SOUTHFORKROANOKERIVER	11/28/2022
ROANOKE	15031	632	CRESCENT BLVD/RTE 632	BR BACK CREEK	11/28/2022
DINWIDDIE	5909	1	BOYDTON PLANK SBL	STONY CREEK	11/23/2022
HANOVER	9501	626	ELMONT RD	STONY RUN CREEK	11/21/2022
HANOVER	9478	606	OLD CHURCH RD	MATADEQUIN CREEK	11/21/2022
MECKLENBURG	11848	4	BUGGS ISLAND RD	ALLENS CREEK	11/21/2022
FRANKLIN	7931	722	BEULAH RD /RTE 722	LITTLE DOE RUN	11/21/2022
FLOYD	7513	221	FLOYD HWY/RTE 221 N.	BR. OF LICK FORK	11/18/2022
FRANKLIN	7746	40	FRANKLIN ST /RTE 40	RENNET BAG CREEK	11/18/2022
BEDFORD	2770	654	FELDSPAR RD/RTE 654	NS RAILWAY	11/17/2022
BEDFORD	2816	691	SHEPERDS ST RD/RTE 691	WOLF CREEK	11/17/2022
CARROLL	4530	52	POPULAR CAMP RD/RTE 52	STREAM	11/17/2022
ROANOKE	15070	677	WILLOW BR RD/RTE 677	BR BACK CREEK	11/17/2022
MECKLENBURG	11984	640	E. ORGANSVILLE RD	PECKERWOOD BRANCH	11/16/2022
CARROLL	4529	52	POPULAR CAMP RD/RTE 52	BRANCH SHORTS CREEK	11/16/2022
CRAIG	5510	617	RTE 617	WRIGHTS BRANCH	11/16/2022
FRANKLIN	8026	961	HEDGEWOOD RD/RTE 961	LITTLE CREEK	11/16/2022
FRANKLIN	7972	767	PRILLIMAN SWCH/RTE 767	BRANCH OF TOWN CREEK	11/16/2022
FRANKLIN	8031	1605	WHSPRNG CK RD/RTE 1605	MAGGODEE CREEK	11/16/2022
WASHINGTON	18988	604	MILL CREEK RD	MILL CREEK	11/15/2022
MECKLENBURG	11981	636	BRIDGE RD	MEHERRIN RIVER	11/15/2022
MECKLENBURG	12004	662	WIGHTMAN RD	BUCKHORN CREEK	11/15/2022
NEW KENT	12738	629	BOULEVARD RD	JONES RUN	11/15/2022
BEDFORD	2819	692	COOL SPRINGS RD/RTE 692	CAMP CREEK	11/15/2022
BEDFORD	2879	746	DICKERSON MILL RD/RTE 746	WOLF CREEK	11/15/2022
BEDFORD	2830	698	VILLAMONT RD /RTE 698	BR. SOUTH FORK GOOSE CR.	11/15/2022
CARROLL	4609	100	SYLVATUS HGWY/RTE 100	ROCK CREEK	11/14/2022
ROANOKE	15104	758	CARSON RD/RTE 758	BR. GLADE CREEK	11/14/2022
ROANOKE	14980	609	E. RURITAN RD/RTE 609	BR. GLADE CREEK	11/10/2022
ROANOKE	15109	777	FT LEWIS CHURCH RD/RTE 777	STYPES BRANCH	11/10/2022
BEDFORD	2713	628	BISHOPS CR RD/RTE 628	BACK CREEK	11/4/2022
BEDFORD	2730	639	HURRICANE DR /RTE 639	BR. OF OSLIN CREEK	11/4/2022
PULASKI	14592	658	DELTON RD/RTE 658	BR. OF NEW RIVER	11/4/2022
PULASKI	14535	605	LITTLE RIVER DAM RD/RTE 605	CLYBOARD BRANCH	11/4/2022
PULASKI	14580	648	SNIDER LANE/RTE 648	BR. OF PEAK CREEK	11/4/2022
FRANKLIN	7869	641	CALLAWAY RD/RTE 641	BLACKWATER RIVER	11/3/2022
FRANKLIN	7951	739	GAP GATE RD/RTE 739	GREEN CREEK	11/3/2022
FRANKLIN	8011	865	TIMBER LINE RD/RTE 865	NICHOLAS CREEK	11/3/2022
MONTGOMERY	12333	726	GOLD RUSH RD/RTE 726	BRUSH CREEK	11/3/2022
MONTGOMERY	12286	657	MERRIMAC RD/RTE 657	STROUBLES CREEK	11/3/2022
MONTGOMERY	12315	708	NORRIS RUN RD/RTE 708	NORRIS RUN	11/3/2022
MONTGOMERY	12301	675	SPLIT RAIL RD/RTE 675	COOKS BRANCH	11/3/2022
PATRICK	13365	687	MICROFILM ROAD/RTE 687	BLACKBERRY CREEK	11/3/2022
PATRICK	13273	623	UNION BRIDGE	SMITH RIVER	11/3/2022
CULPEPER	5578	15	REMINGTON RD	RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER	11/2/2022
BEDFORD	2861	731	CHESTNUT FORK RD/RTE 731	BR. DIFFICULT RUN CREEK	11/2/2022
BEDFORD	2680	607	MTN VIEW ROAD/RTE 607	GLOVE CREEK	11/2/2022
FLOYD	7590	705	BEAVER CRK RD/RTE 705	BEAVER CREEK	11/2/2022
PATRICK	13276	626	ABRAM PENN HWY/RTE 626	N. MAYO RIVER	11/2/2022
PATRICK	13293	635	GOBLINTOWN CRK/RTE 635	GOBLINTOWN CREEK	11/2/2022
PATRICK	13252	610	HELMS RD/RTE 610	BRANCH DAN RIVER	11/2/2022
WISE	19343	83	CLINTWOOD HWY	POUND RIVER	11/1/2022
WISE	19495	1135	LITTLE LEAGUE RD	TOM'S CREEK	11/1/2022
BEDFORD	2829	698	VILLAMONT RD/RTE 698	S. FORK GOOSE CREEK	11/1/2022
CARROLL	4527	52	POPULAR CAMP RD/RTE 52	SHORTS CREEK	11/1/2022
CARROLL	4528	52	POPULAR CAMP RD/RTE 52	SHORTS CREEK	11/1/2022
FRANKLIN	7922	715	CHESTNUT MTN RD/RTE 715	BIG CHESTNUT CREEK	11/1/2022
FRANKLIN	7936	731	DUGWELL RD/RTE 731	BUCK RUN	11/1/2022
FRANKLIN	7848	629	HATCHETT RD/RTE 629	HATCHETTS CREEK	11/1/2022
GILES	8502	730	EGGLESTON RD/RTE 730	CATTLE PASS	11/1/2022
GILES	8495	724	OLD WOLF CR RD/RTE 724	BR. WOLF CREEK	11/1/2022

