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Nova Labs member Alex Rennie displays some of his foamsmithing creations.

## Magic? No, Nova Labs!

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BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

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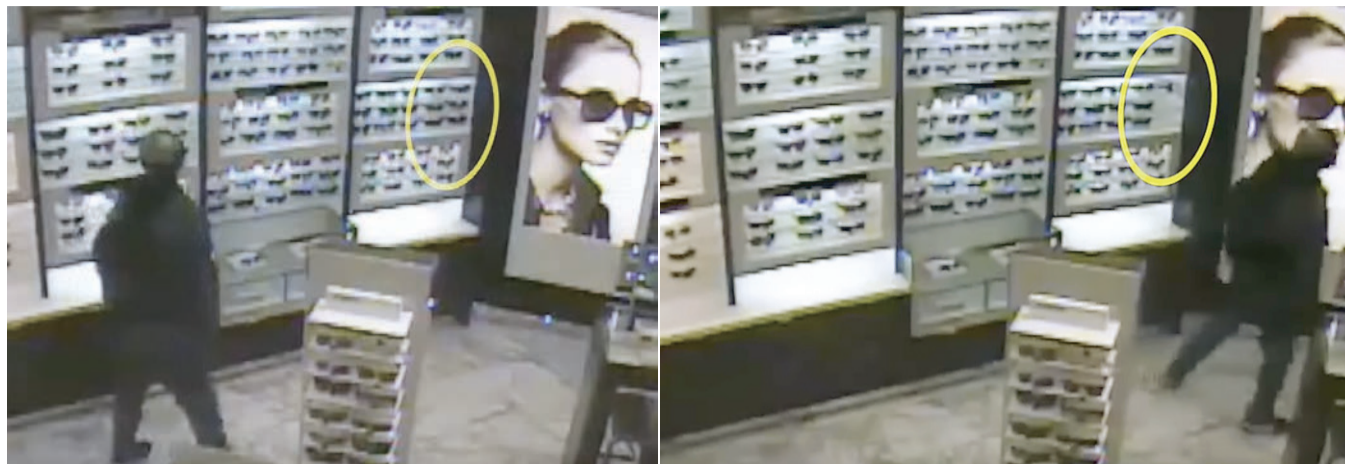




# NEWS



Kevin Davis, chief of police, FCPD



SCREENSHOT FROM FCPD

“Nordstrom Asset Protection associates observed Johnson act in a suspicious manner, saw him select designer sunglasses and believed a ‘larceny’ was about to occur,” says the narrator in FCPD press conference (video): McLean OIS 2.22.23.

## Video Shows Fatal Police Shooting of Unarmed Suspect

Police body camera video shocks; reactions come in.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

Fairfax County Police Department on Thursday, March 23, released body-worn camera footage from the Feb. 22, 2023, fatal shooting of an unarmed shoplifting suspect, Timothy McCree Johnson, 37, of Washington, D.C.

“I, like everyone else who has seen the video, am still processing the events we witnessed. Personally, I find the video disturbing, to say the least,” said Jeff McKay, chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. “Under no circumstances should suspicion of shoplifting alone lead to the tragic loss of human life.”

Sergeant Wesley Shifflett, a 7-year veteran of the department, and Police Officer First Class James Sadler, an 8-year veteran, discharged their firearms while chasing Johnson on foot into a wooded area outside Tysons Corner Center. The two officers, assigned to the Tysons Urban Team, a special unit of FCPD, fired their weapons during a night foot pursuit of Johnson, suspected of stealing designer sunglasses from Nordstrom at Tyson Corner Center.

“Johnson was stuck in the chest one time. Officers immediately rendered aid until fire and rescue personnel arrived,” says the narrator in the released body-worn camera footage. Johnson was taken to an area hospital, where he was pronounced deceased.

“The Fairfax County Police Department and I value life, particularly the lives of those who’ve come into contact with our police officers,” Fairfax County Police Chief Kevin Davis said. He added that best practice transparency policies share body camera footage with the community, to establish legitimacy and build trust. More often than not, the police body camera footage speaks for itself.

“This time, it does not,” Davis said.

The department released an approximate-



SCREENSHOT

FCPD officers in the dark, after Timothy McCree Johnson is shot.

ly 8-minute, three-segmented video during which a female narrator read the embedded text on given frames, interpreting the scenes. The first segment was about three minutes long. It showed surveillance footage of Johnson and officers. The second section, approximately two minutes, was the released footage from the uniformed officer’s body-worn camera (BWC). It, too, depicts Johnson and other officers, but some of the images are grainy and dark. The video’s final section is a slowed-down and digitally enhanced BWC footage of events immediately before, during, and after the shooting.

“Mr. Johnson’s family’s right to know exactly what occurred led FCPD to send the body-worn camera footage to the FBI for enhancement,” said McKay.

Davis said one of the two officers who discharged their guns remains on modified, restricted duty while the other officer had been served notice that day, “administratively separating” him from the Fairfax County Police Department.



PHOTO VIA GENESIS CREMATION & FUNERAL SERVICES

**Timothy McCree Johnson**  
(Oct. 28, 1985- Feb. 22, 2023)

Before taking questions from the media on March 23, Davis made it clear he would not “characterize the evidence” nor offer an opinion on it. Doing so, Davis said, would compromise the integrity of the criminal investigation. The criminal and administrative investigations are ongoing.

The Fairfax County NAACP issued a statement the day after FCPD released the body-worn camera footage. The Fairfax County NAACP statement says in part: “At no time does Mr. Johnson [a Black man] pose a threat to the police officers, much less an immediate threat to an officer or the general public . . . Under FCPD’s Use of Force policy, police officers are not permitted to use deadly force on a fleeing offender unless the officer(s): (1) have “probable cause to believe the individual committed a felony involving violence,” (2) exhaust “all other means to effect an arrest,” and (3) the alleged offender’s escape “poses a significant threat of serious injury or death to the officer or others.” The NAACP also demanded that “the goals and policies of the Tysons Urban Team are reviewed, and a foot pursuit policy developed and enacted.”

Michelle Leete, president of the Fairfax County NAACP, said, “Public release of the body-worn camera footage underscores the urgency in addressing excessive use of force and the systemic lack of accountability and transparency in policing.”

### Watch, Listen to Video

Listen and watch for yourself as police respond, chase and shoot Timothy Johnson. <https://fcpdnews.wordpress.com/2023/02/23/officer-involved-shooting-in-tysons/>

“He will no longer be a Fairfax County police officer,” Davis said. He clarified that “administrative separation” is the equivalent of firing.

McKay said, “I know Mr. Johnson’s family members are still grieving the death of their loved one, and I grieve for them. . . Today, a notice of separation was served to one of the officers who discharged their firearm, and I support the Chief’s decision.”

Davis said there had been no rush to judgment during the 29 days after the shooting. “We conducted a thorough administrative or internal investigation.”

The second officer is on “modified, restricted duty,” because of “his actions that night.”

SEE VIDEO SHOCKS, PAGE 4

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# Police Body Camera Video Shocks

FROM PAGE 3

On March 3, Davis said that the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) would examine “officer involved shooting” incidents in Fairfax County since the start of 2021. PERF will review incident details and “identify any performance patterns, deficiencies, or trends,” according to FCPD. PERF will also provide FCPD with guidance regarding a foot pursuit policy from national best practices. PERF has begun its review and will present findings and recommendations to FCPD. Davis said he will share the findings and recommendations with the Board of Supervisors and the community.

PERF’s review will not be focused, independent examination of the most recent shooting of Timothy Johnson, but will instead be an examination of recent incidents to determine how FCPD can better prevent these “officer involved shootings” going forward.

Karen Keys-Gamara, an at-large member of the Fairfax County School Board and candidate for the delegate seat being vacated by Ken Plum, said, “The misappropriation of police authority wounds our community, especially when it results in the loss of life. As the mother of three young men who are of African American and Hispanic descent, I understand the trauma caused by such violations. Thus, the response must recognize the history of such actions and seek healing-healing that can only occur with the acknowledgment of the concerns of those within our community.”

**“Current policies are insufficient to maintain a sense of safety for people of color in our county.”**

— Fairfax County Democratic Committee Black Caucus statement

On Sunday, March 26, the Fairfax County Democratic Committee Black Caucus released a statement regarding the fatal shooting. “The avoidable death of Timothy Johnson shows that, when pressure-tested against the reality of how these situations occur in the field, the current policies are insufficient to maintain a sense of safety for people of color in our county.”



Chairman Jeff McKay (D)

**“Personally, I find the video disturbing, to say the least. Under no circumstances should suspicion of shoplifting alone lead to the tragic loss of human life.”**

— Jeff McKay, Chairman, Board of Supervisors

“In May 2021, the Black Caucus opposed the leadership of FCPD Chief Kevin Davis. ... due to his history of use or justification of excessive force in policing. Sharing the results from the current Police Executive Research Forum investigation (PERF) is another important step that the Board of Supervisors must take in demonstrating a commitment to transparency and fairness in holding its community officials accountable for the failures of the organizations they lead.”

“The FCDC Black Caucus is compelled to advocate for policies that reflect the voice of the Black community in Fairfax County,” said Kelly Hebron, chair of the FCDC Black Caucus. “We urge the Board of Supervisors to ensure Chief Davis responds with transparency and accountability on this matter and in the development of policies related to suspect pursuits, use of force, officer accountability, and timely dissemination of information to the community.”

Some questions reporters asked Davis and his answers at the March 23 press conference. Text is lightly edited for clarity and length.

**Q: What was found at the scene?**

**Davis:** Two pairs of sunglasses were recovered from the scene, but no firearm or other weapon.



PHOTO BY AUBREY SYLVESTER.

Karen Keys-Gamara

**Q: Is there a history of officer-involved shootings with either officer?**

**Davis:** No, there is not.

**Q: Why was the officer separated from the department, and what about his actions that night?**

**Davis:** There was a failure to live up to the expectations of our agency, in particular, the use of force policies, protocols and procedures.