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.

SoberRide Begins Dec. 16

The 2022 Holiday SoberRide program will be in operation nightly from 10 p.m. until 4 a.m. from Dec. 16, 2022 to Jan. 1, 2023 as way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk holiday period.

The program is offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP).

Each evening during this six-hour period, area residents ages 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download Lyft to their phones, then enter a SoberRide code in the app's 'Promo' section to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. A separate Holiday SoberRide promo code will be posted at 9 p.m. on Dec. 16, 23 and 31 on www.SoberRide.com.

Last December and while unquestionably impacted by the then resurging COVID-19 pandemic including the Omicron variant, 461 persons in the Washington-metropolitan area used the free safe ride service rather than possibly driving home impaired. The charity also offers its SoberRide program on St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Independence Day and Halloween.

Sponsors of WRAP's 2022 Holiday SoberRide® campaign include the 395 Express Lanes, Amazon, Anheuser-Busch, Beer Institute, Brown-Forman, Constellation Brands, District of Columbia Association of Beverage Alcohol Wholesalers, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Foundation of Advancing Alcohol Responsibility, Giant Food, Glory Days Grill, Kendall-Jackson, Lyft, Molson Coors Beverage Company, New Belgium Brewing, Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington, and the Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association.

Since 1991, WRAP's SoberRide program has provided 83,678 free safe rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

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CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION



I love winter



Future home

STUDENT'S NAME: KOWKAB MAHBOOBI
 AGE: 5 YEARS OLD
 SCHOOL: WILLOW SPRINGS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, CLIFTON
 GRADE: FIRST GRADE
 TEACHER: YANSHUN SUI
 TOWN OF RESIDENCE: CLIFTON



Wonderful Place

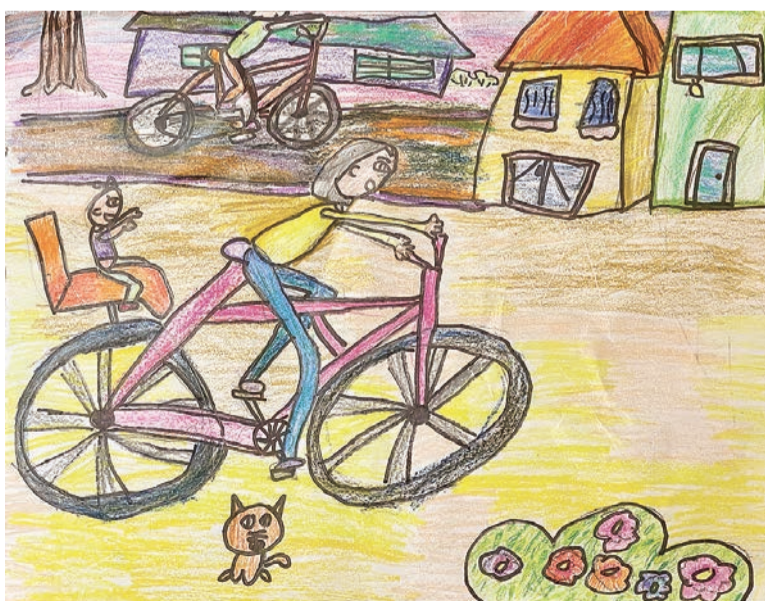


Summer evening

STUDENT'S NAME: NORA YUAN
 AGE: 7 YEARS OLD
 GRADE: 2ND GRADE
 TEACHER: MS. FIENGA
 SCHOOL: DANIEL'S RUN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
 TOWN OF RESIDENCE: CITY OF FAIRFAX



Sweet Neighborhood



Riding my bike



My City

CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

Orange Hunt Elementary School

BRENDA PATRICK,
6TH GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER

Knocked Out

BY NOAH TORRES

3-1. That was the score. We were winning. The last match in the season, and we were crushing it. All other matches had ended up in ties or losses. We wanted this win, we needed it. But it wasn't enough to defeat the opponent, we had to bury them, to plunge them into the earth and have them stay there. As the match got closer to its end, we took more and more shots from every corner of the field, and as a striker, I took more shots than anybody else.

The referee signaled five minutes left, and my team went into overdrive. Whatever hope the other team had, was now gone. My entire team was playing offense, even the goalie made an attempt. Despite all of our efforts, we only managed to get to the penalty box.

After some time, our team was given a corner kick, and as a striker, I had to make sure it went to the back of the net. I stood next to the goalie, ready to head it in at a moment's notice. WHAMMMM! The ball was served perfectly, right to my head. I leaned in to hit the ball into the top corner and Darkness.

I was out for only a few seconds, but it was enough to give my team, and everyone watching, a scare. On my head was a colossal lump. I got up, wobbled for a bit, and then fell back down. My coach helped me off the field, and my mom made sure I was okay.

When I checked the scoreboard, it read 4-1. The ball I headed in, had made it into the goal. In the seconds after, I was pulled off the field. The referee blew the whistle, and the match was over.

My team burst into celebration. I mustered enough strength to celebrate with them.

My head still hurt, but the day was ours. We weren't kings, but we sure felt like it. I don't regret heading that ball, if I was given another chance, I would do the same thing. We wanted glory, so we put in the work, I put in the work, and we got what we wanted. Glory doesn't come without hard work after all.

My Broken Nose

BY: SOPHIA NOTHER

October 2022

It was Sunday. I had my All Stars basketball game. I was so excited, and I had to get up very early. It was 5:30 in the morning when I awoke, and I smelled brewed coffee. I had salty scrambled eggs for breakfast, and was so pumped up for my game. It was a two hour drive with all of my siblings. I was so cramped in my car with six people. When we finally got there I could feel my stomach going around in loops. I was so scared and my heart was beating like a drum. What if we lost the game? What if I don't make my coach proud? Those thoughts were spinning around in my head like a wooden top.

When I stepped onto the court I felt nervous anticipation. I imagined my mom holding my hand for comfort and confidence.

I am Center Position on the court, so that means I am the one blocking the balls. Our team was doing an amazing job working together. We were winning by a landslide with a score of 53 to 31.

Half way into the game, suddenly someone shot the ball. If they made this shot, the other team would win. Without even thinking, I jumped up and tried to block the ball, but my teammate did the same thing. We blocked the ball together, but when we did, she fell straight on top of me. Her elbow hit my nose and pushed it down on the cold floor. The pain was the worst pain I have ever felt. I heard the crowd gasp. I was holding my nose face down on the court when I sat up and took my hands off of my face. I could taste metal in my blood, and saw the dark red liquid on my hands. I felt light headed and then I passed out.

The next thing I knew, I was in an isolated hospital bed. My mom was holding my hand and she looked anxious. I asked where I was. She heard my voice and she immediately called the doctor into the room. The doctors told me what had happened. They said when I fell, I broke my nose. I didn't know what to say, so I said nothing.

We ended up winning the championship, and I had successfully blocked the shot. I was so filled with pride I could explode. My nose healed in approximately one month. If anything, this event made me love basketball even more. The lesson I learned was, even if you get hurt, don't give up.

Splash Mountain

BY ELZA JONES

It was a warm spring day. We were at Disney World waiting in line for a ride that was big, monstrous and scary, Splash Mountain! I looked at the long line that I wished would never end. It was so hot, and I could feel the heat waves hitting me. I wished that I could just get sprayed without going through the ride. I can't believe I let my mom talk me into doing this. We were almost at the top of the line. I couldn't quit or else I would hear about it forever.

When we were finally at the top of the line I slowly lowered myself into the plastic seat. I felt the wetness of the seat from the ride before. Now I wished I had brought my raincoat. I sat next to my mom and my Dad, and once I got seated, the boat started to slowly progress up. I heard the conveyor belt push us up. I had the feeling that we were going to start going backwards. Then I started to regret my choice. I was shaking. I could feel my heart beating. Once we got to the top, The large wooden doors slowly creaked open. I saw a dark tunnel and the boat slowly went into the dark.

SEE ORANGE HUNT ES, PAGE 19

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CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

Orange Hunt Elementary School

MAUREEN KIEFFER, ART TEACHER



Nathan Cleary - 5th Grade



Audrey Yeingst - 5th Grade



Almira Ogun - 1st Grade



Raquel Zimmer - 4th Grade



Caroline Hoyle - 6th Grade



Braeden Guachalla - 2nd Grade



Sarcha Bain - 4th Grade



Martynas Bujokas - 2nd Grade



Michael Winstead - 2nd Grade



Everett Cook - 2nd Grade

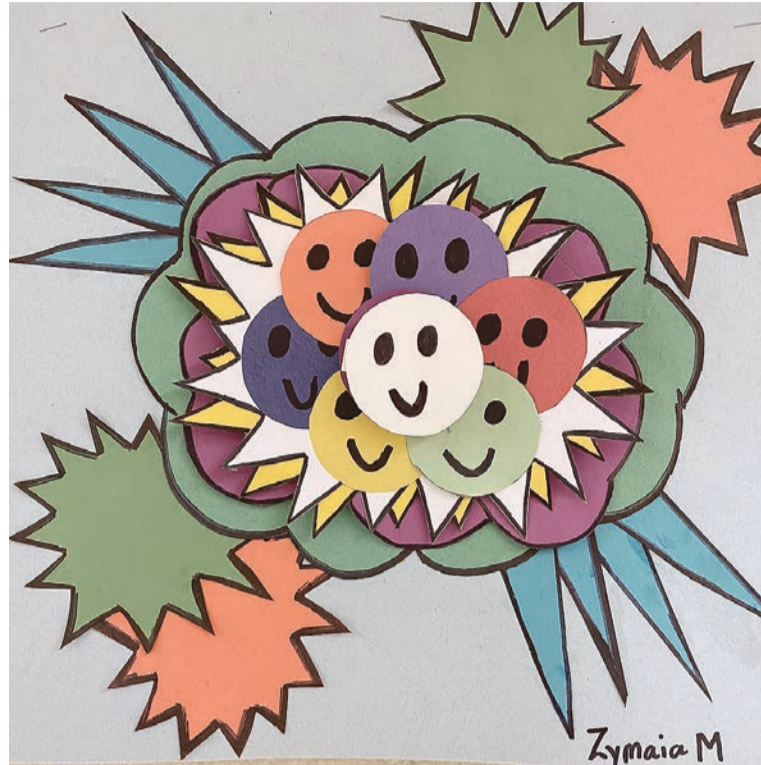
CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