**Q: What is PERF (Police Executive Research Forum) doing?**

**Davis:** I want to be clear: PERF is not independently investigating either criminally or administratively. PERF is a think tank organization; they look at our policies and, if there are gaps in them, (and) our training. The Feb. 22 officer-involved shooting was the first of the year. For the last decade, FCPD averaged 1.5 shootings per year. During the first decade of the 21st century, the number of officer-involved shootings was significantly higher. Some of the years were six, seven, and even eight. So, as we look at 2022, we had six. In 2021, we had one. We’ve had one so far in 2023. The goal is zero

**Q: After the incident, you noted Mr. Johnson’s history in a press conference; did the officers know that then, and do you have any regrets about mentioning that?**

**Davis:** At the time of the officer-involved shooting, they didn’t even know who he was. I should have answered that question differently t... I could have been more careful with my words, and to the extent that those words caused any harm to the Johnson family, I apologize.

Summary of FCPD Release of Officer Body-Worn Camera Footage

**Surveillance Cameras: (0:42-3:56)**

**Summary:** according to text: A man, later identified as Timothy Johnson, enters Nordstrom around 6:13 p.m. The store’s Asset Protection associates see the man select designer sunglasses and believe a larceny is about to occur. They call FCPD’s Tysons

Urban Team, who respond. A plain-clothes officer observes Johnson is in the vicinity of an anti-theft alarm at the store’s exit when it is activated; next, a plain-clothed officer observes Johnson set off a second alarm as he goes through it and leaves the store near the parking garage. Plain-clothed officers follow Johnson into the garage and see him go down the stairwell.

**Uniformed Officer BWC Footage: (0:3:57-7:54))**

**(3:57) Text/Narrator:** “A uniformed officer and plain-clothed officer chased Johnson as he exited the parking garage stairwell, ran through the parking garage, and toward Route. 7.”

**(5:06-5:15)** “Bloomingdale front lot. A Black male going toward 7, Fashion (Blvd.) He’s crossing over.”

**(5:16) Text/Narrator:** “Officers continued to pursue as Johnson changed direction and ran across Fashion Blvd. toward a wooded area.”

**(5:25- 5:27)** “Crossing over, guys. Get on the ground. Get on the ground.”

**(5:29) Text/Narrator:** “While following Johnson into the wood line, both officers discharged their firearms. Johnson was struck in the chest one time.”

**(5:39- 5:44)** “Going into the woods. Through the woods. Get on the ground; get on the ground.”

**(5:44-5:46) Non-speech sounds heard (Later identified as consistent with a firearm.)**

**(5:47)** “Stop reaching. Stop reaching.”

**(5:52)** “Don’t move.”

**(5:53)** “Shots fired.”

**(6:05)** “God damn it. He was reaching. Oh, my God.”

**(6:39) Text/Narrator:** “Officers render aid until fire and rescue personnel arrive.”

**(7:15) Johnson says:** “I’m not reaching for nothing. I have nothing. ...I’m shot, man. Hurry....”

“We got you. Roll over. Chest seal.

**(7:37- 7:44):** Sir, “What’s your name? (Unintelligible)... Let’s get a chest seal on.”

**Replayed Section-Footage Slowed Down and Digitally Enhanced (8:08-8:56)**

**(8:08-8:18)** “Get on the ground. Get on the ground. Going into the woods. Through the woods.”

**(8:23-8:26)** “Get on the ground; get on the ground.”

**(8:27-8:29)** Text/Narrator: “Two pops consistent with gunfire can be heard.”

**(8:32) Text/Narrator:** “Third pop heard consistent with gunfire. “Stop reaching; stop reaching.”

**(8:46-8:49)** “Shots fired. Shots fired”

**(8:56) Text/Narrator:** “Johnson was taken to a nearby hospital where he was pronounced deceased.”

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# Fairfax Man Killed; Vienna Man Charged

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**F**airfax County police have arrested Darren Cruz Colindres, 18, of Vienna, in connection with the fatal shooting of Javier Gomez, 20, of Fairfax. The tragedy occurred Saturday morning, March 25, in the Fairfax Village Apartments.

At 7:47 a.m., police were called to an apartment in the 10400 block of Viera Lane in Fairfax for a report of a man who'd been shot. Officers found Gomez in the living

room suffering from an apparent gunshot wound to his upper body. They rendered aid until fire and rescue personnel arrived. Gomez was taken to an area hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

Preliminarily, detectives learned that Gomez and Cruz Colindres knew each other and were reportedly both in that apartment, Friday night into Saturday morning. According to police, "A family member was asleep in a bedroom when they heard a gunshot. They came out to the living room, found Gomez lying on the floor and [allegedly] saw

Cruz Colindres run from the apartment."

Within hours after the shooting, officers and detectives from the Fugitive Track and Apprehension Unit tracked Cruz Colindres to a home in McLean and took him into custody. He was charged with second-degree murder and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony. He's currently being held without bond in the Adult Detention Center and has a May 24 court date.

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will conduct an autopsy to determine the cause and manner of death. Meanwhile,

detectives continue to conduct interviews, investigate, collect video surveillance and process evidence recovered from the scene. They're trying to determine the circumstances leading up to the fatality. However, as of press time, a firearm had not been recovered.

Anyone with information about this event is asked to call the Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 2. Tips may also be submitted anonymously via Crime Solvers by phoning 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477).

# Police: Herndon Couple Dead in Reston; Murder, Suicide?

**D**etectives from FCPD Major Crimes Bureau continue to investigate after a couple was found dead on a trail in Reston Wednesday afternoon. Around 3 p.m., officers responded to the area of Stratton

Woods Park, 2431 Fox Mill Road, after a community member found a man and a woman unconscious on a trail nearby. Officers found Patricia Garverick, 69, and Richard Garverick, 75, both of Herndon suffering from apparent

gunshot wounds to the upper body. Fairfax County Fire and Rescue personnel declared both deceased at the scene. Preliminarily, detectives believe Richard Garverick shot his wife, Patricia, before shooting himself. Car-

tridge cases and a firearm were located at the scene. Their vehicle was found in the parking lot of Stratton Woods Park. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will be completing autopsies to confirm manner and cause of death.

# GFCA Responds to Overturning of z-MOD

## Virginia Supreme Court voids ZMOD; back to 1,200-page zoning ordinance.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**O**n March 23, the Virginia Supreme Court published a decision declaring the Fairfax County Zoning Ordinance, zMOD, "void ab initio."

The Supreme Court reversed the circuit court's dismissal of residents' claims against Fairfax County's Board of Supervisors and held that the circuit court erred. The result of the decision is the former 1200-page 1978 Zoning Ordinance is reinstated by the county.

The decision noted that:

Fairfax County residents David Berry, Carol A. Hawn, Helen H. Webb, and Adrienne A. Whyte (collectively "Residents") filed the case *Berry v. Board of Supervisors* in 2021. The Residents claimed that the Board violated Virginia law by considering and voting on zMOD in an electronic meeting and that any

action or approval should be void.

The Great Falls Citizens Association (GFCA) released a statement on Tuesday, March 28, noting that the Board of Supervisors adopted zMOD on March 23, 2021, during COVID-19, when Virginia law authorized the county to operate during emergencies and perform essential services related to "continuity of government operations."

"Ultimately, the Supreme Court disagreed and concluded that the board's failure to comply with Virginia's Freedom of Information Act's (VFOIA) open meeting requirements rendered zMOD void ab initio."

GFCA says, "zMOD has been controversial from the start. It quickly expanded well beyond its original stated purposes to provide what zoning officials described as much-needed reformatting and restructuring; a more user-friendly, more readable, and a more up-to-date framework of zoning." GFCA says Fairfax County must react to the Court's decision and consider its practical and policy implications. Consequently, the GFCA will closely monitor the process as it develops."

"ZMOD became effective on July 1, 2021 and applied to all zoning approvals or amendments (i.e., rezonings including subsidiary plans, special exceptions, special per-

mits, variances, modifications and waivers) approved by the Board, the Planning Commission or the Board of Zoning Appeals after that time," said law firm Bean, Kinney and Korman on its "About Real Estate" blog. "The Court's decision leaves the County residents,

property owners, developers and lenders suddenly facing a very uncertain land use regulatory landscape. ... This calls into question the validity of all of the zoning actions ... which were approved or amended since July 1, 2021."



The 1978 z-MOD

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SCREENSHOT

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## What Are Worthy Virginia History Standards?

BY DEL. KENNETH R. "KEN"  
PLUM



In an opinion piece in the online newsletter Cardinal News (<https://cardinalnews.org>) on March 20, 2023, Dwayne Yancey writes that "Youngkin wants to bring back the Readjusters. Good for him." As I understand his column, Yancey had written a previous column about the struggles the Virginia Department of Education was having in revising previous history and social studies standards for the public schools. That column apparently caught the eye of the State Secretary of Education who invited him in a personal conversation to submit his recommendations as to what should be included in the revised standards. He sent her a list and to his surprise "the Youngkin administration is adding mention of the Readjuster Party to the state's standards."

I share his surprise, or more explicitly, I am aghast! Having studied and taught Virginia history at the high school and continuing education levels, I would say that I would not single out for inclusion in school standards what

Encyclopedia Virginia describes as "the shortest-lived and most radical reforming political party in Virginia's history." For college or graduate school examination I would include the party for sure. The effort to "readjust" the Civil War debt by renegeing on paying back some of it or at a lower rate hardly seems like a concept a Republican administration would endorse. The Party's effort to be biracial is commendable until it becomes apparent that their motivation was to get enough Black votes to win the few elections where they were successful.

Even more puzzling is the decision to include the Readjuster Party in the standards considering the Governor's first Executive Order in which he stated and has repeated many times that he was "taking the first step on Day One to end the use of inherently divisive concepts, including Critical Race Theory." Someone will need to speak slowly to help me understand how the Readjuster movement can be explained without reference to political divisiveness in the state or to race as a critical part of the history of

the Commonwealth at the time.

I have been a critic of the process of rewriting the standards since the new administration took over. They inherited a draft that was developed by Virginia-based institutions and experts and for which there was widespread support. Before there was even time to consider that draft, the new administration dismissed it because it did not fit with their message that Virginia schools were failing with low standards. They contracted with out-of-state conservative institutions and individuals to produce a document that can only be described as an embarrassment. Even the administration's appointed Board of Education members would not accept it. The latest draft is being shopped around the state in a series of meetings held in small spaces overcrowded with people who get a couple of minutes each to speak on this topic that the administration has politicized. Being a newspaper columnist apparently gives one an edge to have something included in the standards.

The latest standards are improvements over the earlier versions, but from the testimony at the public hearings it is obvious that they need more work if they are to survive longer than the Readjuster Party did.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Parking Reimagined Is Not Ready for Prime Time

To the Editor:

Fairfax County is proposing an amendment to its Zoning Ordinance to reduce Minimum Parking Requirements in both residential and commercial areas. But in the associated county work group and in virtual town hall meetings, residents have expressed many concerns about what is called "Parking Reimagined," including the following:

**Equity:** The proposed parking amendment benefits developers and the County at the expense of county residents. This amendment will place additional hardship on lower and middle-income residents, who are already struggling economically. I realize that as a result of this proposed amendment some additional affordable housing could be built, however, most of these residents will not obtain affordable housing, but will now have to pay additional costs for parking and commuting.

County staff has stated that lower and middle-income residents do not need as much parking because they do not have as many vehicles as wealthier residents. However, a significant percentage of these residents have work vehicles that they need to park in a safe place near their homes. I find it inherently unfair to implement public policy that will be more costly, while decreasing the quality of life, for so many residents.

**Multifamily Dwellings & Townhouses:** Many of these communities already have issues with insufficient parking. Many multifamily dwellings and townhouses have extended families residing together, increasing the need for multiple vehicles. Parking reductions need to take this shift in family dynamics into consideration.

What happens when residents are forced to carry multiple bags of groceries several blocks in the rain, because they were unable to find a parking space near their home? Or when residents come home late after a hard day at work and cannot find a space near their home?

**Community Impact:** Residents unable to park in their own communities may be forced to encroach on other communities. Any parking reductions need to be integrated with enforcement procedures, to ensure that overflow parking into adjacent communities is prevented. Communities surrounding these developments should not be required to spend the time nor the money implementing parking permits. Also, residents should not have to constantly patrol their communities in order to have illegally parked vehicles towed.

**Loading Spaces/Handicapped Spaces:** Delivery drivers unable to find adequate loading spaces may be forced to park in handicapped spaces while making deliveries. Parking reductions need to ensure

adequate loading spaces so that handicapped spaces remain accessible for handicapped use only. What happens when handicapped residents show up at work, at an appointment or at a store and cannot find an available space?

Handicapped residents should not be forced to walk from a parking space at the back of the lot, nor should they have to arrive a half hour early to ensure that they have time to wait for access to a handicapped parking space. This is a matter of dignity and respect for the handicapped population.

**Environmental Benefit:** Parking reductions were originally viewed as a way of improving environmental issues by reducing excess

asphalt parking areas and adding more green spaces and trees. But the parking amendment fails to require developers to do so. This failure undercuts one of the major benefits of having less parking – more green space and tree canopy. Unfortunately, county staff seems to have focused solely on reducing parking, without using parking reductions to provide a net environmental benefit.

**Additional Waivers in Parking Requirements:** I am confused as to why there needs to be administrative waivers for additional parking reductions. The minimum required parking rates should be the mini-

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 13

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NEWS DEPARTMENT  
[fairfax@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:fairfax@connectionnewspapers.com)

Mary Kimm  
Editor and Publisher  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)

Bonnie Hobbs  
Community Reporter  
703-778-9415  
[bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:bhobbs@connectionnewspapers.com)

Mercia Hobson  
Staff Reporter  
[mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mhobson@connectionnewspapers.com)

Mike Salmon  
Contributing Writer  
[msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:msalmon@connectionnewspapers.com)

Ken Moore  
Contributing Writer

Susan Laume  
Contributing Writer

ADVERTISING  
For advertising information  
[sales@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:sales@connectionnewspapers.com)  
703-778-9431

Debbie Funk  
Display Advertising/National Sales  
703-778-9444  
[debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:debfunk@connectionnewspapers.com)

David Griffin  
Marketing Assistant  
703-778-9431  
[dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:dgriffin@connectionnewspapers.com)

Classified & Employment  
Advertising  
703-778-9431

Editor & Publisher  
Mary Kimm  
[mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com)  
@MaryKimm

Publisher  
Jerry Vernon  
703-549-0004  
[jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:jvernon@connectionnewspapers.com)

In Memoriam  
Managing Editor  
Kemal Kurspahic

Art/Design:  
Laurence Foong  
Production Manager  
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CIRCULATION  
Circulation Manager  
Ann Oliver  
[circulation@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:circulation@connectionnewspapers.com)



# Ohio Derailment Highlights Rail Safety Locally

Could derailment with hazardous chemical spill happen here?

By MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

At night around eastern Springfield, it's not hard to forget the presence of a railroad line that runs on a north-south trajectory along I-95. The trains run all night long. When thinking of the recent train accident in Ohio, many may be wondering, are we safe from a similar catastrophe?

On Feb. 3, at 8:55 p.m., 38 cars of a 150-car Norfolk Southern freight train carrying hazardous materials derailed in East Palestine, Ohio. This caused a fire and nearby residents were told to evacuate. The train was carrying toxic materials which spilled into a nearby stream and killed many fish in the stream. Following the derailment, the Environmental Protection Agency began sampling the air and water around that area to determine the danger to the nearby residents.

Following the Ohio train derailment, there was another train derailment reported, this one in West Virginia on March 8 that resulted in an "unknown" amount of diesel to spill into New River.

Northern Virginia has been on the safety radar though, says Connor Spielmaker Sr. Communications Manager at Norfolk Southern. The actual train accident numbers are down, he said. Norfolk Southern partnered with emergency responders from Alexandria last summer for the latest Operation Awareness & Response

training session aboard the Norfolk Southern HazMat Safety Train. Team members from the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department learned firsthand from safety experts about the fundamental steps required for an adequate response to a locomotive emergency.

Spielmaker did add that there are other freight carriers in the Northern Virginia area too. "Norfolk Southern is not the only railroad in the DMV," he said.

Fairfax County has a Hazardous Materials Response Team that consistently conducts training specific to railway incidents. They coordinate efforts with the Northern Virginia Regional Intelligence Community to gather information about the hazardous materials that are transported through this area to develop effective and realistic emergency response plans for any hazardous spills that may occur, said the Fairfax County Department of Emergency Management and Fire and Rescue.

A Fairfax County Emergency Operations Plan was created as a



Fairfax County took place in rail emergency exercises last summer.

PHOTO BY FAIRFAX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE



How close is too close? In some places, townhouses look right out to the tracks.

PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

framework for the management of major emergencies in the county

which includes a plan for rail and hazardous materials. They coordinate with other area jurisdictions to create the Railroad Emergency Response Manual so they have a consistent way to respond to rail emergencies.

The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation noted that railroads have invested more than \$250 billion in the past two decades to create a safer rail network.

While DRPT is not directly involved with freight operations, it supports freight by encouraging truck-to-rail diversion, said DRPT spokesperson Amy Friedenberger. Virginia has a statewide rail plan that is updated every four years, and in the 2022 plan, which came out in September, projects in the Alexandria and Springfield include station improvements, the Franconia-Springfield bypass, and a Franconia to Lorton third mainline.

## Zero Accident Goal

According to the Association of American Railroads, they are taking safety actions since the derailment in Ohio and have a goal of zero accidents. This includes fixing the loose wheel defect, adding hot bearing detectors, tightening bearing inspection rules, training more first responders, and implementing fire improvement enhancements on tank cars. Despite the crash in Ohio, the FTA said that the accident rate for hazmat transportation is down 78% percent since 2000.

"Even though data show railroads are safe, the industry believes that the East Palestine derailment earlier this year, and its aftermath, require railroads and freight shippers alike to lead with actions that restore trust and will further improve freight rail safety," according to the Association of American Railroads blog.

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# If You Can Imagine It, You Can Build It Here

## Nova Labs makerspace opens in Fairfax City; moved from Reston.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**N**ova Labs in Fairfax City is like a theme park for creative people. But instead of rides and rollercoasters, it's a huge indoor space filled with the tools, equipment, classes and experts they need to create practically anything they can imagine.

And this 27,000-square-foot makerspace at 3850 Jermantown Road (behind H Mart and across from Katherine Johnson Middle School) held its official grand opening and ribbon cutting March 18 to much fanfare and jubilation.

"This filled a need we didn't even know we needed – an intergenerational makerspace, for the youngest children to retirees, to discover what can be made on the cutting edge of technology," said Fairfax Mayor Catherine Read. "And there's even a free, CUE bus stop in front."

A volunteer-run nonprofit, Nova Labs is the ultimate workspace where hobbyists, inventors, tinkerers, artisans, engineers and entrepreneurs can create and collaborate with others to achieve their dreams. It offers them access to resources – from common tools to advanced machines, 3D printers and fabrication equipment – they can use to design and prototype their projects and turn them into realities.

Its slogan is "Rediscover the Joy of Making Things," and members enjoy 24/7 access. They also help co-manage the space by teaching classes, maintaining their equipment and promoting making to others. And Fairfax officials are delighted to have it in their community.

"This was a joint effort on behalf of so many people – including the previous mayor and City Council – who had the vision to put this in place," said Read. And indeed, past Mayor David Meyer was among the ceremony's attendees.