Mantua Elementary School

NATHALIE SHIRLEY & DAVIDE LORENZI, ART SPECIALISTS



Sophie Ackermann – 6th Grade



Zymaia Mendes – 6th Grade



Hanley Prout – 4th Grade



Madeleine Clapp – 5th Grade



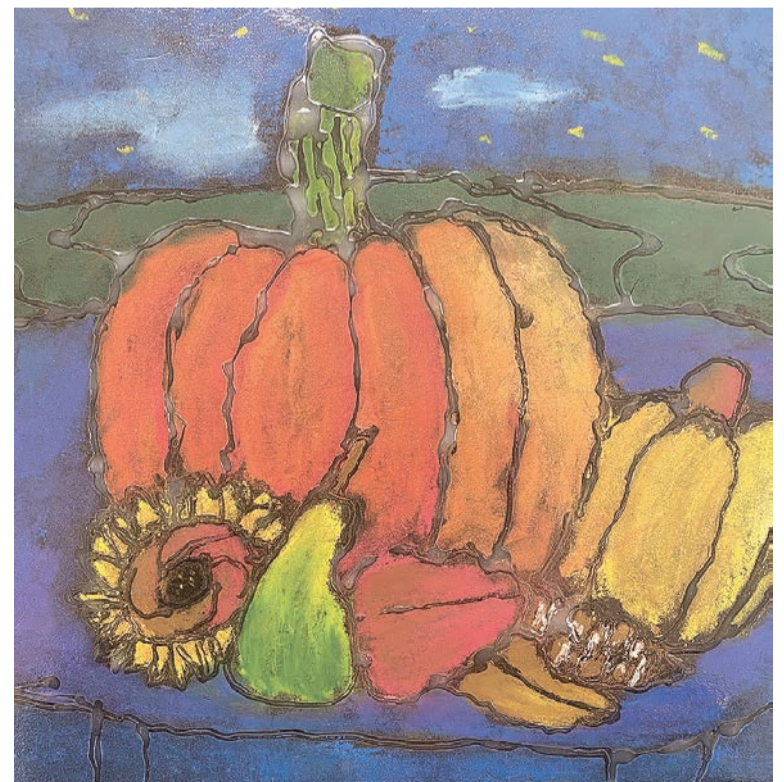
Dhruv Meerasri – 1st Grade



Anna Olmos – 3rd Grade



Keller Renken – 5th Grade



Hannah Li – 5th Grade

CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

Kids Are Stars of Lego Discovery Center Groundbreaking

The new Lego Discovery Center will open next summer in Springfield.



The piles were so big, the children needed shovels.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

There's a good chance engineers across the region got their start with Legos, and now all Lego lovers will have a better opportunity to hone those building skills when the new 32,000-square-foot Lego Discovery Center opens next year in the Springfield Town Center.

Officials as well as a bunch of Lego children were on hand last week for the groundbreaking of the new center. The highlight of the groundbreaking event was a bucket loader truck full of Lego bricks, and Lego costume characters, right outside of the mall entrance,

marking the official groundbreaking moment. Justin Roth, the Town Center marketing director, stressed that it will be much more than just a store.

"It's a whole indoor Lego experience," he said.

Therese Alvich, who will serve as the general manager of the attraction, added that the search is now on for the attraction's Master Model Builder, which is an experienced Lego craftsman that will show off the potential to anyone that enters the door. Throughout the new LEGO Discovery Centers, a team of playmakers and Master Model Builders will work to inspire guests through fun, interactive Lego Creative Workshops highlighting indoor Lego play ex-



More Legos than they can shake a brick at.

periences.

Legos got their start in the early 1900s in Denmark when Ole Kirk Christiansen founded the company in a Danish carpentry workshop. He crafted wooden building blocks. In came the plastic revolution right after World War II and they took off after that, rising to the toy that they are today.

Legos let the imagination go wild.



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Local officials Jeff McKay, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, and Rodney Lusk, Franconia District Supervisor, were there with Lego officials to break ground on the project.



Since it was a construction zone, hard hats were a must.

SPECIAL ELECTION

Early Voting Underway for VA House of Delegates 35th District

Fills seat vacated by former Delegate Mark Keams.

MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Holly Seibold (D) and Monique Baroudi (R) are the candidates running in the 2023 state legislative special election for the Virginia House of Delegates District 35 on Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2023. Longtime Delegate Mark Keam (D), most recently elected for his seventh term in 2021, stepped down on Sept. 6, 2022, to work in the Biden administration, triggering the opening. Keam easily defeated Kevin McGrath (R) in the general election Nov. 2, 2021, with 68.7 percent of the total 35,250 votes.