Economic Development Authority Chair Kathleen Paley said Councilmember Jon Stehle first approached her about encouraging Nova Labs to come to Fairfax when she "didn't know what a makerspace was. What makes Nova Labs amazing is that it's giving an outlet to adults at the end of a dull workday, inspiring them and letting them create."

"We're excited about having Nova Labs as part of our community," added Doug Church, Central Fairfax Chamber of Commerce chairman. "We enjoy the partnership between it and the City and have watched it evolve. The support from the mayor, Council and Economic Development Office [EDO] has been wonderful. Nova Labs is unique to us, and we're proud to have this gem in our city."

Agreeing, Brian Jacoby, an original founding member of Nova Labs, said, "It's gratifying to see this taking place."

Nova Labs Board President Bradley Matthews said his grandfather, a machinist, in-



Bradley Matthews cuts the ribbon while (from left) Catherine Read, Kathleen Paley, David Meyer and Jeanne Marshall hold it.



Visitors looking at some of the projects and chatting with the artisans.

spired his creativity. "I learned that, with the right tools, support, knowledge and community, you can build anything," he said. As an adult, he became a banker; but when his son broke a chair and he was able to fix it, his creative juices started flowing again.

"I started woodworking and then created a tool to make DIY [do it yourself] more accessible for non-makers," said Matthews. "And I'm now working toward a patent for it. Nova Labs is about inspiring the child to build for the future, and the hobbyist with the spark of an idea, who could create the next invention." Then he invited the crowd inside to "see the space and find the inspiration for yourself."

Nova Labs began in Reston in 2011 but left there in 2022. Matthews said it moved to Fairfax for three reasons:

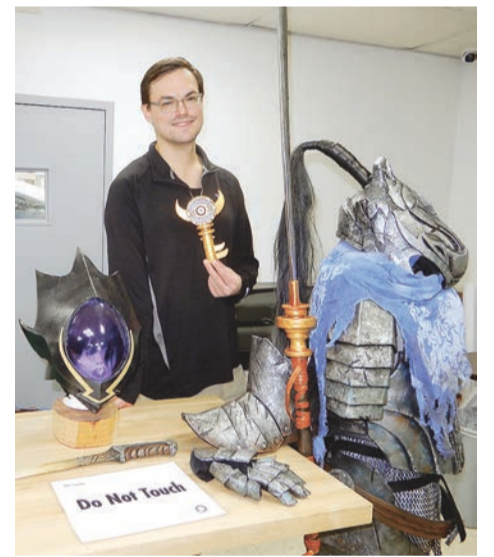
\* "The City's central location in Fairfax County, opening up a new opportunity in the

southern part of the county to our members.

\* "The City and EDO are focused on building businesses, so we also have our Innovation Center here – 10 offices and 20 members trying to build their businesses.

\* "The focus on youth programs. About half the students in Fairfax City are below the poverty line; but we can stop that cycle by equipping them with the knowledge and fearlessness to build their future. We offer summer school and summer camps, robotics and ongoing youth programs. There are different membership levels, but we have scholarships available for these students and can offer discounted and free programs, as well."

Daytimes, non-summer, the facility usually attracts 20-30 people at a time. Saturdays and Sundays, hundreds come to "work on their projects, hang out and socialize with like-minded people," said Matthews. "It's



Member Alex Rennie displays some of his foamsmithing creations.

not just about the tools, it's also about the community."

The front of the building contains a laser lab for laser cutting, 3D printing and thermoforming (heating plastic-polymer material and shaping it in a mold); a studio for resin pouring, jewelry making, stained glass activities and airbrushing; and a crafter's cove for crafting, quilting and cosplay (making costumes of characters from movies, books or video games).

The back of the building has areas for robotics, taking apart things, tiny drones, blacksmithing, welding, metal working, woodworking and mixed-media pursuits. And during the grand opening, attendees got to visit each area and watch the artisans in action working on their projects.

SEE MAKERSPACE, PAGE 15  
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



# COMMUNITY

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Member David Kaufman displays the symmetrical designs he made from software he created.



Vince McCullough (at left) explains cookie-decorating with an airbrush to Matt Webster and his children, Amelia and Teddy.

## Generosity in Sharing Skills and Knowledge

Visitors amazed, excited, by the possibilities at Nova Labs.

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**A** makerspace, shared workshop, education center and a continual source of inspiration and motivation – that’s Nova Labs in Fairfax City. And during its March 18 grand opening, both existing members, volunteers and visitors sang its praises.

“I love the community here,” said Hale Sinek, assistant steward of Crafters Cove. “Everyone is so wonderful – it’s like a family. We’re volunteer-run, but most volunteers are also members. I make a lot of chainmail jewelry, just for fun, and it feels wonderful to create something with my own two hands that wasn’t there before.”

“I also like teaching because it’s sharing knowledge and strengthens that sense of community – especially when people were so isolated during the pandemic,” she continued. “People are so helpful here and enjoy imparting what they know to others.”

Nearby, visitor Janet Carlton stopped to chat with member Sally Byers, operating a long-arm quilting machine. “I make leather moccasins,” said Carlton. “We came today because my husband likes fixing things and we both could use more community.”

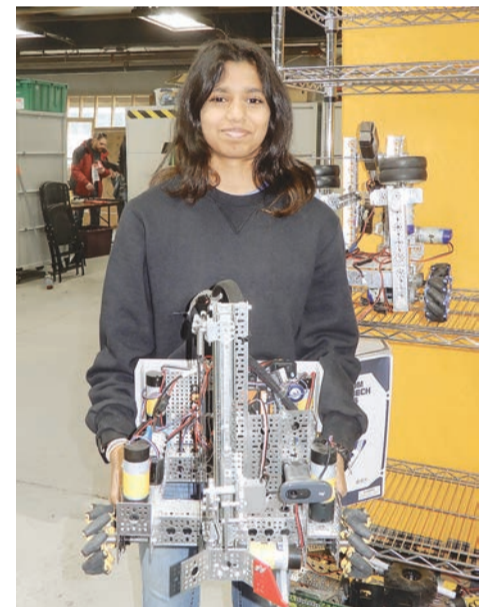
Will Turner brought his children from Reston to the grand opening. “I think it’s a good program for kids and entrepreneurs, and a great opportunity to expose kids to technology,” he said. “My son participates in a First LEGO League here. He loves robots and space and is amazed by the 3D printers here.”

Nearby, volunteer Alex Rennie demonstrated the art of foamsmithing. “It’s taking a flexible, foam material in different layers of thickness, cutting and gluing it together and shaping it using a dremel,” he said. Rennie then explained that a dremel is “a rotary tool, like a portable sander.”

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Hale Sinek at a table displaying some items members have made.



Rachel Carson eighth-grader Sreeya Pithani holds the robot she and her robotics team built.



Member Patrick Thompson holds some items he made on a 3D printer.



Rachel Carson eighth-grader Sreeya Pithani holds the robot she and her robotics team built.

Volunteer Vince McCullough – who’s also on Nova Labs’ board – teaches airbrushing and other classes. And he demonstrated the technique to Matt Webster, who came to the event with his children, Amelia, 10, and

Teddy, 8. Using food-safe ink and a stencil, McCullough showed them how to transfer a design to a cookie.

Teddy said he liked the “creations,” as did his sister. “I liked the airbrushing be-

cause it’s drawing with air and ink combined in a brush,” said Amelia. “And you can spread it around and decorate cookies with the airbrush.”

SEE POSSIBILITIES, PAGE 15

THE CONNECTION ♦ MARCH 29 - APRIL 4, 2023 ♦ 9



# CALENDAR

## BLUEBELLS AND SPRING WILDFLOWERS

Lace up your hiking shoes, grab your camera and enjoy the ephemeral wildflowers that bloom in our parks. Ephemeral flowers are those that bloom temporarily. Their short-lived beauty allows them to grow and reproduce quickly before the canopy of the forest comes alive. Take advantage of the opportunity to get out, during this limited time, to see many of our native ephemeral blooms including bluebells, toad lilies, spring beauties, may apples and more!

Spring Wildflowers Programs

April 1 (10 to 11:30 a.m.):

Spring Wildflowers and Bald Eagles Family Walk, Riverbend Park, \$9

April 2 (9:30 to 11:30 a.m.):

Waterfalls and Wildflowers Hike, Scotts Run Nature Preserve, \$10

April 6 (9 to 11 a.m.): Spring Wildflowers at Scotts Run, Scotts Run Nature Preserve, \$10

April 13 (4 to 5 p.m.): Wonderful Wildflowers, Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, \$7

April 14 (9:30 to 11:30 a.m.): Waterfalls and Wildflowers Hike, Scotts Run Nature Preserve, \$10

April 16 (10 to 11 a.m.): Wildflowers Walk and Craft, Burke Lake Park, \$8

April 30 (9:30 to 11:30 a.m.): Managing for Native Wildflowers, Riverbend Park, \$10

May 6 (Noon to 1 p.m.): Wildflowers Walk and Craft, Burke Lake Park, \$8

May 7 (3 to 4 p.m.): Wonderful Wildflowers, Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, \$7

Bluebells Wildflower Programs & Events

March 31 (9:30 to 11:30 a.m.): Bluebells and Bloodroots, Riverbend Park, \$9

April 8 (10 a.m. to noon and noon to 2 p.m.): Bluebells at the Bend, Riverbend Park, \$10 / \$12

April 16 (9:30 to 11:30 a.m.): Bluebells and Bloodroots, Riverbend Park, \$9

## NOW THRU APRIL 30

Score: Mixed Media Art. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Score explores 20 years of the work of Virginia-based mixed media artist, Joan Dreyer. While developing her MFA thesis at Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia, PA, Joan began taking tools, techniques and imagery that have been historically considered "women's work" and transforming them into innovative, contemporary art that is responsive to the tone and tensions of our times. Created by combining fiber techniques with unexpected materials like X-rays, her work is a subtle art that asks questions about life, loss, symbolism, and the impact of war instead of providing one size fits all answers. The artist's work provides a space for the contemplation of life stages that we all encounter. The result is a body of work that allows for meaningful but also multiple interpretations by the viewer. Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/score-mixed-media>

## ONGOING

Earthquake Relief Collection. Elected leaders from Northern Virginia announced the launch of a



The Good Humor Men will appear Saturday, April 1, 2023 at the McLean Community Center in McLean.

fundraising effort to collect money to purchase food packages for those impacted by the recent earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. NVRC hopes to collect \$25,000 for this effort. To donate, visit [www.helpearthquakevictims.org](http://www.helpearthquakevictims.org).