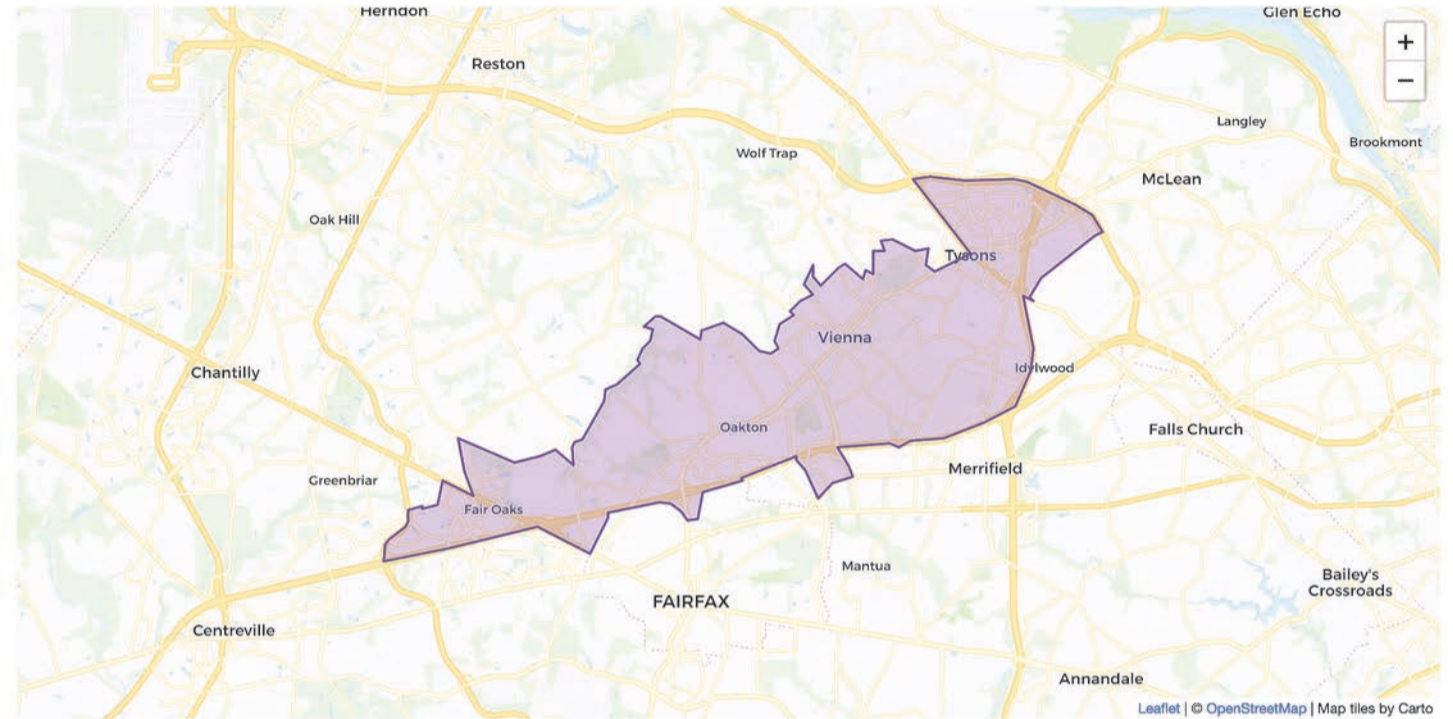
Voters can find out more about the candidates by visiting their websites, for Holly Seibold <https://www.hollyseibold.com/>, and Campaign Facebook for Monique Baroudi.

Seibold is an educator, business owner, and non-profit leader. She founded BRAWS, "Bringing Resources to Aid Women's Shelters," and was appointed by Gov. Ralph Northam to the Virginia Council on Women. Seibold names three key issues. She says, "Protecting women's health-care and fighting for abortion access; investing in our public schools and keeping our kids safe from gun violence and supporting small businesses and workforce development in our community."

Seibold graduated from American University, and from The George Washington University with a M.Ed. in elementary education.

Seibold can be reached at <https://www.hollyseibold.com/contact.html>.

Baroudi is a graduate of Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology and the University of Virginia with a degree in systems engineering. Baroudi is running, she says, "(Because) schools are



Elections Held

2023 Special	2021	2019	2017	2015	2013	2011
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General Election: Jan. 10, 2023

Map of VA 35th District



Holly M. Seibold
(D)



Monique L. Baroudi
(R)

not safe and seem to be more committed to indoctrinating children rather than teaching them important life skills like reading, writing and math. ... Our taxes discourage

enterprise and our government regulations discourage innovation," she says. Baroudi can be reached at monique@mbforvirginia.com.

District 35 represents 92,718 constituents, according to the 2020 Census. Virginia Code dictates that the Virginia General Assembly will assume office on the second Wednesday in January, which is Jan. 11 in 2023. Early voting began on Nov. 23 for the open District 35 seat. It includes Oakton, Tysons, Vienna, and Dunn Loring. The election will be held using the pre-redistricting district lines.

The Fairfax County Government Center's Office of Elections provides early voting Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. through Jan. 7 at 12000 Government Center Pkwy., Fairfax, and the Providence

Community Center on two Saturdays, Dec. 31 and Jan. 7, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is located at 3001 Vaden Dr., Fairfax. There is no voting on county holidays, Fri., Dec. 23 (from noon on), Mon., Dec. 26, and Mon., Jan. 2.

Registered voters can request a mail-in ballot through the Virginia Department of Elections or vote in person on Election Day.

Drop boxes are available to return a completed ballot during satellite operating hours.

The boundaries of this district, which will be known as the 12th District for the next set of elections, were altered during the recent redistricting. The Virginia Supreme Court unanimously approved district maps for the Virginia House of Delegates and Virginia State Senate on Dec. 28, 2021, and they will take effect for Virginia's 2023 legislative elections.

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](https://www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

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

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 19

CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

Annandale Terrace ES



Second Grade-Isabella Farfan Rodriguez- "Neighborhood Friends"-Drawing.



Third Grade-Bryan Mateo- "Cultural Self Portrait"-Drawing.



Nghia "Jimmy" Nguyen - "Cultural Identity Self-Portrait" - Drawing.



Second Grade-David Nguyen- "ATES Flag"-Collage.



Kindergarten-Alessia Gonzalez Aguilar - "I Am Special" - Drawing.



Betania Tesfaye - "Abstract Self-Portrait" - Painting.



1st Grade - Connor Pehlivan - Abstract Shape Design - Collage.



1st Grade - Sajed Saeed - "My Family" - Drawing.



Laura Ngo - "Neighborhood Friends" - Drawing.



Ashley Romero Guevara - "Neighborhood Friends" - Drawing.

CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

Annandale Terrace ES



Kindergarten - Safaa Liyana - "I Am Special"-Drawing.



Jamie Lu - "Neighborhood Friends" - Drawing.



First Grade-Kevin Villatoro Santiago- "My Family"-Drawing.



Kindergarten-Gianna Mayaba- "Down on the Farm"-Drawing.



Fourth Grade-McKayla Minor- "My Dogs"-Painting.



Third Grade-Josselin Aleman Barahona- "A Day in the Park"-Painting.



First Grade-Ryu Munoz Hinojosa- "My Family's Monster"-Collage.



Deborah Miranda Diaz - "Super Plant" - Painting.



Kindergarten-Fatima Almasi - "I Am Special" - Drawing.



Second Grade-Kendra Gonzalez Aguilar- "ATES Flag"-Collage.



Fifth Grade-Keyra Cabrera Oliva- "Monument Building"-Painting



Kindergarten - James Leon Pec - Panda Collage.



From left, Eric Christensen, Springfield Town Center; Esperanza and Dan LaMay, Dan's Van Lines; Supervisor Rodney Lusk; Lauma Wingrove, CALIBRE Systems; Lyndon Lansdowne, Manfredi Insurance Agency; Matt Moore, Edward Jones Old Town South; Karen Echeverri, Pampered Pet Boutique and Barkery; April Pinch-Keeler, MVLC; Alex Thalacker, FCEDA.

Chamber Presents 2022 Excellence in Business Awards



Matt Moore, Edward Jones Old Town South, receives the Rising Star award from Eric Christensen, chamber vice chair.



Supervisor Rodney Lusk receives the Chamber Citizen of the Year award from Alex Thalacker, chamber chairman.

Supervisor Rodney Lusk, Franconia District, was recognized as the Chamber Citizen of the Year, at the annual Holiday Biz Awards of the Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce.

Lusk was honored for his efforts to bring the Workforce Innovation and Skills Hub (WISH) Center to Richmond Highway saying, "Supervisor Lusk has worked to change the lives of our most vulnerable neighbors. To uplift them, not through subsidies or charity but through the creation of a pathway to the kinds of salaries that will allow them to not just survive in our community ... but thrive here."

A large, festive group of business and community leaders attended the Chamber's holiday event where five outstanding local businesses were recognized with Excellence in Business 2022 awards. Awards were presented to CALIBRE Systems Inc., Dan's Van Lines, Ray Manfredi Allstate Insurance Agency, Pampered Pet Boutique and Barkery, and MVLE.

"These awards recognize businesses that embody the values and culture of the chamber of commerce," said Alex Thalacker, Chamber Chairman. "We are pleased to recognize these businesses for their valuable services and also for the way they give back to the community."

Matt Moore, a CFP with Edward Jones Old Town South, was recognized as the Chamber's "Rising Star," for his significant contributions as chair of the LeadShare group and his service to the CAN the Bird 5K

Kingstowne Turkey Trot.

As an employee-owned company, CALIBRE embraces community engagement as an inherent part of its culture and regards it as a corporate and individual responsibility for all employee-owners. CALIBRE supports more than 30 charitable organizations and takes an active role in many community organizations.

Their annual golf event benefits Homes For Our Troops where they work to help disabled military personnel obtain fully accessible homes.

Dan's Van Lines is a family-owned moving company, committed to not just moving rooms of household goods – they're dedicated to safeguarding all of the feelings and moments those rooms hold for you, too. In business since 1997, Dan's Van Lines continues to grow and innovate.

Manfredi Insurance is ranked in the top 3% nationally among other agencies for service scores. The agency has won the Premier Service Award every year since it has existed, since 1989, and consistently given back to the community.

The nonprofit organization of the year, MVLE works to create futures for people with disabilities and remove barriers to employment and support services. Since 1971, MVLE has created opportunities for individuals with disabilities to find their independence through community-based social activities, supported employment, and customized skills training.

The 2022 New Business of the Year was Pampered Pet Boutique and Barkery. Pampered Pet is a pet boutique specializing in all things pet related.

Owner Karen Echeverri believes that if it's not good enough for her pet it's not good enough for yours either.

They offer holistic dog and cat food to provide your pets with the nutrition they need to live happy, healthy lives.

HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT 2022



The Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and Fairfax Ballet present 'The Nutcracker' on Dec. 17-18, 2022, at GMU Center for the Arts in Fairfax.



Take a Holiday Candlelight Tour of Mount Vernon Estate Dec. 18.

THROUGH DEC 23

"Snow Maiden." At Syntetic Theater, 1800 S. Bell St, Arlington. In a frozen forest, a lonely boy builds a girl from snow. When she mysteriously comes to life, mischief, laughter, and enchantment abound. But what will happen when the ice begins to melt? Told through dazzling movement, dance, and acrobatics, Snow Maiden is a magical tale of hope, friendship and the transformative power of dreams. Based on the beloved folktale Snegurochka, Snow Maiden is a holiday treat for friends and fans of all ages.