## NOW THRU MAY 31

Candytopia Opens. At Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Candytopia, in partnership with Tysons Corner Center announces the arrival of its sweet interactive concept to the center. It will feature 16,000 square feet with 14 different interactive environments, Instagram-worthy photo opportunities, and delectable tastes of your favorite sweet treats. There is a candy art gallery, a state-of-the-art candy confetti room, complete with confetti-farting pigs, a marshmallow pit filled with a quarter-million marshmallows, as well as DMV-inspired elements throughout the experience. The journey includes candy samples throughout the experience. Visit [www.candytopia.com](http://www.candytopia.com).

## NOW THRU APRIL 16

Texture Photography Exhibit. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Falls Church Arts Gallery, 700-B West Broad Street, Falls Church. Sixty photographic images from 37 photographers will be featured in "Texture, A Photography Show" on view at Falls Church Arts Gallery. The submissions vary widely and range from country and city scenes to bodies of water, botanicals, and geographical formations, among others. Visit the website: [www.fallschurcharts.org](http://www.fallschurcharts.org).

## NOW THRU APRIL 2

Art Exhibition. 1-6 p.m. At Mosaic Arts Gallery, 2931-B Eskridge Road, Fairfax. An art exhibition titled "Focus on Faces" will be presented by the mosaicArts Gallery. The exhibition will feature encaustic portraits of young adults painted by Alexandria artist, Linda Lowery. Opening reception March 11 from 4:00-7:00 p.m. Visit the website: [mosaicarts.site](http://mosaicarts.site)

## ONGOING

Riverbend Park Plant Sale. At 8700 Potomac Hills Street, Great Falls. The Annual Plant Sale is now open! Go to [www.forbpark.org](http://www.forbpark.org), then click on "2023 Native Plant Sale" to order your plants by April 1st. Pickup is on April 29th.

## NOW THRU APRIL 8

Easter Bunny Photos at Tysons Corner Center. The Easter Bunny is back at Tysons Corner Center starting on March 17. Individuals, kids and families can visit the Bunny in Fashion Court-Lower Level Nordstrom Wing, and for the easiest experience, pre-book photo sessions for your littles by visiting the link: <https://www.tysonscornercenter.com/BunnyPhotos>

## NOW THRU APRIL 1

BLCKSMTH in Spring Residency. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. BLCKSMTH is the handle of Michael James Schneider, a writer and artist living in Portland, Oregon, who creates quirky and thought-provoking content. His Instagram account reaches over 600K followers and has had numerous viral posts. During his residency at MCC, Schneider will engage diverse groups in conversations about what brings the community together, how to lift one another up and how to creatively express oneself. These workshops are free and open to the public and registration is not required.

## Schedule

BLCKSMTH X Millennials and Young Professionals Workshop  
Wednesday, March 29, 8-9:30 a.m. at MCC

BLCKSMTH X Teen Workshop  
Thursday, March 30, 3:30-4:30 p.m. at OFC

BLCKSMTH X McLean Community Center Gallery Pop Up  
Thursday, March 30, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at MCC

BLCKSMTH X Retirees Workshop  
Friday, March 31, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at MCC

BLCKSMTH X Veterans Workshop  
Friday, March 31, 4-5:30 p.m. at MCC

## THURSDAY/MARCH 30

Visiting Filmmakers Series. 5-8 p.m. At George Mason University's Johnson Center Cinema, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Join them for a free screening of the acclaimed new Netflix documentary, "Descendant," followed by a live Q&A with the filmmakers! Register here: <https://cglink.me/2d7/r1960176>



The Spring Wildflowers and Bald Eagles Family Walk will take place Saturday, April 1, 2023 at Riverbend Park in Great Falls.

## FRIDAY/MARCH 31

Anirudh Live! Tour. 8-10 p.m. At EagleBank Arena, 4500 Patriot Circle, Fairfax. Don't miss out on the most anticipated tour of 2023! Announcing the "Once Upon A Time" Tour featuring Anirudh Ravichander, the youngest and fastest-rising film composer in the World. Proudly presented by Shri Balaji Entertainment and powered by Kash Patel Productions. From sold-out dates across the globe, including recently sold-out shows at the OVO, London's most iconic music venue, Accor Arena in Paris, and giant live stream appearances hosted by Disney and Hotstar, Anirudh is a rockstar whose viral tunes have taken the film industry by storm! Visit the website: <https://tickets.kashpatelproductions.com/e-anirudh-washington-dc-2023>

## MARCH 31-APRIL 1

Cirque FLIP Fabrique. Friday at 8 p.m.; Saturday at 2 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. In this all-new, high-energy production, the seven acrobats of FLIP Fabrique don high heels, then football shoulder pads to dazzle audiences of all ages. Muse playfully pirouettes around and tackles the perennially complicated questions of gender archetypes—circus-style.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 1

Inaugural Blossom Fest. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. At Springfield Town Center, Springfield. Will include over 40 community vendors ranging from handmade craft vendors to home remodeling companies to health and wellness vendors. Several food trucks will also be participating including Empanadas De Mendoza, Supreme Kabob, KONA Ice, and more. Family-friendly entertainment will also be occurring throughout the day.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 1

The Good Humor Men. 7 p.m. At The Alden Theater, McLean Community Center, McLean. Performing at The Alden on April 1 will be Keith Alberstadt, Tony Deyo and Pat

Hazell. Three of America's funniest standup comedians join forces to showcase their original brand of humor in an evening packed with punch lines, clever writing and hair trigger laughs. Tickets are \$30, \$25 for students and seniors and \$20 for MCC district residents. Visit [aldentheatre.org](http://aldentheatre.org) or call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 1

Spring Festival. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. Spring has long served as a symbol of renewal and hope. Being outside at Gunston Hall made George Mason happy, and we think it will make you happy, too. Come celebrate the season with us at Gunston Hall. From toddlers to seniors, everyone will enjoy the crafts, garden activities, kite-flying, and food. Don't miss the plant sale! Guests are welcome to bring their own kites or to purchase one in the Gunston Hall museum shop. Visit the website: <https://gunstonhall.org/events/spring-festival-2/>

## SATURDAY/APRIL 1

14th Annual Monopoly Tournament. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. At Moose Lodge, 9612 Fernedge Lane, Lorton. Ron Kowalski Real Estate Group's Monopoly Tournament. They'll play 3 timed rounds of Monopoly - those with the most assets advance. Players of any / all skill levels are encouraged to play. Top Prizes: 1st Place \$500; 2nd Place \$250; 3rd Place \$100. Trophies for 4th-6th place. Many door prizes too! Once again, a fantastic continental breakfast will be provided by South County Cares Church and lunch will be provided for all players and guests who make a small donation. The registration fee is only \$25 if you pay in advance/online; \$35 at the door. Ages 8+. All proceeds go to Lorton Action Community Center, a 501(c)3 organization. For more information go to: [Monopoly-Lorton.com](http://Monopoly-Lorton.com) or [LortonAction.org](http://LortonAction.org).

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 12

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# MEET THE CANDIDATES

# McLEAN COMMUNITY CENTER 2023 GOVERNING BOARD ELECTIONS



The Governing Board and staff of the McLean Community Center strongly encourage all qualified residents to vote for members of MCC's 2023-2024 Governing Board. Your vote sends a very important message of your support of the Center's programs and services.

1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean, Va. 22101 703-790-0123/TTY: 711 [mcleancenter.org](http://mcleancenter.org)

**McLean Community Center**  
The Center of It All

## ADULT CANDIDATES THREE POSITIONS OPEN



**GLORIA MARRERO CHAMBERS**  
[gloriamcnclean@gmail.com](mailto:gloriamcnclean@gmail.com)

I was born in Puerto Rico and attended college in Baltimore, where I met my husband. I became a teacher. Our kids attended The Langley School and we moved to McLean in 2013. My commitment to public service and volunteer work in the past 26 years is extensive: I've served as sports team parent, parish Catechism teacher, Vice President, Langley School Board. MCC is a wonderful community resource. As Board member, I'll ensure programs/events engage our community. I'll be a responsible steward of tax dollars and commit my decades of leadership and board experience to give back to our community.



**MATT COLSIA**  
[matt.colsia@gmail.com](mailto:matt.colsia@gmail.com)

Hello fellow McLean residents. I'm seeking to serve on the MCC Governing Board. My family and I have enjoyed living in McLean for three years and I'd like to give back to the community through servant leadership and volunteer service. I recently retired after serving 26 years in the U.S. Army, most recently as specialty aeromedical staff officer, National Guard HQ, Arlington. My awards include the Bronze Star, the Air Medal and the Senior Aviator Badge and I'm a member of the Army Association of the United States. I also volunteer at McLean High, Longfellow Middle and Franklin Sherman schools.



**KATIE GORKA**  
[katiegorkamclean@protonmail.com](mailto:katiegorkamclean@protonmail.com)

I moved to McLean in 2008 and found it a wonderful place to raise our children. Now that they are grown, I wanted to find a way to give back to the community. I always enjoyed MCC events and feel it's a great community asset. I've had a long career in public policy, at think tanks and in government. After the Berlin Wall fell, I put together a Central and Eastern European film festival in NYC. As a board member, I'd ensure programming represents all members of the community and that MCC responsibly stewards funds and resources entrusted to it.