THROUGH DEC. 31

Home for the Holidays Art Show. At Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Works by local artists on display the entire month of December. Visit www.artsherndon.org. Call 703-956-6590.

THROUGH DEC. 17

The PARC at Tysons Holiday Market. Fridays and Saturdays. Celebrate the holiday season with local makers, crafters, and artisans from the Fairfax County area! Visit the holiday market at The PARC at Tysons on the first three Fridays and Saturdays of December for a pop-up shop of local artisans and small businesses offering holiday-inspired goods. The PARC will be transformed into a festive indoors and outdoors winter village, featuring

ing a local holiday market and (free!) snowtastic activities for the whole family to enjoy! Food and beverages can be purchased onsite from local businesses as well.

THROUGH DEC. 18

Holiday Market. At 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Del Ray Artisans 27th Annual Holiday Market offers unique handmade fine arts and crafts from local artists. Choose from wall art, pottery, photography, jewelry, glass, and much more! Plus 2023 wall calendars to support Del Ray Artisans nonprofit. Free admission. Market is the first three weekends in December (Dec 2-4, Dec 9-11, Dec 16-18). Different artists each weekend! Open Fridays 6-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Details: delrayartisans.org/holiday-market

DEC. 10-18

"The Perfect Christmas List." At Richard J. Ernst Theater, NOVA Annandale Campus. Encore Theatrical Arts Project (ETAP) presents a glamorous and dazzling holiday musical that features 30 performers, creative choreography, elaborate sets, stunning costumes, and 20 musical numbers. Show dates: Saturday, Dec. 10 at 12 p.m., 4 p.m., 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, Dec. 11 at 12 p.m., 4 p.m.; Friday, December 16th at 7:30 p.m.; Sat-

urday, December 17th at 12 p.m., 4 p.m., 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, December 18th at 12 p.m., 4 p.m. Visit www.ensemble-tap.org

THURSDAY/DEC. 15

When Christmas Hurts. 7-8 p.m. At St. John's Lutheran Church, 5952 Franconia Road, Alexandria. This is a service designed for all who may be experiencing this holiday season with hurt, grief, or sadness. All are welcome to attend in-person or virtually on Facebook Live. Visit the website: www.sjlc.com

FRIDAY/DEC. 16

Appalachian Bluegrass Christmas. 7-9:30 p.m. Music and readings with Shoestring Theatre, Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Visit artsherndon.org. Tickets \$10. Call 703-956-6590.

SATURDAY/DEC. 17

Open for the Arts – Holiday Open House. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Children's

activities with A Thousand Stories, Herndon Books Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Visit artsherndon.org. Call 703-956-6590.

SATURDAY/DEC. 17

Wreaths Across America. Noon. Volunteer wreath laying ceremony honoring veterans. At Chestnut Grove Cemetery, 831 Dranesville Road, Herndon. Visit herndonwomansclub.org. Call 703-435-3480

DEC. 17-18

"The Nutcracker." 4 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. Presented by Fairfax Symphony Orchestra and Fairfax Ballet. The FSO production of Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker features live, musical accompaniment by a full orchestra, together with dancers on stage.

SUNDAY/DEC. 18

Holiday Candlelight Tour. At Mount Vernon Estate, Mount Vernon. Experience the holidays like George

and Martha Washington. Meet Mrs. Washington and 18th-century Mount Vernon residents during a 45-minute candlelit estate tour, see the themed Christmas trees, and shop for holiday gifts.

SUNDAY/DEC. 18

Home for the Holidays with the Treble Clefs. 5-7 p.m. Join the Treble Clefs and Friends. Includes refreshments and a special visitor. At Arts Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Visit artsherndon.org or call 703-956-6590.

SATURDAY/DEC. 31

New Year's Eve Golf Tournament. 10 a.m. Shotgun start. Annual four-person scramble. Entry fee includes green fee, cart fee, range balls and prizes. Entry deadline December 26. At Herndon Centennial Golf Course, 909 Ferndale Avenue, Herndon. Cost is \$80 per player. Call 703-471-5769 or visit herndongolf.com.

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, "Kringle 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.

DEC. 3 TO FEB. 5, 2023

Women Playing Hamlet. 8 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. A non-traditional look at one of

Shakespeare's most revered works, presented in modern English, Women Playing Hamlet follows a young actress tackling the role of Hamlet in a comedic romp that examines gender norms, actors' egos, and Shakespeare. Women Playing Hamlet, by William Missouri Downs. Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/women-playing-hamlet>

DEC. 9 TO JAN. 23, 2023

8th Glass National. 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Oshiro's high-contrast illustrations and paintings depict surrealistic scenes of characters with unique experiences related to identity, be it from race, gender or neurodiversity.

DEC. 9 TO JAN. 23, 2023

Off We Go to Paradise. 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Oshiro's high-contrast illustrations and paintings depict surrealistic scenes of characters with unique

experiences related to identity, be it from race, gender or neurodiversity. Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/off-to-paradise>

SUNDAY/DEC. 18

Rescue of Mount Vernon. 3-4:30 p.m. At Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Road, Burke. Mary Lipsey will speak on how George Washington's estate fell into disrepair and how the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association mobilized to save it. Email: slawski_brian@yahoo.com

SUNDAY/DEC. 18

Santa Comes to Lake Accotink Park. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Lake Accotink, 7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield. Not only can you spend time with Santa Claus, but you can enjoy holiday goodies, including treats for your pets, photos with Santa and prizes, as well. Call 703-569-3464.

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LEGALS

ABC LICENSE

Sodexo Operations LLC trading as EagleBank Arena, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax, Fairfax County, Virginia 22030-4422. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Retail Annual Mixed Beverage Performing Arts Facility license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Thomas Morse, Vice President. Date notice posted at establishment: 12/3/2022. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or (800) 552-3200.