**KATHLEEN COONEY PORTER**  
[kcptrademarks@gmail.com](mailto:kcptrademarks@gmail.com)

I moved to McLean in 1998 with my husband. Together, we raised twin girls who attended Chesterbrook Elementary and Longfellow Middle schools. Our girls went to many programs at MCC, especially The Alden Theatre. The Old Firehouse was my go-to summer camp. I cannot say enough great things about OFC. I have practiced intellectual property for over 30 years. I worked on many matters involving animation, theatre, publications and more. I have a background in the stewardship of funds as a managing partner. I believe my experience will advance the programs of MCC and increase representation of our diverse community.



**LINCOM aka AMIRTHALINGAM THILLAICHIDAMBARAM**  
[lincoln133MCC@gmail.com](mailto:lincoln133MCC@gmail.com)

I am affectionately called Lincoln or Lingam by my friends and neighbors in the McLean Hunt. Attending my grandchild's events, I have a heightened appreciation for the arts, education and our community. As an 89-year-old, I bring a lifetime of experiences in literary, legal and management skills to the McLean Community Center Governing Board. In addition, I would enrich the Governing Board decisions with my perspectives on aging and living life fully. I commit to adding my love of education, community building and leadership to the MCC Governing Board. I humbly ask for your vote.

## YOUTH CANDIDATES LANGLEY HIGH SCHOOL BOUNDARY AREA ONE POSITION OPEN



**SOPHIA BRUNO**  
[sophiabruno2048@gmail.com](mailto:sophiabruno2048@gmail.com)

I am Sophia Bruno, a junior at Langley, and I am running for the MCC Board. I am an active member of the Langley community, both in and out of school. I am constantly looking for ways to give back, including organizing a meal-making event to feed the homeless, volunteering as an assistant at St. Luke's Sunday School and teaching kids at Mathnasium. I have learned that being a leader is being humble, responsible and approachable. With my experience, creativity and passion, I intend to represent my fellow McLean youths and ensure that all voices are heard.



**CABOT FISHER**  
[cabot4MCC@gmail.com](mailto:cabot4MCC@gmail.com)

I am Cabot Fisher, and I am running for the McLean Community Center Board. Teens need representation on the board, and I am confident that I can be a strong voice for the community. I am involved with different groups such as my school's debate team, handbell choir and the Jewish student alliance, which will make me a valuable voice on the board. I will advocate for a tutoring space for students so they can get help with academics. My education and background give me the necessary tools to represent teens and all members of the community on the board.



**CHARLOTTE LOVING**  
[charlotterloving@gmail.com](mailto:charlotterloving@gmail.com)

The Community Center has been an important part of my life growing up in McLean and I would like to make sure others have the same positive experience. Through extra-curricular activities I have friends at McLean and Langley. I am co-president of the Langley Nice Cream Club, a member of the Principal's Advisory Council and Co-Captain of the Langley Softball team, all of which have taught me to communicate, lead, plan and achieve goals. If re-elected, I will work to make sure the Community Center and Old Firehouse continue to be valuable and enjoyable resources for high school students.



**DUY (MIKEY) NGUYEN**  
[mikey983e@gmail.com](mailto:mikey983e@gmail.com)

I'm Duy (Mikey) Nguyen and I'm running to be an MCC Governing Board member to become more involved in my community and learn more about the people in my community. I have been involved in the community through helping coach swimmers and flag football, as well as teaching my peers at school how to play chess, my favorite game. Another one of my interests is learning about history. In AP World and AP U.S. my understanding of the world has been modified heavily by learning about past trends and events and I'm grateful to my teachers for that.



**ETHAN PWU**  
[ethanpwu123@gmail.com](mailto:ethanpwu123@gmail.com)

Since moving to McLean in 2017, the community has been nothing but welcoming. I am grateful for the opportunity to run for the Governing Board of the MCC. I have the privilege of being involved with LHS's marching band and crew team, which have taught me discipline, teamwork and diligence. Volunteering at MCC events has been an important part of my life, as giving back to my community is a core value of mine. I believe that my positive connections with members of the community will allow me to create a worthwhile impact and help all members of our community.



**SONYA THOTT**  
[sonya4mclean@gmail.com](mailto:sonya4mclean@gmail.com)

Hello MCC Governing Board! My name is Sonya Thott, a sophomore at Langley High School. I am petitioning for the MCC Governing Board Youth leader role. As a contributor to the MCC mission to make our community a better place for all, I have great ideas on how to improve our community collaboratively. I love listening to others' perspectives and ideas with attentiveness, empathy, tenacity and diligence. I care for the community and feel that every voice should be heard in decisions made by the MCC to promote inclusion and diversity. I hope that you accept me as a candidate!

## YOUTH CANDIDATES McLEAN HIGH SCHOOL BOUNDARY AREA ONE POSITION OPEN



**ELEANOR AGUE**  
[eleanor.ague@gmail.com](mailto:eleanor.ague@gmail.com)

My name is Eleanor Ague, and I am running for the McLean Community Center Governing Board to benefit the community of McLean. I am currently a junior at McLean High School and am committed to becoming an integrated member of our society through the missions of the McLean Community Center. I am very interested in public policy and recently completed the United States Senate Page Program, which gave me the opportunity to witness democracy in action. This experience gave me great sense of enthusiasm for service, which I am excited to apply to the McLean community.



**RAFIK HANNA**  
[rafhanna06@gmail.com](mailto:rafhanna06@gmail.com)

For the past two years, I have been in the Unruly Theatre Project, an award-winning professional improv troupe. A truly challenging experience, I believe the UTP has allowed me to develop diverse leadership, communication and confidence skills that are suitable for this position. McLean as a community has been nothing short of wonderful to me, and I believe the MCC Governing Board is an excellent opportunity to give back to this wonderful community. I care deeply about McLean, and I am honored to be a candidate for the MCC Governing Board.



**KATY PEREZ**  
[k.pereznesmith@gmail.com](mailto:k.pereznesmith@gmail.com)

Hi! I am Katy Perez and I am running to be a McLean Community Center board member because I love my town and want to be a voice for our youth! My family has been part of the McLean community for over 50 years, and I am excited to play an important role in its future. In my role as a board member, I plan to create opportunities to keep our city clean, happy and connected with our neighbors. I will do this through outreach and being open to advice and opinions on what we should do in our community!



**PHILIP ROTONDO**  
[philiprotondo@gmail.com](mailto:philiprotondo@gmail.com)

I am Philip Rotondo, a junior at McLean High School, and I'm running for MCC Governing Board. I know how important MCC is to making McLean so vibrant - MCC gave me my first exposure to live music and theater and helped me connect with friends and neighbors. Staying active in the community is very important to me. I stay involved through my work on McLean's Highlander Magazine and the MCC's Youth Ambassador Program. I'd love the opportunity to serve on our community's Governing Board to help maintain and expand MCC's programming to appeal to people of all ages and backgrounds.

For more information on the election, visit [mcleancenter.org](http://mcleancenter.org) or email [elections@mcleancenter.org](mailto:elections@mcleancenter.org).



# CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

## SATURDAY/APRIL 1

8th Annual O'Donovan Humanities Lecture. At Oakcrest School. Dr. Taryn Okuma, Associate Professor at The Catholic University of America, will be the keynote speaker at the 8th Annual O'Donovan Humanities Lecture at Oakcrest School on April 1, 2023. The topic will be "Why Read Memoir?" Learn more at Oakcrest.org.

## SATURDAY/APRIL 1

Beatbox with Christylez Bacon. 2 p.m. At Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Family Fun is just around the corner with OnStage's Beatbox with Christylez Bacon concert! Christylez Bacon (pronounced: christyles) is a GRAMMY Nominated Progressive Hip-Hop artist and multi-instrumentalist from Southeast, Washington, DC. This interactive concert will engage families in singing and beatboxing activities while merging the rhythms with classical music. Visit the website: <https://www.workhousearts.org/calendar/beatbox-with-christylez-bacon>

## APRIL 1-2

SPRINGPEX 2023. At John R. Lewis High School, 6540 Franconia Road, Springfield. SPRINGPEX is the Washington, D.C. area's largest club-sponsored stamp show. Admission to the show is free. All local stamp collectors and interested public are invited to attend. The show features interesting competitive and non-competitive philatelic exhibits, and 20+ stamp and cover dealers from throughout the Eastern U.S., and the Washington metropolitan area. Show hours will be 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, (April 1), and 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Sunday (April 2). Free parking is available in the school lot. For additional information on SPRINGPEX 2023, visit the website at [www.springfieldstampclub.org](http://www.springfieldstampclub.org).

## SUNDAY/APRIL 2

Pedal with Petals Family Bike Ride. 8-11 a.m. At Tysons Corner Center Plaza, McLean. The bike ride is approximately 15 minutes long and circles around Tysons Corner Center. Groups of riders will take off every 30 minutes starting at 8:15 a.m. with the last ride at 9:45 a.m. Participants will gather at The Plaza at Tysons Corner Center for activities to include cherry blossom themed bike decorating, free bike repairs by Trek Bicycle, fun photo opportunities, face painting, with snacks and water available for riders, and more. At the Capital Bikeshare Tysons Metro South station, staff will provide free bikes for the event on a first come first served basis. Fairfax Alliance for Better Biking (FABB) is providing bike marshals to help guide the cyclists, young and old. Event registration is at [tysonsva.org](http://tysonsva.org).

## SUNDAY/APRIL 2

Daniel Hope and the Zurich Chamber Orchestra America. 2 p.m. Violin luminary Daniel Hope returns with the Zurich Chamber Orchestra to reveal the charisma of American music in a program named after his new album, America. This concert celebrates our country's most recognizable tunes from across the 20th century, including Copland's iconic "Hoe-down" from Rodeo and "At the River" from Old American Songs; Gershwin's Song Suite featuring "I Got Rhythm" and "Summertime"; Barber's Adagio for Strings; music by Duke Ellington and Florence Price; highlights from Kurt Weill's The Threepenny Opera; and Echorus by Philip Glass.

## APRIL 2-9

King of Kings Lutheran Church - Holy Week Worship Schedule  
Palm Sunday, April 2 - 10 a.m.  
Maundy Thursday, April 6 - 7 p.m.  
Good Friday, April 7- Noon and 7 p.m.

Easter Sunday, April 9 - 8am and 10 a.m.  
All Are Welcome! King of Kings Lutheran Church is located at 4025 Kings Way - Fairfax. For more information visit [www.kofk.org](http://www.kofk.org) or contact the church office 703-378-7272.

## APRIL 4 TO JULY 27

Senior Slow-Pitch Softball Seasons. 9 a.m. to noon. At Braddock, Wakefield, and Nottaway Softball Fields. Join NoVa Senior Softball, men 50+, women 40+, average age 66. Skill-level assessment. 24 teams, three levels of play.  
Tuesday/Thursday morning double-headers. Begin Spring Training now.  
703-663-7881. Visit the website: [www.nvss.org](http://www.nvss.org)

## WEDNESDAY/APRIL 5

Birds Urban Hazards. 10-11:30 a.m. At Mason District Government Center, 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale. Anne Lewis, president of "City Life" will talk about hazards (e.g. buildings) to birds in urban areas who become disoriented during their migration season. Website: <http://narfe.org/chapter1159>

## THURSDAY/APRIL 6

Visiting Filmmakers Series. 6-7 p.m. Online. Filmmaker Rebeca Huntt and Film at Mason Professor May Santiago will discuss Huntt's acclaimed new film, Beba, during this one-hour virtual Q&A. To register: [https://gmu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_0EBDwob9S1yMznTj5f7JvA](https://gmu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_0EBDwob9S1yMznTj5f7JvA)

## SATURDAY/APRIL 8

Easter at The Perch. 9:30 a.m. At The Watermark Hotel, 1825 Capital One Drive South, Tysons. Egg hunt starting at 10 a.m. The fun continues into the afternoon with a slew of activities on the Great Lawn including yard games, a petting zoo with alpacas and bunnies, temporary tattoos, photos with The Easter Bunny, selfie stations, sack races, prizes and more.

## BULLETIN BOARD

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

## OUTSTANDING CHARACTER AWARD FOR TEENS

The McLean Citizens Association (MCA) is again sponsoring Teen Character Awards to recognize teens with exceptional ethical and compassionate character. Teens who have, on their own and without compensation or formal recognition, cared for elderly relatives or younger siblings, or who have helped out in the neighborhood or community (defined as the Greater Washington D.C. metropolitan area), deserve to be recognized not only for themselves but as examples to others. All teen nominations must meet the criteria listed on the attached application. The MCA Education and Youth Committee will review nominations to determine compliance and select the winners from the most deserving candidates.

The award consists of a certificate, which will be presented on the outdoor stage at McLean Day at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 20, 2023. Names of award winners will be provided to the local newspapers to highlight recognition of the teens' achievements. A nomination application is attached.

Nominations must be submitted via email to [e-y\\_committee@mcleancitizens.org](mailto:e-y_committee@mcleancitizens.org) no later than Friday, April 21, 2023. For further information, contact the E&Y Committee Chair at: [e-y\\_committee@mcleancitizens.org](mailto:e-y_committee@mcleancitizens.org).

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# International Musician Brings Troupe to Workhouse

**Award-winning percussionist Tom Teasley delivers multi-cultural sounds.**

BY MIKE SALMON  
THE CONNECTION

Tom Teasley's music is all over the place. He's a native Alexandrian who uses all kinds of drums, cymbals, stringed instruments, keyboards and water to create a sound that is totally unique in the world of music. It's taken him all over the world too and in mid April, he's back at the Workhouse Arts Center with an international cast in a show titled "Tom Teasley and Friends."

"I grew up playing in rock bands," Teasley said. He was a drummer in a band that played at the Cellar Door club in DC, the Wharf and 219 King Street, and also toured with a 1980s group called the Nighthawks.

Now he is an internationally acclaimed percussionist who specializes in world music using a variety of instruments and sound engineering skills. One skill he's recently adopted is to play soundtracks to old, silent movies. This includes original soundtracks to Charlie Chaplin's "The Immigrant" and Buster Keaton's "Sherlock, Jr." It breathes a new life to these cinematic classics. "I started touring with the State Department," he said, and from there he played at the U.S. embassies in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Iraq, Samoa, Oman, and Jerusalem.

His upcoming show at the Workhouse has an international flair too. He will be playing with Indian bansuri master and keyboardist John Wubbenhorst, and Thai dancer Suteera Nagavajara in a premier East/West collaboration. He looks at dance as a beautiful contrast. "She's bringing an entirely different element," he said.

His upcoming Workhouse show is described as a collection of "global jazz percussion stylings," incorporating the bamboo flute and the subtle movement in Thai dancing. Ganesh Kumar will be part of the show with a small tambourine called a kanjira and he will share the stage with keyboardist Geoff Rorhbach.

His music is perfect for the Workhouse, said Liz Colandene, Performing Arts Coordinator. "His music is always considerate and inspired by the artworks around

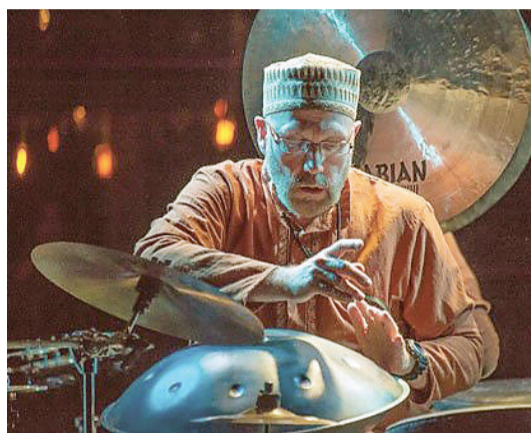


PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/CONNECTION

**Tom Teasley is big on hand drums and cymbals of all sizes.**

him in our galleries and he brings with him collaborators of many diverse backgrounds to perform," she said.

### Musical Milestones

After Teasley's stint as a drummer in a rock band, he went to Peabody Music School, and then played for the U.S. Navy Band for six years while he was finding his niche. It wasn't until he landed in New Orleans and experienced all the different versions of jazz that he began experimenting with percussion sounds using all his musical skills adhering to sounds of traditional music.

Teasley's list of awards includes DRUM! Magazine Drummie Award World Percussionist of the Year, five Fulbright-Hayes Awards for collaborating with indigenous master musicians and WAMA Washington Area Music Award for Outstanding World Music Instrumentalist 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2020. This spring, he starts his residency as a musician at George Mason University "where I will present workshops and write music featuring my eclectic world/jazz approach to percussion," he said.

"I've been fortunate to follow my passion with the music," he said, "helps keep me young at heart."

### LETTERS

## Jacobson Parking Reimagined

FROM PAGE 6

mum, not an intermediary step which developers can reduce further by appealing to the Director of Land Development Services or the Board of Supervisors.

If a proposed development has a unique circumstance which might call for further reductions in required parking, then public hearings need to be held so residents can have their voices heard. But additional parking reductions below the minimum should not be a common occurrence.

Public Hearings: Public hearings before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors will be held later this year. Meanwhile, residents can email concerns about parking reductions to:

ClerktotheBOS@fairfaxcounty.gov  
Plancom@fairfaxcounty.gov

Residents can also sign up to speak at the Planning Commission public hearing at: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planningcommission/speaker> Resident testimony can be given in person, via telephone or via video.

Parking reductions will affect the quality of life of residents for

years. They need to be implemented in a fashion that ensures Fairfax County has the resources to support the changes. But most importantly, the costs of reducing minimum parking requirements should not be borne solely by the residents.

**Donna Jacobson,**  
President, Lafayette Village  
Community Assn.  
Annandale

*Editor's note: Find out more about the county proposal at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning-development/zoning-ordinance/parking-reimagined>*

Obituary

Obituary



**Elizabeth Martins**  
August 18, 1938 - March 18, 2023

**Elizabeth Anne Martins, 84**, of Ashburn, Virginia went to her heavenly home on March 18, 2023. She was a beloved wife, mother, grandmother, family member, friend, and child of God. Elizabeth was born on August 18, 1938 in Providence, Rhode Island to her late parents James R. McAleer and Elizabeth J. (Taylor) McAleer. Elizabeth Anne Martins grew up in Providence, Rhode Island with her four siblings: Jimmy, Mary, Joe, and Tommy. Elizabeth graduated from St. Xavier's Academy in 1956 and went on to graduate from Rhode Island College with a degree in education. She married Vasco C. Martins on July 14, 1963 at St. Edward's Church in Providence and they later moved to McLean and then Reston Virginia, where they lived for over fifty years. Vasco and Elizabeth had four children together: Ellen Marie (Martins) Berg, Paul Anthony Martins, Joseph James Martins, and David McAleer Martins. Elizabeth was a dedicated wife and mother, and she sought to honor the Lord in everything that she did.

Elizabeth was known for how much she loved her Savior, Jesus Christ, and other people. She put others before herself and was generous with her resources. She understood the value of simple, but powerful gestures like handwritten letters and words of encouragement. She enjoyed sharing good books, beautiful music, and family memories and she was the happiest when surrounded by those she loved. She was also a faithful prayer warrior who cherished God's Word. The impact of her devotion is seen and felt deeply by many in her circle of family and friends. Elizabeth Anne Martins is survived by her husband of almost sixty years, Vasco; her daughter Ellen (Russ), her sons Paul (Karen), Joseph (Katrina), and David (Rebekah), ten grandchildren (Joshua, Julia, James, Titus, Hope, Madison, Alysse, Josie, Isaiah, and Asher), as well as other family members.

A Celebration of Life Service will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 25 at Cornerstone Chapel: 650 Battlefield Parkway SE Leesburg, Virginia 20175. A reception will immediately follow the service. In lieu of flowers and other gifts, donations can be made in Elizabeth's memory to First Baptist Church of Easton where her son Paul serves as the minister: 115 Idlewild Avenue Easton, Maryland 21601.