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THE CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

CALENDAR

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Let us know about an upcoming event
connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

Hello! I'm Sarah Shin, an 11-year-old 6th grader at Sangster Elementary School in Springfield. I really enjoyed writing my entry, the poem "Dreams," and I hope you enjoy it!

Dreams

Dreams are like
A translucent platform of a winding staircase
It's there, only but a possibility in my life
It's there, but so far away and hard to reach
My heart draws tight with worry
But for my wishes to turn into reality
I know
Even if I had to take a million steps
Then so be it
I'll just take a step
Or two
Or three
Or More
Everyday

Orange Hunt Elementary School

BRENDA PATRICK,
6TH GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHER

FROM PAGE 9

When the boat went in, I looked to the left and there was a puppet rabbit standing in front of a small straw cottage. The boat slowly progressed forward. I heard the boat gliding in the water to the scene. Next the rabbit went into a forest where he met a gray wolf. I knew that we were going to drop, but it kept going. Next the wolf was attempting to cook the rabbit in a big pot.

A door opened and we were about to drop. I

gripped my mom's hand tightly. I didn't notice that I was saying "No,no,no". Then the boat started to tip. I saw the drop and the people down below standing at the edge waiting to get splashed. I leaned back hoping not to fall. My stomach hurt immensely. Then whoosh! The boat dropped at an 80 degree angle. The boat bumped up and down as it sped down the slope. My pony-

tail ran behind me, I felt the water splashing everywhere. I screamed as loud as I could without noticing. I saw my brother having so much fun. I looked next to me and saw the thorn decorations flash next to me. I felt as if I was going to fall out of my seat. If I was not holding on to my mom's hand my arms would be up waving around. Then it stopped. It seemed so still I stayed seated still shaking.

I looked at myself and my family. Our shirts all had hundreds of water droplets everywhere even though it was not my favorite. The water felt good considering how hot it was. Once we got off, I squeezed my shirt so the water would come out. I shook my head vigorously when my mom asked how I liked the ride. As we walked away from the ride, I looked back and I thought even though I did not enjoy it, I should always try.

The End

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 13

facilitated. For more information and to get the Zoom link, contact Jack Tarr at jtarr5@verizon.net or 703-821-6838. Haven of Northern Virginia provides support, compassion, information and resources to the bereaved and seriously ill. To become a Haven volunteer, please call 703-941-7000 to request an orientation. Volunteers must complete a 30-hour training and commit to one year of service answering Haven phones (2.5 hours weekly). Next training is scheduled for fall 2017.

<cal1>Ongoing
<cal2>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 learn more, email info@alnv.org, or visit www.alnv.org.

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

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

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

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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.

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

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

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Twenty-Five Years Later



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

I submitted my first column for publication in early Dec. 2009 after having been hired for an advertising sales position 10 months earlier. Previously, I had been in the insurance business for almost 20 years. I always had a writing urge beginning with a story I wrote in first grade about the day I was born, to a Junior High School experience I had writing a last will and testament-type of compilation for the graduating ninth-graders (myself included) to a series of sports columns for my High School newspaper (the Denebola) and finally to a nearly two-year stint writing a column for the "diamondback," the weekly college newspaper for The University of Maryland. Upon graduation, I submitted writing samples around town and was offered a job at a local paper in Prince Georges County. However, upon my acceptance and return from Massachusetts to fill the position, I was devastated to learn the position had vanished due to weak advertising sales (little did I realize how much of a precursor that difficulty would turn out to be) which caused the publisher to reduce the number of pages it printed and with that page reduction went my column.

My columns written then were a preview to what my columns would become years later. The major difference between then and now, other than age, wisdom, and experience, were the curse words, in college anyway. They came naturally to me then and appeared regularly in my content. The editor never censored me. These columns were not spewing hate or anything, more about a college undergraduate trying to navigate the demands and challenges of college life.

Substance/content-wise, my columns are similar to what they were about then: "Everything in general about nothing in particular." There wasn't much information in my columns. Nor do I suppose there was much journalistic substance to what/how I write either. Nevertheless, I developed my own style which continues to this day. In addition to commenting on the minutiae in life we all must endure; I try to work through the trivialities of the day with a wink and a nod to the hope that what doesn't kill us, makes us stronger. As an example: I handwrite these columns with no fatigue in my arm. And for a man of my age/experience, being able to do anything non-stop for an hour is worth mentioning.

Seriously though, this writing thing must be in my DNA. I don't have to think too much about what I'm doing (it shows, right?). I'm able to, as my brother once said: "Churn out the drivel" without much further ado. And I thank our Editor-in-Chief Mary Kimm for giving me the space/opportunity to explore my passion every week; it was her idea to add a picture.

In my writing career at Connection Newspapers (which was the avocation to my full-time advertising sales vocation), I have won multiple writing awards from the various Press Associations that make up the "DMV," (Maryland, Washington, DC, and Delaware) for my weekly editorial columns. Unfortunately, I've never received a literary call-up to the Majors, so to speak. Occasionally I had a column appear in other print media, but the overwhelming exposure came in The Connection. And though I may have toiled in relative obscurity as a result, I loved being able to express myself so personally. As I have so often said, it's not so important that it's me writing about it, rather it's important that it's being written about. Write on.

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



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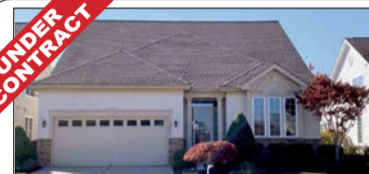
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