Legals

Legals

NORTH CAROLINA  
CUMBERLAND COUNTY  
FILM NUMBER:

IN THE GENERAL COURT OF JUSTICE  
DISTRICT COURT DIVISION  
FILE NUMBER: 22 CVD 4523

NICOLE FENLEY,  
Plaintiff

**NOTICE OF SERVICE OF  
PROCESS BY PUBLICATION**

vs.

JOHN FENLEY, II,  
Defendant

TO: JOHN FENLEY, II

**TAKE NOTICE** that a pleading seeking relief against you has been filed in the above entitled action. The nature of the relief being sought in this action is absolute divorce. You are required to make defense to such pleading not later than 12th day of May, 2023, and upon your failure to do so, the party seeking service against you will apply to this Court for the relief sought.

This the 22nd day of March, 2023.

BLACKWELL & EDWARDS, P.A.

TIMOTHY D. EDWARDS  
Attorney for Plaintiff  
300 Dick Street  
Post Office Box 469  
Fayetteville, NC 28302  
Telephone: (910) 483-5176

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PLAY BALL VIRGINIA BURKE, LLC, trading as Glory Days Grill, 9526 OLD KEENE MILL ROAD, BURKE, FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22015-4270. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Mixed Beverage license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Jesse Steven McPherson, Managing Member. Date notice posted at establishment: March 22, 2023. 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.

### Legals

#### ABC LICENSE

PLAY BALL VIRGINIA LORTON, LLC trading as Glory Days Grill, 9459 LORTON MARKET STREET, LORTON, FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22079-1963. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Mixed Beverage license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Jesse Steven McPherson. Date notice posted at establishment: March 22, 2023. 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.

### Legals

#### ABC LICENSE

PLAY BALL VIRGINIA HERNDON, LLC trading as Glory Days Grill, 2567 JOHN MILTON DRIVE, FOX MILL SHOPPING CENTER, HERNDON, FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA, 20171-2527. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Mixed Beverage license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Jesse Steven McPherson. Date notice posted at establishment: March 22, 2023. 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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### Legals

#### ABC LICENSE

PLAY BALL VIRGINIA CENTREVILLE, LLC trading as Glory Days Grill, 13850 BRADDOCK ROAD, STE A, CENTREVILLE, FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 20121-2452. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Mixed Beverage license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Jesse Steven McPherson, Managing Member. Date notice posted at establishment: March 22, 2023. 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.

### Legals

#### ABC LICENSE

PLAY BALL VIRGINIA RESTON, LLC trading as Glory Days Grill, 1400 NORTH POINT VILLAGE CENTER, RESTON, FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 20171-2527. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Mixed Beverage license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Jesse Steven McPherson, Managing Member. Date notice posted at establishment: March 22, 2023. 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.

### Legals

#### ABC LICENSE

TKC 1, LLC trading as Joon & The Kitchen Collective, 8045 Leesburg Pike, Store Nos. T3-120 and T3-L-160, Vienna, Fairfax County, Virginia 22182-2737. The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Mixed Beverage Restaurant with Caterer license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages. Ben Farahani, Member of Member Ahani, LLC. Date notice posted at establishment: March 23, 2023. 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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BONNIE H OBBS/THE CONNECTION

Mayor Catherine Read and Nova Labs board members: (back row, from left) are Jim Sweeney, Jay Jayamohan, Rajiv Dewan, Pat Marstall and Bradley Matthews; and (front row, from left) Kathryn Schiller, Catherine Read, Asma Chaudhary, Vince McCullough and Jeanne Marshall.

# Makerspace Opens

FROM PAGE 8

People may create things just for their own satisfaction or can learn how to turn these items into a business. “Our Innovation Center brings in, for example, patent attorneys, experts in getting funding – everything you need to get that first product built,” said Matthews.

For example, an engineer who worked with solar panels for his day job met a person at Nova Labs who created plastic snowflakes on a laser cutter. The engineer knew people didn’t want to install solar panels because they’re ugly, so he asked the craftsman if he could incorporate his snowflakes to make the panels prettier and more attractive to customers.

Ultimately, said Matthews, that craftsman “got grants to start building [this project] for the Department of Energy. And now he has a full business and recently got a half-million-dollar grant from the Department of En-

ergy to move it into production. So he went from an idea and a chance encounter with an engineer from the community to getting grants and creating a business. If you can imagine it, you can build it.”

Glad to finally have Nova Labs up and running in its new home, Matthews said, “This has been a marathon at a sprint’s pace. It’s taken under two years – finding a building, securing loans, getting Council approval, building plans and permits, plus 10 months of construction. This building was a phone-company’s vehicle-repair spot. Sundog Productions made it a manufacturing building, we bought the whole building and now we lease some of it to them.”

Surveying the scene, he said, “It’s fantastic to see all the youth here, people making projects and others seeing what they can do. This is how people of all ages can maintain and grow their creativity and never lose it.”

For more information, go to <https://www.nova-labs.org/>.

# Possibilities At Nova Labs

FROM PAGE 9

As for the new facility, Webster said, “It’s really great – we’re excited.”

At another table, member David Kaufman displayed a variety of colorful and intricate symmetrical designs he made out of wood, cardboard, plastic and fabric. He started a company called Polygonia, which offers online, graphic-design tools, and he created the software that enabled him to bring his ideas to life.

Meanwhile, in a room filled with 3D printers, volunteer Patrick Thompson told visitors some of the things they could make with these printers. And in the woodworking area, another maker explained how he creates uniquely shaped, wooden serving spoons out of tree branches.

In yet another section of the building, young teens put robots through obstacle courses, and Rachel Carson eighth-grader Sreeya Pithani showed off the robot she and

her robotics team built together.

Interested in woodworking and 3D printing, Fairfax resident Nancy Wemmerus came to see what Nova Labs has to offer and was pleasantly surprised. “It exceeded my expectations,” she said. “I think this is a tremendous opportunity to use really high-level equipment most of us can’t afford to have in our homes. But most importantly, we can do it together with others.”

“And all of this comes with so many experts,” she continued. “There also seems to be a real generosity of spirit in terms of sharing skills and knowledge. I’m impressed that a novice can come in and create something without being afraid. It’s really cool – and they’re so kind and welcoming here.”

“And it seems like they really care about safety, too. I hope they’re a big success; they’ve got a lot of promise to bring together people with shared interests in a way that builds them up. This is where you can build a community.”

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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 omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

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# A Definite Maybe



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

For the first time in 14 years, my current scan interval has been almost five months. This represents a quantum leap from my long-standing every-three-month scan and is a record. After years of “stable” results, my wife, Dina, who has been a part of every Kenny-with-cancer decision acquiesced at our last – and first face-to-face meeting with my oncologist (the first in two+ years) and agreed, per my oncologist’s suggestion, to increase the time between my previously quarterly scans (a recurring discussion between Team Lourie and my oncologist). The apparent slow-growing cancer that I have combined with the risk of accumulating radiation from the various scans I regularly have, leading to possible new cancers/tumors as a side effect, convinced her to agree/allow this change. This month (March) is that first scan at the ‘record’ interval.

To say I’m anticipating trouble when the results are emailed to me is a bit of an overstatement. To say I’m worried about the possible consequences of having waited an extra two months – to see what’s going on inside my lungs, where my papillary thyroid cancer has spread, is more accurate. Though the reason for extending the interval seems logical and prudent, all things considered (14 years a cancer patient and the tumors have moved and/or grown so marginally that what amount of growth or movement would likely occur during that extra month or more is a minimal risk, according to my oncologist). Still, the waiting and wondering during that extra month or two is hardly for the weak of heart. Nevertheless, it is a goal of every cancer patient to be able to increase the interval of their scans because they conquered or at least stalled/survived, the cancer. That’s progress and the beginning of a less cancer-centric lifestyle. It’s what every cancer patient undergoing treatment dreams about.

I’d be lying if I said waiting for the results of the first scan after having extended the quarterly interval was just another day in the office, so to speak. Hardly. I kind of feel that my future hangs in the balance somehow. I’m not any more symptomatic than I’ve been, I’ll just have to wait longer to find out/have it confirmed. Even though I’ve been down nearly every road in my 14-plus years as a cancer patient, this road (interval) represents a road not travelled and as such, it seems to be giving me pause. Not fits by any means. But a more challenging fall-asleep at night.

Part of this anxiety/insecurity comes from having been given a “terminal” diagnosis originally in Feb. ’09. Ever since I’ve lived with the inevitability that one day, to invoke Bob Marley, “the bottom will drop out” and one of these scans is going to show tumor growth and movement or involvement with another major organ (like my kidneys, as an example); end-of-life-type trouble. That’s the fear I’ve been loathing every time I’ve had these scans up until I receive the all-clear (sort of) from my oncologist. The reality is cancer is an insidious and semi unpredictable intruder and quite often it wins, while the patient loses. And 14 years is an awfully long time for a “terminal” patient like me to keep winning while the cancer is losing/not doing what it almost always does: create havoc and in many cases, death.

Every time, in person when we had post-scan appointments with my oncologist or I received an email indicating that scan results were in, I almost always closed my eyes, took a deep breath and said a bit of a prayer when the oncologist knocked on the door of the examining room where Dina I were waiting or when at home, when I would I click on the message on the provider’s website.

The evolution of our sitting and waiting experience has matched the evolution of how we all communicate nowadays. Back in the day, we always had to go to the facility for an in-person appointment with the oncologist specifically to discuss the results of my most recent scan. Now, the results are released automatically from the radiologists before my oncologist has likely even seen the report. The report is not lay-person friendly. It is in doctor-speak and not particularly clear. Though there are sections titled “Findings” and “Impressions,” there’s a lot of additional information that might be telling, that is if I knew what I was being told.

This has been my life every three months for the past 14 years. Now it’s my life every four months. Is it better or worse? I can’t say yet. As long as the results are “stable,” then I’d say it’s better.

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





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